

subject focus

Hotel management in Europe

Universities and colleges in Europe provide plenty of opportunities for progression and development in the hotel management industry. **BETHAN NORRIS** reports.

The global tourism and hospitality industry has always been a popular field of interest for international students, given its reliance on the ability of staff to speak different languages and also the widespread and flexible job opportunities available. And, according to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), opportunities for students are currently better than ever after some lacklustre years for the industry. The latest issue of the World Tourism Barometer, published in October, revealed that "tourism results for the period from January to August 2004 show a spectacular rebound of tourism as all regions saw a surge in international arrivals" (see page 8).

Many universities and colleges in Europe are concentrating on providing an array of options for career progression within this service industry. Founded in 1995, the London Hotel School (LHS) in the UK offers potential hospitality students the chance to brush up their English skills in its three-month English foundation programme or six-month English for hospitality programme.

With an emphasis on pronunciation and speaking skills, the language courses provide a foundation for progression on to the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) diploma, also offered at the school. This in turn can lead on to an LHS Working Diploma and LHS Advanced Diploma, which, if completed successfully, enable students to transfer to a university to complete the final year of a BA honours degree.

Catriona MacCallum at the school emphasises the flexibility offered in their courses. "Students have the choice of what area they would like to specialise in, for example, tourism, food & beverage, sales & marketing or finance," she says.

At the Scottish Hotel School at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland, students can undertake either an undergraduate BA course in hotel and hospitality management

or a postgraduate diploma in one of four different subject areas covering tourism and hotel & hospitality management. One of the postgraduate courses available, in human resource management for the tourism and hospitality industries, was developed by the school in response to interest in research regarding this area.

Alastair Goldsmith at the school says that significant interest in their courses appears to be from the postgraduate market, with the biggest student markets being Taiwan and China. However, he adds, "The undergraduate course is also franchised in Iran and Hong Kong. Students from these two countries have the option of completing their studies in Glasgow."

Another development in this sector in recent years has been the introduction of courses focusing on the relatively new role of information technology within the industry. Claudia Mossenlechner from MCI - Management Center Innsbruck in Austria says that their undergraduate degree programme in tourism offers "an extensive number of courses in the area of applied information management – fundamentals of applied information systems, e-business in tourism, etc". She adds, "The cornerstones of the programme are a sound education in business administration, the development of entrepreneurial approaches as well as a high awareness regarding customer and service orientation."

At Ecole Hôtelière de Genève (EHG), in Geneva, Switzerland – the spiritual home of hotel management education – the emphasis too is on closely tailoring courses to the demands of the industry. Oskar Sykora from the school says that their Diplôme de Restaurateur-Hotelière is "adapted to the market needs and our own research". He adds, "the best providers [of marketing overseas] are the graduates and employers – hoteliers and restaurateurs who are satisfied with the EHG professional education".