

Hotel management courses in Europe

Europe enjoys a good reputation for its hotel management courses, but the changing demands of the tourist industry mean that education providers are facing new challenges.

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Europe, especially Switzerland, is known as the birth place of hotel management schools,” says Karin McQuade from Cursos no Exterior agency in Brazil. “It is still easier to find a job [in this field] when you [have] studied in Europe than in another country.”

With a reputation for traditionalism and quality that is acknowledged worldwide, schools and universities in Europe have a unique advantage when it comes to marketing their hotel management courses to overseas students. And many are keen to cash in on the huge new markets opening up through the expansion of worldwide tourism.

“Hotel management courses are where the future is,” asserts Paul Mullins from the American College Dublin in Ireland. “This is only the second year of our hotel management course and we are experiencing a huge upsurge in interest.” The course currently has students enrolled from the USA, Pakistan, Russia, China, India and Nigeria, and Mullins believes that students from countries that have a relatively new tourism industry hold the most growth potential in the coming years.

He continues, “I think that Russia will be a huge market for the future. The hospitality industry is a big new industry in

Russia and many students are retraining in this field as they cannot get jobs in their original professions. The United Nations has recently identified China and Russia as being the tourism markets of the 21st century.”

Alison Hollier, Regional Manager at the SHMS Swiss Hotel Management School in Switzerland, agrees. “There has been an increase in [student] numbers from many countries around the world, especially where tourism is a developing or an important industry to the economy of the country.”

Countries such as Brazil are experiencing a huge demand for skilled hotel employees. “Brazil is building enormous amounts of hotels and there are not enough specialised staff to hire locally,” says McQuade. “If you have studied and worked abroad you can come back with better [employment] chances. Around 95 per cent of our hotel management students go to Europe at some stage of their studies.”

The benefits of a hotel management education acquired in Europe can have enormous implications for future success. “The emphasis of operational skills in various departments and the strong knowledge in food and beverage as well as multi-languages, set the real Swiss hotel schools apart from the

Example of award	Certificate, Diploma, Higher Diploma, BA, MA, MSc, Postgraduate diploma
Length of courses (years)	1-4
Min. English requirements – Toefl	550
Min. English requirements – Ielts	6.0
Approx. tuition fee per year in local currency (Switzerland)	18,600 (US\$11,327)
Approx. tuition fee per year in local currency (UK)	7,000 (US\$9,800)
Approx. tuition fee per year in local currency (Ireland)	8,000 (US\$9,120)
Approx. tuition fee per year in local currency (Netherlands)	2,100 (US\$1,870)

Degrees: BA (Bachelor of Arts), MA (Master of Arts), MSc (Master of Sciences)

The information in the table above is meant as a guide only. All facts must be confirmed by institutions in the relevant countries.



similar programmes offered by universities throughout the world," claims Janet Vogel, Marketing Manager at Hotel Institute Montreux in Switzerland.

However, Arnoud van Delft, Director of Alumni Affairs at Hotelschool The Hague in the Netherlands argues that, although quality may be high in Switzerland, courses are expensive. "Our courses are less expensive [than most] other hotel management courses in Europe," he says. "Some Swiss hotel schools are very good but expensive and quite conservative [and] traditional. We see ourselves as trendsetters in the hospitality industry."

Although hotel management courses offered by private hotel schools in Switzerland were traditionally one- or two-year certificate or diploma courses, focusing heavily on vocational-based training and providing some element of paid work experience, many schools have responded to the demands of the developing industry by offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. These are more academic in content and feature a more advanced management education combined with the traditional vocational elements.

"Over the past few years there has been a much higher demand for hotel management programmes especially for courses of higher education such as bachelor degrees, postgraduate studies and masters programmes," says Hollier. "SHMS has developed its courses to suit these needs and offers up to masters and degree level."

Students at SHMS have the opportunity to build on qualifications already earned and structure their academic progress to suit themselves. For example, students can take the certificate programme for one year, transfer to the diploma in hotel operational management for a further year and complete a degree a year later in conjunction with the University of Derby in the UK. Another two semesters of study leads to a Master of Arts in hospitality management.

The trend for graduate and postgraduate qualifications is echoed at other hotel schools in Europe. "[There is a] very strong international demand [for hotel management programmes], especially [at] postgraduate [level]," confirms Tom Baum, Head of Department at the Scottish Hotel School at

Strathclyde University in Scotland. Regarding Swiss hotel management providers, he says, "The reputation [of Swiss schools] is with respect to a very limited type of course. Most Swiss schools now rely on UK accreditation or validation for their higher awards."

Although Switzerland enjoys a good reputation for its hotel management courses, Vogel warns that some new schools are taking advantage of the Swiss label to recruit international students. "Many students suffer from these kinds of schools [that] don't really provide hotel management education at all," she says. There are several accreditation schemes for hotel management programmes in Switzerland

and Europe, which provide quality assurance. The European Foundation for the Accreditation of Hotelschool Programmes (EFAH) has developed recognised levels and standards of quality for hotel schools across Europe that offer courses of at least two years in length.

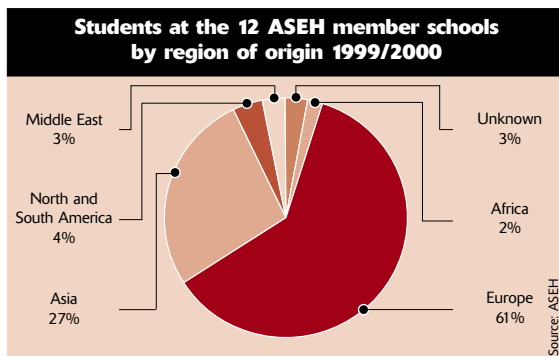
The Swiss Hotel Schools Association (ASEH) was developed in 1985 in order to develop a quality label for Swiss hotel management education. Martin Kisseleff, President of ASEH, says "Selecting a good hotel management school for international students becomes more and more difficult in a global market situation. ASEH has been established to ensure that its member schools are providing the highest level of professional and academic studies in hotel management."

Job prospects for hotel management graduates is very positive, with course providers in Europe boasting high graduate employment rates. "Our institution has exceptionally good relations with all

major employers in our field, which materialise every semester through presentations and recruitment activities carried out at our premises," reports Fabienne Rollandin, Communications Manager at Glion Hotel School in Switzerland.

For graduates of Hotelschool The Hague, job prospects also look rosy. "Our graduates become general managers or have comparable levelled positions," says van Delft. "About 50 per cent remain in the hospitality business – the others are easily picked up by other industries. Big international hotel chains like Hyatt, Hilton, Sheraton and Walt Disney World, visit our school to recruit their future managers." ○

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	Lang of Instruction	Total students
Switzerland		
Ecole Hoteliere de Geneve "ES", Geneva	French	120
Glion Hotel School, Bulle	English	800
Hotel Institute Montreux, Montreux	English	320
SHMS Swiss Hotel Management School, Montreux	English	300
France		
Institute de Management Hotelier International (IMHI), Cergy-Pontoise	English	120
Scotland		
Scottish Hotel School, Strathclyde University, Strathclyde	English	285
England		
London Hotel School, London	English	160
Oxford Brookes University, Oxford	English	16,000
University of Surrey School of Management Services, Guildford	English	1,000
Netherlands		
Hotelschool The Hague*, The Hague	English/Dutch	1,300
International Hotel and Management School*, The Hague	English	25,000
Ireland		
American College Dublin, Dublin	English	800

*institutions that do not currently use education consultants