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Hotel and restaurant management education

Giousmpasoglou, Charalampos ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9225-3475> (2016)  
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## **Hotel & restaurant management education**

The hotel and restaurant sector (hereafter called the hospitality industry), as a modern economic activity was shaped after World War Two and is closely linked with the development of mass tourism and the rapid growth of the airline industry. The hospitality and tourism industries together, are the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that hospitality and tourism are directly and indirectly responsible for 11% of gross domestic product, 200 million jobs, 8% of total employment and 5.5 million new jobs per year up to 2010. Today, the hospitality industry is a steadily growing sector, generating a significant number of jobs globally.

The sector has proven to be extremely resilient to the global economic crisis and the volatile business environment. The rapid development and expansion in traditional destinations such as Europe and North America as well as new markets, such as the Middle East and Asia, requires the preparation and development of the future generation of hotel and restaurant managers (hereafter called hospitality managers). Given the growing demand for skilled hospitality managers, the numbers of enrollments in undergraduate hospitality, tourism and leisure programs (HTLPs) has increased significantly since the 1980s. For example, the National Centre for Education Statistics reported that numbers of HTLPs have rapidly grown in the USA, increasing from 128 in 1986 to 307 in 2010. Nowadays, hospitality management programs are a well-established part of tertiary management education (higher, post-secondary or further education) and it is expected to grow bigger in the following years. This entry explores the hospitality management curriculum approaches in terms of structure, content and future developments.

## **The evolution of hospitality management education**

The European educational structure in hospitality management and related fields has highlighted the operational aspects of the industry for more than a century. Until the early 1980s, only hands-on vocational programs were offered in this field. The curricula were based on skills oriented training, and students received a narrow education. During the 1990s there was a strengthening international movement, driven by higher education hospitality academics towards the ‘liberation’ of hospitality management higher education from its vocational base, and to explore the inclusion in the curriculum of a broader and more reflective orientation. As a result, undergraduate and postgraduate hospitality management programs initially in North America and later in Europe became part of business schools’ generic management programs. This has inevitably led to the development of two main streams in hospitality management education: the ‘*Swiss-French*’ traditional approach followed largely by hotel schools especially in Europe, and the U.S. ‘business’ approach followed mostly by American and British universities.

It can be argued that hospitality management as an area for study is faced with uncertainties and controversies over the past four decades. These include simple misunderstandings about what the study of this subject is about, doubts about the seriousness of the subject, concern about the over-reliance on other disciplines and worries about the proper balance between the vocational and academic aspects of the subject. There are also questions of whether there is a need for a core curriculum, the challenge of identifying a unique body of knowledge about hospitality management.

Throughout the course of development of hospitality management as a distinct area of study, three significant developments occurred. First, there has been a massive global increase in the numbers of students, institutions and teachers. Second, the

curriculum has broadened beyond its original vocational scope, and hospitality management has emerged as a subject for study at many different levels of education. Third, this growth and change has led to tensions in the development of the curriculum. On the one hand, the danger of excess vocational focus exists, where hospitality management education does little more than provide a reflection of the world of work. On the other hand, a practical education (as opposed to a rather more narrowly defined vocational education) needs to equip students both for employment and to cope in the world.

## **Hospitality management curriculum**

It can be suggested that the hospitality management education is a function of both the acquisition of knowledge and skills about management in a way similar to that of other management courses and, the acquisition of knowledge and skills about hotel and restaurant operations in a similar way to craft courses. This means that hospitality management education can be perceived as a mixture of academic, professional and craft knowledge, and skills aimed at satisfying the needs of the hospitality industry.

In addition, hospitality management education should assist the student to develop personal attributes such as people and interpersonal skills, adaptability, flexibility and tolerance, cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence followed by emotional maturity, industry experience, and self-confidence. These attributes are essential ingredients for those who aspire to top management positions in hotels and restaurants; personal sacrifice and having the right personality (i.e. being likeable, having physical attractiveness and being charismatic) are also highly valued.

## **Teaching and research staff qualifications**

The controversial subject of tenure has raised serious considerations about the quality of the available hospitality management programs in higher education. In the 1980s, assistant and associate professors with industry experience and a Master's degree staffed the majority of the existing hospitality programs. The research requirements to achieve tenure were minimal. A terminal degree became a requisite for getting a tenure track in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As a result, the three most important attributes for gaining tenure were a PhD, a track record of publications and a track record of good teaching. How often educators get published and in what journals are also important considerations when discussing tenure and promotion. Today, many hospitality management programs require a terminal degree that provides their graduates with research skills. As more universities stress research, the pressure for academic staff to publish is increasing. In some cases the department or college uses a very objective approach for the research requirements for tenure. These programs require their faculty to produce 12-16 refereed articles to meet the research requirement for tenure. They stress quantity rather than quality because the number of articles published is very easy to measure. Determining the quality of an article is more difficult. One of the outcomes of this quantitative requirement is that professors publish only to gain tenure. These professors publish across a variety of disciplines, depending on the opportunities to publish with colleagues. They also seek journals that will provide the least resistance to publication. These journals are not well read or indexed. As a result, professors who chase quantity to meet tenure requirements are often not known as an expert in any area and few people have read their work.

## **The internationalization of hospitality education**

One of the characteristics of hospitality management education in many parts of the world is that it is highly international both in the student population and in the academic staff. However, all too often this internationalism has not been well developed, either to provide wider cultural dimensions to the study or to provide wider mobility. The developments under the Bologna initiative in the countries of the European Union provide a beginning to increased internationalization in that part of the world. But the significant number of students from other areas, particularly from China and South East Asia, suggest that there is scope for a much more adventurous approach to internationalism. In part, this is about ensuring that the development of hotel and restaurant management knowledge, the delivery of programs and the production of resources do not pursue an exclusively '*western*' orientation, but it is equally about providing opportunities for mobility of staff and students.

Moreover, an international industry invariably attracts international students as well as international employees making the question of whether or not learning might be influenced by culture increasingly pertinent. It is imperative therefore that educators and trainers, both in and out of the workplace, ask how best to teach international groups and question how successful learning can best take place. Therefore, it can be suggested that one step in this direction might be to look at the learning styles of individuals of different cultural backgrounds. Based on research that analysed the learning style preferences of international students studying hospitality and tourism management in Australia in 2005, Paul Baron argues that a large subgroup of international students have learning style preferences that are different to those of other international and domestic students. From this, Baron raises the question of whether such students should fit into a system which is very different to

their prior experience or whether the system should be more sensitive and accommodating to their needs.

### **Quality assurance**

Presently, the increase of stakeholder accountability in higher education (HE) is a key concern for many hospitality management program providers. Quality assurance is lying at the heart of this development. The demand for quality assurance became inseparable with the development and facilitation of hospitality management programs; this occurred due to an increasing number of HE hospitality program providers who are pursuing internationalization to cater for student/ faculty mobility and increase their international competitiveness.

The increased number of international collaborations in hospitality management programs has raised the issue for the creation of a valid international quality instrument to ensure standardization, homogenization and academic recognition. Assuming that the program assessment is using a valid international quality instrument indicates the quality of the hospitality management program itself. As a result, students can be more confident in qualifications from programmes assessed via such instruments. Furthermore, quality assurance practices referred to using this instrument appear relevant to increasing the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Among the various forms of quality assurance in HE context, external programme accreditation / evaluation is best recognised in U.S. and European programs offered globally. Major programme accrediting agencies and professional bodies, such as the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (I-CHRIE) have assumed the role of gatekeeper for the quality of hospitality education. Despite the increasing globalisation and internationalisation of

hospitality management programs, the aforementioned accreditation/evaluation systems are primarily restricted to specific nations and there is no common instrument to assure the quality across borders.

### **Graduate employability**

The over-supply of programmes and graduates globally has been a fairly constant strand of criticism of hospitality management education. Looked at in fairly narrow terms of programmes providing fairly specific training and education for specific entry positions in industry, the criticism may be justified. Indeed some of the early programmes may have had such a narrow orientation. However, today there is little excuse for programmes to be confined to narrow vocationalism. The knowledge base concerning hospitality management is extensive and provides a rich basis from which to develop programmes and in turn will provide a broad and demanding education at all levels.

Hospitality management graduates are equipped for a range of career and personal development opportunities. The most important ingredient in this is that the education and the knowledge base on which it draws must do much more than reflect the immediate needs of the work place or the immediate demands of the entry employment positions. In addition, career paths for students in the hospitality and tourism cluster can be very diverse. Students may choose to be hotel managers, event planners, chefs, wedding directors or marketing managers for a convention and visitors bureau. This variety of career offerings is one of the unique benefits of having a hospitality related degree.

Hotel and restaurant management education has reached a point that can meet the highly demanding requirements of the profession and the industry. The challenge



for the education providers and the employers is to manage to motivate and retain the future leaders who decide to change career, even before the completion of their studies after their first encounter with the real world. Carefully designed curricula with industry exposure and management development programs are a good start for the reduction of the industry's high turnover in all management levels.

As a concluding point it can be suggested that after an intense period of growth and development, hotel and restaurant management education is now in a good position to achieve the following: to provide new insights into the operation and management of a major global economic activity, to contribute to the effective stewardship of scarce resources used by hospitality and to ensure that those who leave their courses have a range of knowledge and competencies for their career, whether it be in hospitality or elsewhere. It is these features that will make hospitality management education relevant for the future.

*Charalampos Giousmpasoglou*

**See also:** *Tourism Education; Hospitality Education; Hotel Schools; Hospitality curriculum*

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## Websites

The International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE)  
<http://www.chrie.org/>

Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education  
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Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education – JoHLSTE  
<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-hospitality-leisure-sport-and-tourism-education-johlste/>