

Tourism and Hotel Management education

A pioneer approach

A unique educational programme in tourism and hotel studies

Tourism and Hotel Management studies were first introduced at the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (UAB) – Autonomous University of Barcelona – in 1993 with the foundation of the *Escola Superior d'Hoteleria de Catalunya* (ESHC) – Catalonia Higher School of Hospitality Studies – a higher education centre linked to the UAB. The project was completed four years later with the creation of a second attached school, the *Escola Universitària de Turisme* (EUT) – University School of Tourism. The concept constitutes a pioneer approach to tourism and hotel management education and is unique in Spain. The two schools have been jointly managed since 1999, and a single, new school, *Escola Universitària de Turisme i Direcció Hotelera* (EUTDH) – University School of Tourism and Hotel Management – was created in 2000.

Synergies between the two specialities

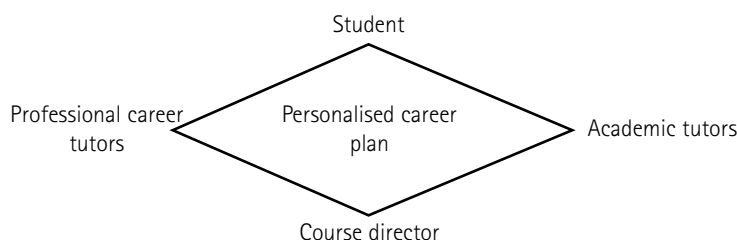
The curricular structure at EUTDH allows students to transfer between programmes and obtain recognition for courses already taken in their first choice. As a result students can obtain both qualifications: Diploma in Tourism and Diploma in Hotel Management. The existence of two different programmes has made it possible not only to provide highly specialised studies, but also to take advantage of the existing synergies in order to achieve economies of scale in the provision and use of resources, which fosters education at university standard.

The School maintains close contact with tourism institutions and the hotel sector, which ensures adequate practical experience for the students, permits the direct participation of representatives of both private enterprise and public organisations in teaching, and guarantees a wide range of employment opportunities for graduates.



Professional Programme, Industrial Placements and Employment Service

The Professional Programme requires the application of considerable academic expertise in order to personalise the orientation of each student's career. It also entails a follow-up on an individual basis, with the aim of enhancing the students' professional profiles by concentrating on personal preferences, aptitudes and acquired job-skills.



Right from the start of the course, the students are brought into contact with the actual realities of the tourism sector. Agreements for practical work placements in a variety of top level companies and public bodies – in Spain and abroad – allow the students to appreciate the real applications of the theoretical knowledge they have acquired, and to acquire a wide-reaching and overall perspective, which, together, facilitate their insertion in the labour market.

Permanent contact with the tourism and hotel sectors

The Employment Service facilitates students' access to the labour market, often even before they graduate. Detailed knowledge of each student's potential derived from the personal follow-up through the Professional Programme, the service's permanent contacts with real day-to-day situations in the sector, and its continually updated data base of the students' CVs, actively stimulates access to jobs in the sector.



Educational rigour and information technology

Incorporation of information and communication technology

The students at EUTDH are in constant contact with a telematic environment, which allows them to work from the outset with the aid of the new communication technologies, and apply these to their studies. Services provided include:

- Email, with personalised addresses
- Electronic tutorials with their teachers
- Simulators for the running of travel agencies and hotels
- Classrooms equipped with multimedia teaching facilities
- Free access to the full range of Internet services

Information and communication technology is envisaged as a valuable management tool, which enhances the curricula as well as helping in the learning process. The students have access to the programmes most frequented used by the majority of the tourism and hotel companies. These include: the Savia/Amadeus reservations programme, for which EUTDH is an authorised training centre; computerised administration programmes for hotel establishments, including mainframe room-reception programmes and inventory administration systems, etc., such as Optims, RA2000 and others currently of widespread use in the sector.



The constant challenge of maintaining scientific rigour and adapting teaching to the latest technological advances has led to the creation of a committee to develop strategies for Knowledge acquisition. In fact, the further education programmes already include bimodal courses, which combine classroom and distance learning techniques.

Residential training in the *Hotel Meliá Confort Campus* and *meliaviajes.com*

Students acquire their hotel training in the Hotel Meliá Confort Campus, which is located in the same building complex as the School. The hotel has 104 rooms; a congress and convention hall with capacity for 900 people in 2,500 m²; three restaurants with different styles: the rapid service Sirius cafeteria, La Marmita, which offers traditional cuisine, and a student cafeteria, which provides instruction in basic food preparation and service techniques.

The Hotel Meliá Confort Campus, currently managed by the Sol Meliá chain, one of the world's leading hotel groups, is an ideal setting for the students' residential practical training, as it gives them the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom to real-life situations, by performing the service and administrative duties necessary in the different departments.

With a view to offering our students the chance to put knowledge acquired in the classroom into practice through residential practical training, our school houses an onsite travel agency: *meliaviajes.com*.

As an online travel agency and independent tour operator, it is available on WAP telephones, digital TV as well as by means of other new technologies. Besides, *meliaviajes.com* is an exclusive provider of all leisure and travel products being commercialised by America Online portal (AOL).

All in all, the existence of this agency at EUTDH enables our students to discover new tendencies in the uptake of advanced technology as well as total product orientation and travellers' needs. All this surrounded by the most advanced information and communication technology.

**Practical application
of knowledge**

meliaviajes.com

