

**Hospitality Management Skills:
An Educational and Workplace Comparative Analysis**

By

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Abstract**Wood, Daniel L.****Hospitality Management Skills:****An Educational and Workplace Comparative Analysis****M.s. Training & Development****Professor Robert Davies, December, 2003****53 Pages****American Psychological Association, 5th edition**

This study utilized secondary data to formulate a comparison of hospitality curricular design as it is viewed by industry. The two studies used for this research project were conducted in a longitudinal format. The two studies asked industry recruiters at a university sponsored career event to indicate where key hospitality skills are best learned.

The comparative findings profiled that specific skills are best learned in the work place while a smaller skill set was needed from Hospitality Education. The skills found to be most important which are taught in the educational setting were compared to the hospitality courses at the University of Wisconsin-Stout with the purpose of identifying any potential gaps in skills. A model was used which allows courses to be compared to the skill sets industry deems as important.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	I
List of Tables.....	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Introduction.....	1
Purpose of Study	3
Objectives of Study	4
Significance of Study	4
Scope and Limitations of Study	5
Definition of Terms	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction.....	7
Foundations of Hospitality Education	7
Research Pertaining to Hospitality Education.....	8
Meeting the Needs of Industry: Educational Response...	9
Industrial Expectations of Hospitality Education	11
Summary of Literature Review	12
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Description of Methodology	13
Methodology used for the identified Studies.....	13
Selection of Subjects.....	14

Research Design	15
Instrument	15
Statistical Analysis.....	16
Assumptions.....	17
Summary	17
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Overview	18
Results of Comparative Analysis.....	29
Respondent Demographics	32
2-year program vs. 4-year program	33
Summary of Findings.....	33
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	
Summary and Conclusions.....	37
Recommendations for Education	41
REFERENCES.....	44
APPENDIX A Skills by importance from combined study.....	47
APPENDIX B Skills by importance in educational setting	48
APPENDIX C Skills by importance in on the job training	49
APPENDIX D Course evaluation form for industry demand.....	50
APPENDIX E Course evaluation form in Quantity Foods.....	51
APPENDIX F Course evaluation form in Lodging Admin.	52

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	
Skills Ranked by importance from Study 1	19
Table 4.2	
Skills ranked by importance from Study 2.....	20
Table 4.3	
Study 1 and 2 combined	22
Table 4.4	
Study 1 at School.....	24
Table 4.5	
Study 2 at School.....	26
Table 4.6	
Skills ranked by importance of that should be learned while at school Study 1 and 2 combined.....	28
Table 4.7	
Top ten skills as determined by results of Study 1 and 2 combined	29
Table 4.8	
Top ten skills that should be learned while at school Study 1 and 2 combined	30
Table. 4.9	
Demographic Gender.....	32
Table 4.10	
Level of Education	33
Table 4.11	
Results of the question if a two year degree is equal to a four year degree.....	34

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality students who graduate today face many challenges when finding a job in today's competitive job market. Graduates must meet the expectations of the prospective companies as well as recruiters' expectations. Questions arise to how education is responding to industry. Academic Hospitality programs are designed to teach the skills that will prepare them to be competitive in the workplace. These skills should enable the graduate to manage the rapidly changing demands in today's hospitality industry addressing increased competition, changing consumer attitudes and employer demands.

According to Johnstone (1994), there are large discrepancies between formal training and employer demands in the hospitality industry. The Johnstone research outlines the issues within the hospitality industry and underscores the direct link to education. Academic Hospitality programs should be addressing these skills which are deemed necessary for graduates to have, yet these programs are leaving some or many of these skills to be taught by the employer. Employers feel their recruits are less adequately prepared for work after graduation. They find that some skills are missing in recruits that should have been taught in the educational system at the undergraduate level. In research by Goodman & Sprague (1991), it is noted that hospitality education as we know it is in danger of vanishing. Hospitality education programs must continually shift to meet changing demands in the hospitality industry. These issues need to be understood as they represent a core

within the industry. The hospitality industry operates in a very competitive environment catering to continual and swiftly changing consumer trends. For this reason, hospitality programs must be especially keen in adapting to these shifts, responding to them with educational content and programs that make practical sense to the graduates so they possess the desired skill sets for the job market they enter.

The top ten issues facing the hospitality industry in 2004 were identified by The International Society of Hospitality Consultants (ISHC) at their annual meeting. The top ten issues that are facing the industry for the next five years will include:

1. Distribution Channel Management
2. Worldwide Terrorism and Safety
3. Capital
4. New Business Realities
5. Service Gaps
6. Global Uncertainty
7. Building Occupancy
8. Airlines in the 21st Century
9. Management Evolution and the Shift of Power, and
10. Financial Viability

These areas of concern will directly affect the way the hospitality industry will evolve over the next few years. Along with these areas of concern, this study will

utilize the skills found to be important and identify hospitality programs which meet the desired skill sets for hospitality graduates to achieve (2003).

Education/Industry Skill Assessment

Assessments of the job market demand in the hospitality industry are essential for supporting education program. Research has shown that curriculum which parallels industry needs can assist in the career preparation of graduates in pursuit of postgraduate careers. Research such as Goodman & Sprague (1991), find that students of hospitality education will remain in the industry longer if they have a strong base understanding of what is expected of them by industry. If hospitality programs and their supporting curriculum are adjusted to meet the needs of hospitality employers/industry, it must reflect the needs of industry today as well as the short and long-term future. If education can modify curriculum on a calculated schedule it could potentially offer resolution for issues regarding dated content and skills sets which do not match industry need. Ultimately the skills learned by students of hospitality must mirror contemporary skills demanded by today's competitive and quickly changing hospitality industry.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to identify specific management skills that industry recruiters perceive as important for success in the hospitality industry. Additionally, this study will also identify where these skills are best learned and if the hospitality and tourism programs are adjusting the curriculum to accommodate

the needs of the recruiters and today's hospitality employers while meeting the long term needs of the student.

In addition to identifying these needs, this study will create a model that can be used to identify the skills that are being taught to the students in the current curriculum and what skills may need to be added to the current curriculum to meet the industry's desired skill sets.

Objectives of Study

Upon completion of this study, the following objectives shall be identified using the identified studies:

1. Identify the skills that hospitality recruiters perceive as being important for success in the hospitality industry.
2. Identify where the perceived important skills are best learned: on the job or in an educational setting.
3. Identify whether or not skills that are deemed as best learned in an educational setting are being addressed in the current hospitality and tourism programs.
4. Model the skills needed by industry which education must address in curriculum.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is that it will provide information for the purpose of assisting academic hospitality programs and their instructional staff in designing

curricula to more appropriately meet the needs of graduates as well as the job market they are entering. With the findings from this study, the educator will be able to identify the skills that recruiters in today's hospitality industry find important and be able to design coursework and classes that will enable the students to obtain the skills that are deemed important.

Once these needs are identified, the model that has been created by this study can be used to identify the skill set gaps so that education can incorporate such skills into the current curriculum. Once the gaps are bridged, the educational systems will be able to direct their efforts of teaching what skills today's employers are looking for.

Scope and Limitations of Study

The scope of this study includes surveying recruiters in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry regarding their opinions of preparation of graduates from academic Hospitality Programs. Some recruiters were surveyed while attending a university sponsored career conference for the hospitality industry, while other recruiters were surveyed as they were conducting on-campus job interviews at times other than during the career conference. The scope of the study is directed towards providing a model to hospitality education to make curricular change. The two studies used for this study was conducted in the Midwest with input from national recruiters, however, this study may present some results that may be unique to the Midwest region and may not be able to be generalized outside the region presenting possible limitations.

Definitions and Terms

The following terms are common parlance of the hospitality and training industries, and will be defined for the ease of the reader:

OTJ: On-the-job, training that takes place at the workplace.

JIT: Just-in-Time, is web-based training on a certain topic at the convenience of the employee taking the training.

Recruiter: The individual who represents an employer and performs interviews with students who are seeking employment post graduation.

Technical Education: integrates technical and career proficiencies with academic content; and prepares students for the workplace, further education, training and family and community roles.

4 year degree: an academic degree grant to someone who has successfully completed a specific course of study.

2 year degree: a formal education that is directed to essential skills and does not include more intensive general education courses and electives.

Entry level: a starting point in a career.

Career placements: Securing employment in a specialized work function within society, generally performed by a professional.

Operational skills: Knowledge, skills, and abilities an individual possesses.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review examines the relationship between education and the hospitality industry and specifically, the body of literature dealing with campus recruiting and the future of hospitality education. The review of literature also provides perspectives from the hospitality industry professionals as well as those from educational professionals.

The review focuses on several areas including the foundation of hospitality education, research in the hospitality education field and education's response to the industry's expectations.

Foundations of Hospitality Education

Hospitality education itself was born out of a need to supply the hospitality industry with competent managers and is often driven by industry standards (Nelson and Dopson, 2001). According to a study by Nelson and Dobson, the main determinants of success in the hospitality education are the quality of graduates and retention of those graduates in industry (2001). Most undergraduate hospitality programs are specialized rather than general, and their courses lack a general business perspective (Pavesic, 1991). Curricular issues have been widely discussed and debated in the hospitality education literature, primarily because of the relative newness of the field of study in comparison with other fields, and

because of the continual reconstruction of curricula to satisfy institutional and industry needs (Nelson and Dobson, 2001). According to Riegel (1991), that hospitality education basically consists of three key elements substantive knowledge, skills and values. He explains that the substantive knowledge component is essential for the practice of the profession, the skill component provides the ability to apply knowledge to practice, and the values component fosters career values necessary for success (Riegel, 1991)

Research Pertaining to Hospitality Education

A survey of hospitality workplace researchers indicate that most believe there are large discrepancies between formal training and employer demands in the hospitality industry. One researcher summed up the key issues addressed in this study by saying: "The American worker is in trouble, and so is American higher education" (Johnstone, 1994).

While Johnstone's (1994) perception may be considered by some to be on the extreme end of those who would push for major changes in hospitality training programs, there are others who support these views. For instance, Goodman & Sprague (1991) note that hospitality education, as we know it is in danger of vanishing. Hospitality education programs must refocus or face a similar fate of specialized programs such as those in the insurance, banking and transportation fields, which have been absorbed into general business programs. According to Michael Haywood (1989) "Education must adapt itself and its role in order to retain its effectiveness. Educators must now explore the prospects for educational design

that enable students to prepare for continuing learning and participation in the transformation of their personal lives, their careers, and their society.” In another study by Durocher & Goodman (1991), graduating seniors in the hospitality industry were questioned. Eighty-one percent of those seniors who responded to the survey expected to enter a training program upon graduation. In the same study by Durocher & Goodman, it was found that the average training program in the hospitality industry was 5.5 months long with high levels of variation among respondents. In a survey conducted by the American Society for Training & Development, 95 of the companies surveyed stated that learning occurred from formal in-house training (Benson, 1997). Only 71% stated that some of their training had been obtained in University programs (Benson, 1997). From 1993–1995, the percentage of companies indicating that they supported formal academic training grew from 52 to 72% (Benson, 1997).

According to Pavesic (1993), some hospitality programs are faulted as being too theoretical, and in other instances, they are criticized as being too industry focused and technically orientated. Thus, a standard foundation that industry seeks may not be provided to students.

Meeting the Needs of Industry: Educational Response

A unique approach that Cornell University School of Administration is taking to meet the demand of the recruiting and job market is to require a freshman level “principles of management” course. In this course, freshman students are required to create a “real life” business plan and then implement the plan. Along with labs

where they actually research, plan and implement business plans, they are also required to attend lectures by the instructors who are called consultants. This course actually helps students learn through a “real world” experience (Fitzgerald & Cullen, 1991). Cornell University is calling their Business Group Experience an experimental learning course. The University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) has developed innovative projects that set UW-Stout apart from others in the field, including its comprehensive lab management program. Students are required to work in and manage two campus-dining facilities. According to Darrell VanLoenen, program director of the Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management program at the UW-Stout, “This real-world environment gives them the opportunity to put their skills and knowledge to the test, to learn from their mistakes and celebrate their accomplishments” (Crockett, 2002).

To continue to satisfy the basic purpose of hospitality education, curricula needs to be driven by current industry needs. Students need to depend on timely curriculum to form their preparation (Reigel, 1995). According to Kluge (1996), information technology in the hospitality curriculum will be required to be sure that the skills students obtain during their studies will prepare them for a career in hospitality.

According to Crockett (2002), Darrell VanLoenen predicts that academic programs will be increasingly driven by technology and curriculum will need to keep pace with change as they are looking toward the future of educational delivery systems. At the UW-Stout, all incoming freshman will receive a laptop computer. “We’re one of just a few schools in the country to provide laptops to freshman,”

says VanLoenen. "It's a huge undertaking, but our goal is eventually to have a completely wireless campus by 2005" (Crockett, 2002).

Industrial Expectations of Hospitality Education

A 2001 National Restaurant Association report cited technological changes as six of the top 10 trends affecting the restaurant industry by the year 2011 (Klassen, 2001). According to Mark Hamilton, director of the Technology Research and Education Center at the University of Houston's Conrad N. Hilton College, "Changes in technology make it incumbent upon hospitality education to provide students with the basic knowledge, skill and attitude necessary to be effective in this environment,"(Klassen, 2001). Today's hospitality industry comprises a growing number of regionally and globally dispersed multi-unit firms. The increasingly complex nature of how these firms are organized, along with the continuous state of change and market uncertainty in all sectors of the business environment, create a situation that requires constant learning for all managers (Cho, Schmelzer, 2000). To address the need for re-educating managers in the hospitality industry, a conceptual model is presented, which combines critical thinking, collaborative learning and just-in-time (JIT) education, tools that managers need to be successful in the workplace (Cho, Schmelzer,2000). Another concept that is similar to JIT is the use of distance education tools, to deliver timely and contemporary concepts to traditional and non-traditional students.

In the 1998 study completed by Breiter & Clements, the top three skills that were deemed important by hospitality recruiters of new graduates were; leadership

skills, managerial communications and, employee relations (Breiter & Clements, 1998). According to the same study by Breiter & Clements (1998), they stated that as educators plan the program curricula of the future, they must develop ways to prepare students to be innovators of the future while providing key concepts that industry demands. They predict that excellent human and conceptual skills will be very important into the 21st century.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature finds that industry is seeking a definitive skill set that is enabling and productive for the various elements of the hospitality and tourism industry. The literature also defines the need to change content in hospitality education to keep pace with industry. New financial issues in higher education find that programs with lower enrollments are merged into business or other programs while those that survive look for ways to offer contemporary education supporting the industry they serve.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized secondary data and compared two years of research regarding employer's perspective of hospitality education and associated skills needed by industry.

Profile of Study

The potential employers of hospitality education graduates were deemed to be the population to survey by the researchers. Employers send their recruiters to college campuses search of qualified graduates, thus corporate sponsored recruiters maintain perfect knowledge regarding demanded skills sets by industry and their respective employers.

Secondary Data Defined

The data selected for this study was secondary data collected in a longitudinal manner. The two studies were similar from a skill set component but maintained little difference in supporting questions.

Data Collection: Study #1 and Study #2

The methods for this study are quantitative. A single page survey was given to participants to fill out and return in a longitudinal format. The instrument included a list of workplace skills that participants were asked to rate importance.

Participants were also asked to determine where those skills are best learned.

They were asked to choose between an educational setting and a work setting.

Study #1

The first study distributed 66 questionnaires to hospitality recruiters participating in a career conference. They were asked to fill out the survey and mail it back. Out of the 66 surveys distributed to these recruiters, 48 were returned. Of the 48 respondents 52% were males, 44% were females and 4% were omits.

Respondents were asked to indicate their age grouping. Of the 48 respondents 48% were between the ages of 18–34 years, 52% were between the ages of 35–64 years and 0% omits. With regards to the respondent's level of education, 14.6% had some college education, 56.3% were college graduates, and 16.7% had post graduate education, while 10.4% had Master's/Doctorate degree.

Study #2

The second study distributed 120 questionnaires to hospitality recruiters. The return rate of this survey was 83% out of 120 surveys. The respondents were asked to identify their gender. Of the 83 respondents 36% were males, 49% were females and 14% were omits. Respondents were asked to indicate their age

grouping. Of the 83 respondents 65% were between the ages of 18–34 years, 25% were between the ages of 35–64 years and 10% were omits. With regard to the respondents level of education, 13% had some college education, 61% were college graduates, 10% had post graduate education, 10% had Masters/Doctorate Degree and 6% were omits.

Combined, 186 recruiters were surveyed, with a combined return rate of 70.4% with 131 total returned surveys.

Research Design

This research project was designed to compare studies and identify the skills that are perceived as important by recruiters. To develop an application model and, for comparative purposes only, this study modeled the University of Wisconsin-Stout's (UW-Stout) Hospitality & Tourism Management Program to the collected data. The measure proposed will satisfy the question if this program compares to or exceeds the needs of industry from a curricular perspective and is the hospitality program meeting the needs of the employers. Simply stated, is hospitality education offering students the skill set they need to be successful in the hospitality management field?

Instrument

The researchers for the two studies that were conducted created a modified version of a survey that was conducted by Brieter and Clements (1998) to assess the skills that are perceived as important by hospitality recruiters. Specifically, the

survey was modified to address the perceived importance of 18 skill sets that graduates need to have and then identify where those skills are best learned, either in an educational setting or on the job after graduation. The survey asked the participants to rank the skills on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important. Questions relating to experience and level of education of the participants were also included to provide background information on the recruiter participants.

The instrument also included nine agree/disagree questions, open-ended questions and demographic questions. In review of the research documents, there were no identifying marks or controlling numbers on the surveys that could identify the participants.

In review of researcher notes, the direct purpose of these two studies was to determine the skills that are perceived as important for graduates of the Hospitality Management programs. The goal was to learn from a recruiters perspective where needs are, where gaps exist and areas in need of modification to meet the needs of industry.

Statistical Analysis

A statistical analysis was performed on the two data bases using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences: SPSS. Frequencies, means, and comparative statistics were used to meet the objectives of the study.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the data was collected in the methods identified to this researcher. It is also assumed that all controls, surveys and methods used were managed in an appropriate way as defined by the primary researchers. This researcher did not participate in the collection of data for either study.

Summary

The methods used in this study compared secondary data collected in a longitudinal method over a period of two years. The focus of the study was to determine key skill sets required by industry and then compared to existing hospitality educational programs. An analysis was made to determine if the skills are being presented in program curriculum to enable students to meet current skill trends.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of this comparative study are presented in this chapter. The two identified data bases were compared to understand which hospitality skills are best learned in an academic setting or which skill set is best learned while employed. The skill list came from the Breiter and Clements (1998) research, which identified the typical post graduate skill sets demanded by industry.

Overview

Analysis of the data presented specific markers of what skill topic is best learned and by location. The findings indicate that there is a difference in what hospitality education offers and what industry demands. Industry indicated that more skills on the survey are best learned at the work place. A smaller list of skills are left for education indicating that industry is willing to train at higher levels than in the past. The literature supported the theory that industry is assuming a more dynamic role in educating the employee in a post graduation perspective. Education may need to enhance curricular offerings to keep with industrial demand.

The data showing the skills in order of importance from the first study are shown on the first table. (Table 4.1) The skills were ranked on their importance on a scale of 1 – 5, 5 being the most important. There were 48 recruiters that ranked the skills according to importance of each skill. The importance of these skills was determined by the recruiters and shows how important each skill is to industry.

N=48

Table 4.1

Skills ranked by importance from Study 1	
Skill	Mean
Leadership	4.7
Staffing	4.6
Managerial Communications	4.5
Other: Problem Resolution	4.5
Employee Relations	4.4
Other: Supervision	4.3
Employee Training	4.3
Operational Controls	4.3
Guest Services	4.3
Forecasting & Budgeting	4.2
Sales Techniques	4.1
Other: Internship	4.0
F & B Management	4.0
Computer Applications	3.7
Marketing	3.3
Rooms Division Management	3.3
Development Planning	3.2
Hospitality Law	3.2
Strategic Planning	3.0
Research Skills	2.1
Tourism Promotion	2.1

In the second study, the skills were also ranked by importance of each skill, and the results are shown in Table 4.2. N=83

Table 4.2

Skills ranked by importance from Study 2.	
Skill	Mean
Employee Relations	4.7
Leadership	4.7
Guest Services	4.5
Other: Conflict Management	4.5
Staffing	4.5
Employee Training	4.4
Other: Supervision Techniques	4.4
Managerial Communications	4.3
Food & Beverage Management	4.0
Operational Controls	4.0
Forecasting & Budgeting	3.9
Sales Techniques	3.8
Computer Applications	3.7
Other: Field Experience	3.6
Strategic Planning	3.5
Marketing	3.4
Rooms Division Management	3.1
Hospitality Law	3.0
Research Skills	2.8
Tourism Promotion	2.7
Development Planning	2.6

In the second table (Table 4.2), there were 83 respondents that ranked the skills by importance, as in the first study, these skills were ranked on a scale of 1–5, 5 being the highest or most important. Table 4.3 is a combined average of importance of both studies. There were a total of 131 respondents included in the combined survey, therefore, the skills are rated in both studies and reflect a average of both, thereby showing a longitudinal study from both studies. N=131

Table 4.3

Study 1 & 2 Combined	
Skill	Mean
Leadership	4.7
Employee Relations	4.6
Other: Problem Resolutions	4.5
Staffing	4.5
Employee Training	4.4
Guest Services	4.4
Managerial Communications	4.4
Operational Controls	4.2
Other: Internship	4.2
F & B Management	4.0
Forecasting & Budgeting	4.0
Other: Supervision	4.0
Sales Techniques	3.9
Computer Applications	3.7
Marketing	3.3
Rooms Division Management	3.2
Strategic Planning	3.2
Hospitality Law	3.1
Development Planning	2.9
Research Skills	2.5
Tourism Promotion	2.4

Once the skills were ranked in order of importance, the second objective was to determine where the skills were best learned, either on the job or in an educational setting. The results from the first study are shown in Table 4.4 and reflect a percentage of respondents that felt that the skills were best learned in an educational setting. There were 48 respondents in the first study. The importance of these percentages is directly linked to where the skills should be learned. Once the skills are determined to be best learned in an educational setting, the curriculum can be adjusted to reflect the important skills. N=48.

Table 4.4

Study 1	
Skill	At School
Research Skills	.81
Hospitality Law	.76
Tourism Promotion	.71
Strategic Planning	.69
Marketing	.67
Forecasting & Budgeting	.63
Development Planning	.63
Computer Applications	.63
Rooms Division Management	.58
F & B Management	.50
Operational Controls	.50
Sales Techniques	.46
Leadership	.40
Managerial Communications	.40
Staffing	.35
Employee Training	.31
Employee Relations	.27
Guest Services	.19

The results from the second study are shown in Table 4.5. These skills are again ranked in order of importance. There were 83 respondents in the second study; therefore, the percentages are based on those 83 respondents.

N=83

Table 4.5

Study 2	
Skill	At School
Hospitality Law	.89
Research Skills	.88
Development Planning	.80
Computer Applications	.80
Tourism Promotion	.71
Strategic Planning	.67
Marketing	.59
Forecasting & Budgeting	.53
Operational Controls	.47
Employee Training	.41
Sales Techniques	.40
Rooms Division Management	.37
F & B Management	.31
Managerial Communications	.28
Leadership	.20
Employee Relations	.16
Guest Services	.16
Staffing	.11

Table 4.6 shows a combined average of the two studies. The 131 respondents were compiled to show the average importance of where the skills were learned on this table.

The skill which was determined to be the most important to be learned while attending a formal hospitality education program was Research Skills, with an average of 93% of the 131 respondents from a combined total of both studies. The second most important was Hospitality Law with 89% of the respondents indicating that this should be learned while attending a formal educational program. The third, the most important skill to learn while attending school was Tourism Promotions with 79% of the respondents feeling that this was an important skill to be learned while attending college.

The skills the respondents felt were the least important to be learned while attending an educational program include Employee Relations (19%), Guest Services (18%), and Staffing (18%). The respondents felt that these skills were best to be trained while on the job by an overwhelming 81%.

Table 4.6

Skills ranked by importance of that should be learned while at school Study 1 & 2 Combined	
Skill	At School
Research Skills	.93
Hospitality Law	.89
Tourism Promotion	.79
Computer Applications	.69
Strategic Planning	.67
Development Planning	.65
Marketing	.61
Forecasting & Budgeting	.55
Operational Controls	.44
Rooms Division Management	.43
Sales Techniques	.39
F & B Management	.38
Employee Training	.33
Managerial Communications	.27
Leadership	.25
Employee Relations	.19
Guest Services	.18
Staffing	.18

Results of the Comparative Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the comparative study. The results define skills as needed by industry and where these skills are best learned. According to the findings, the top 10 skills that employers want prospective employees to have include: Leadership, Employee Relations, Problem Resolution, Staffing, Employee Training, Guest Services, Managerial Communications, Operational Controls, Internship and Food and Beverage Management. (See table 4.7)

Table 4.7

Top ten skills as determined by results of Study 1 & 2 Combined.	
Skill	Mean
Leadership	4.7
Employee Relations	4.6
Other: Problem Resolutions	4.5
Staffing	4.5
Employee Training	4.4
Guest Services	4.4
Managerial Communications	4.4
Operational Controls	4.2
Other: Internship	4.2
F & B Management	4.0

Out of these skills identified to be the most important by recruiters, approximately 45 percent indicated that these skills were better learned while on

the job. The highest number (44%) of recruiters felt that Operational Controls should be learned while attending an educational setting. The remainder of the skills deemed important ranked less than 38% by recruiters and were best learned while pursuing their formal education in the hospitality field.

It is the consensus of the top 10 skills recruiters that the following skills should be learned while in the educational environment: Research skills, Hospitality Law, Tourism Promotion, Computer Applications, Strategic Planning, Development Planning, Marketing, Forecasting & Budgeting, Operational Controls and Rooms Division Management. (See Table 4.8)

Table 4.8

Top ten skills that should be learned while at school Study 1 & 2 Combined	
Skill	At School
Research Skills	.93
Hospitality Law	.89
Tourism Promotion	.79
Computer Applications	.69
Strategic Planning	.67
Development Planning	.65
Marketing	.61
Forecasting & Budgeting	.55
Operational Controls	.44
Rooms Division Management	.43

Comparing these findings to the current Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management Program at the UW-Stout, there is no formal course to address the most important skill of research. While there is research involved in most college course assignments, this may be a skill that is lacking within the curriculum in this particular program. The second skill is Hospitality Law. UW-Stout maintains eight credits in law and related law courses in the Hospitality and Tourism undergraduate program. The third important technical skill that that should be learned while attending school is Tourism Promotion. Again, the UW-Stout has no formal class that is dedicated completely to learning this identified skill set. Computer Applications is ranked fourth on the list of most important skills. It is presented for a mere two-credit requirement during the entire 4-year program plan of the Hospitality and Tourism undergraduate degree at UW-Stout.

Considering the recent introduction of laptop computers at UW-Stout for all students it would only underscore that the UW-Stout hospitality curriculum will need to be modified to accommodate student's ability to use technology and educational delivery of industry concepts from a technological standpoint.

The next two skills in the structured hierarchy are Strategic and Development Planning. Once again, compared to the UW-Stout Hospitality and Tourism Program, there are no set courses in the current program to specifically address these skill, yet some courses may in process deliver related content. The course titled Hospitality Marketing and Sales provides basic foundations regarding this skill. The questions remains unanswered as to whether or not one course is sufficient.

Less than 50% of the recruiters feel that the other skills should be learned in the educational setting. With the majority of skills that are deemed as important to recruiters being best learned on the job, is there a need for a narrow specialized undergraduate program. It is possible that industry is seeking all-new employment candidates that possess skill sets unlike the previous 30 years of hospitality education.

Respondent Demographics

In addition to the requested importance of the skills, respondents were asked to answer some demographic questions about themselves. One of the questions was to indicate if they were male or female, Table 4.9 provides a breakdown of the number of both males and females from each study.

Table 4.9

Gender	Study 1 n=48	Study 2 n=83
Male (4% omits)	52	36
Female (14% omits)	44	49

In review of the results of the surveys, an average of 97% of recruiters reported having at least some college education. While they did not report on what their major was while attending college, they did indeed report that they had attended. In the first study, 98% of the recruiters reported having at least some college education, while in the second study, only 94% reported that they had any

college education. From the results, the study indicates that the number of recruiters that has some form of formal education was down 4% from the previous year's study. If this continues and is observed as a trend, education may not be perceived as important to future recruiters. While 4% less of the recruiters have formal education in the second study, they rated the skills they find as important relatively similar to the results from the first study which reported that 4% more of the recruiters had some formal education. The breakdown of the recruiter's educational level is listed in Table 4.10. There are 5% more college graduates in the second study and there are 7% fewer post graduate students in the second study.

Table 4.10

Level of Education	Study 1 n=48	Study 2 n=83	Combined n=131
Some College	15%	13%	14%
College Graduates	56%	61%	59%
Post Graduate	17%	10%	14%
Master's/Doctorate	10%	10%	10%

2-Year Program vs. 4-Year Program

When looking at educational delivery style, the recruiters were asked if they felt that a two-year hospitality degree was equal to a four-year university degree. Combining results from both studies, an average of 87.3% of the polled recruiters

felt that a two-year degree was not equal to a four-year degree. (See Table 4.11) However, the second study indicated that more of the recruiters felt like a two-year degree is becoming more equal to a four-year degree than in the previous study. These findings present a view that the two-year degree is becoming equal to the four-year degree for hospitality students. If this trend continues to bridge this gap, employers will eventually find that a two-year degree is comparable to that of a four-year degree. Four-year universities must adjust their curriculum to rise back to a higher stature. Goodman & Sprague (1991) predict that hospitality education is in danger of vanishing; however, if the educational institutions adjust their curriculum to reflect the changing needs of today's employers, the specialty education can be rebuilt.

Table 4.11

Results of the question if a 2 year degree is equal to a 4r year degree		
	Study 1 n=48	Study 2 n=83
Agree	10.9%	14.50%
Disagree	89.10%	85.50%

Average 87.3

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The direct purpose of the individual studies was to determine the skills that are perceived as important for graduates of the Hospitality Management programs. The goal was to learn from a recruiter's perspective where needs are, where gaps exist and areas in need of modification to meet the needs of industry. With the knowledge learned as a result of those two studies, the purpose of this study was to utilize the information from those studies and develop a model to compare courses to that can help to evaluate if the current curriculum is teaching the skills that are being found important by today's recruiters.

This study was designed to take the identified skills that are perceived as important for hospitality students to have to be successful in the hospitality industry. Secondly, this study looked at where these skills were best learned, either on-the-job or in formal educational settings. Finally, the study made a comparison from the studies and the current hospitality curriculum and identified potential areas within the educational hospitality programs that could be updated to bridge the gap between what employers are demanding of today's graduates and the educational programs are teaching using a model created for this study.

Of the graduating seniors that were questioned in the study by Durocher & Goodman (1991), eighty-one percent of those seniors who responded to the survey expected to enter a training program upon graduation of their hospitality education program. In the same study by Durocher & Goodman, it was found that the average training program in the hospitality industry was 5.5 months long with high

levels of variation among respondents. The question that surfaces is whether or not companies will continue to offer intensive training programs to new college recruits. The current trend is to cut back on training budgets according to the Top Ten Trends for 2004. The analysis points to new employee competency and workplace performance and what will be expected upon being hired. How will the hospitality employee expectations change of the training programs that they will enter upon being hired to a new company? Hospitality education must focus on the fact that training budgets are being cut and make sure there is a balance of essential skills and the skills industry desires hospitality graduates to possess, which they may not be preparing students. Industry may seek new outlets to find competent employees meeting operational and administrative needs.

In addition to corporate budget limitations, there are also severe budget constraints that universities must operate under. Because of new budgetary constraints for both industry and education, it is more imperative that education refine a focus on the relevance of each course that is being offered today in the educational setting. Partnerships between education and the industries they serve is extremely important as budgets cut expansion while demand grows for competent qualified staff or educated students. In a survey conducted by the American Society for Training & Development, approximately 95 of the companies surveyed stated that learning occurred from formal in-house training (Benson, 1997). Only 71% stated that some of their training had been obtained in University programs (Benson, 1997). If the skill sets are more closely directed to the

important skills and if industry has more input on the educational programs, there will be less duplication of training the skill sets that are needed for graduates.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate two existing studies regarding skill content. The studies surveyed recruiters on a number of skills and asked them to rank them for importance and to identify where those skills were best learned.

The four main objectives for this study were to assess:

1. Identify the skills that hospitality recruiters perceive as being important for success in the hospitality industry.
2. Identify where the perceived important skills are best learned--either on the job or in an educational setting.
3. Identify whether or not skills that are deemed as best learned in an educational setting are being addressed in the current hospitality and tourism programs.
4. Model the skills needed by industry that education must address in curriculum.

The review of the literature offered an overview of issue concerns surrounding the hospitality profession. Throughout the views from the recruiters were given to provide industry input, review of scholarly journals provided views from educational perspectives and the results of the studies have indicated that the hospitality industry is changing very rapidly and is demanding that the educational requirements change to meet the needs of today's industry. The need for

evaluation is critical as research has indicate that specialty degree program such as hospitality and tourism may be in jeopardy becoming more of a generalized business degree or simply merged into business programs as a concentration.

The first objective of this study was to identify the skills that hospitality recruiters perceive as being important for success in the hospitality industry. This objective was met by this study by using the data from previous studies. The results from those studies indicated the importance of 18 skills that they found to be important for post graduate students to have once they complete their specialized education. The lists of skills listed in order of importance are presented in table 3 in chapter four of this study.

The second objective of this study was to identify where the perceived important skills are best learned--either on-the-job or in an educational setting. This objective was achieved by having the survey respondents identify whether the skills were best learned on-the-job or in an educational setting. Once they indicated, the collective totals were divided into the total number of surveys and were given a percentage of importance. For comparison reasons, the totals were combined and each skill was given a percentage of importance based on the total number of responses. The skills were ranked in order of most important to be learned in an educational setting and also to be learned on-the-job. These skills are presented in this study in chapter four in Table 4.6.

After identification of the important skills and where the skills are best learned according to the results of the surveys, a comparison was made to UW-Stout's Hospitality and Tourism curriculum as an example application. Hospitality

management programs such as UW-Stout can utilize the results of this study and evaluation tools to identify gaps in curricular offerings and adjust content and methods to meet contemporary industry needs. The comparison of the results to a hospitality program curriculum outlines the third objective of this study. The objective was to identify whether or not skills that are deemed as best learned in an educational setting are being addressed in the current hospitality and tourism programs.

Finally, the fourth objective to make a model that will help identify the gaps in hospitality programs and help them incorporate those skills needed by industry into the educational programs. This model takes the important skills and gives educators the ability to identify the importance of each skill as ranked by industry and incorporate any changes that are found into the curriculum. A model has been created to help in this comparison, it is presented in Appendix D. This model can assist educators in determining if the important skills for graduates to have upon graduation are being included in hospitality specific courses and to which level the skill is being included in the course.

Appendix E presents an example of this model and how it can be used to evaluate a course. This model compared the curriculum to a laboratory course called Quantity Food Production or QFP. The first thing that needs to be done when using this model is to determine if all of the skills are relevant to the specific course. In QFP, there were two of the skills that were not applicable to the subject matter of the course. The two courses that were not applicable are Hospitality Law and Rooms Division Management. Since they do not pertain to this subject matter

of this course, they are deemed to be non-applicable or N/A. Once the skills which are applicable are identified, the list is reviewed and indications are noted if the particular skill is being taught in the course of study. Out of the applicable 16 skills, only 1 skill, Research Skills, was not taught during the course. The total of skills being taught is divided by the total number of relevant skills; the total is a percentage of the skills that are being taught during this course. In this example, 94 percent of the skills were being taught in the course. The next part of this model examines how intensive each skill is taught during the course. The instructor will rate the amount of content that the course teaches on a scale of 1 – 5, 5 being the most intensive training for a particular skill. Once the level of intensity is rated by the instructor, the intensity level can be compared to the level of importance and reviewed for similarities, which will provide a guide of the appropriate level of that particular skill are being taught in the course. The most important skill of Leadership was rated a 4.7 (See Table 4.3 in Chapter 4). In the combined totals of what recruiters felt as important, QFP was rated to have an intensity level of 4. This indicated that the skill was closely being taught and is a near match to the skill level important for graduates to have. Another example is Sales Techniques. While rated an importance of 3.9 by recruiters, it was ranked by the instructor to only have a rating of level 2 on intensity in the QFP course. Therefore, a comparison of the skill and incorporation of more Sales Techniques in the course raises it to the expectations of the recruiters.

The second example of utilizing the comparative model is found in Appendix F. Although similar to the QFP example, it is a non-lab based class. A comparison

of the importance of the skills from Table 4.3 in chapter 4, you will find that Lodging Administration is consistent with the skills that are deemed to be important by recruiters. The course as rated by the instructor teaches 100 percent of the relevant skills and is comparable on the level of importance of each skill. Because this course was deemed to provide training for 15 out of 15 relevant courses, and each of the skills were rated very similar to importance by the instructor to what the recruiters felt as the importance level, this class would need no modifications to help achieve the overall goal of the educational program to teach the skills important for students to be successful in today's competitive job market.

Recommendation for Education

The results of the comparative study indicate that Leadership was the number one skill that employers felt was important for hospitality students to possess. Employee Relations ranked second, while Problem Resolution ranked third. Recruiters responded that these three skills should be learned while on-the-job while others were best learned while attending formal education. The skills that were best learned while in an educational setting were Research Skills 93%, Hospitality Law 89%, Tourism Promotions 79%, Computer Applications 69% and Strategic Planning with 67% (see Table 4.6 in chapter 4). While reviewing similar hospitality and tourism program to compare courses and content, many of the programs indeed address these constructs, concepts and topics in present curriculum. Educators seemingly need to consider the level of importance that recruiters are indicating that softer skills such as Leadership and thought based

skills like Strategic Planning are more important than topical technical skills. The question that surfaces centers on hospitality programs adjusting their curriculum to accommodate the need for these new skill sets in their programs. By university and college and department requirements, most programs undergo evaluation and curriculum review on a scheduled basis. In higher education the cycle can be as short as one year or as long as ten years. Research underscores that most curricular content change occurs in the instructional approach to a course as opposed to developing new courses.

Hospitality educators must recognize that industry skill sets are rapidly changing. Hospitality education must provide the tools industry expects for students or they face being ignored by industry. Studies such as this review or similar reviews can assist in the development or modification of curriculum that meets the students and industry needs. If educators utilize the model presented in this study, they can clearly compare the skills that are important for graduates entering a dynamic hospitality and tourism workplace. It is recommended that this study and similar studies be conducted yearly to enable curricular change from a micro concept perspective to a macro change based on industry need. A study and curricular review will enable students seeking employment, create value in program and its curriculum and enable the re-development of hospitality programs.

The industry that hospitality and tourism serves plays an important roll in defining the constructs of hospitality education. Educators need to rely on the practical needs of industry while serving the long term educational needs of the students. There must be forward thinking instructors and administrators that do not

get stuck in the past and not incorporate demanded skills into their classroom curriculum. If this combined effort is done on a regular basis, there will be continuous improvement of the hospitality courses and therefore, the overall program will be more successful on teaching tomorrow's hospitality professionals.

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APPENDIX A

Skills ranked by importance from study 1 & 2 and combined. Study 1 n=48, Study 2 n=83 Combined Study n=131 All ranked on a scale of 1 – 5, 5 being the most important.

Study 1		Study 2		Study 1 & 2 Combined	
Skill	Mean	Skill	Mean	Skill	Mean
Leadership	4.7	Employee Relations	4.7	Leadership	4.7
Staffing	4.6	Leadership	4.7	Employee Relations	4.6
Managerial Communications	4.5	Guest Services	4.5	Other: Problem Resolutions	4.5
Other: Problem Resolution	4.5	Other: Conflict Management	4.5	Staffing	4.5
Employee Relations	4.4	Staffing	4.5	Employee Training	4.4
Other: Supervision	4.3	Employee Training	4.4	Guest Services	4.4
Employee Training	4.3	Other: Supervision Techniques	4.4	Managerial Communications	4.4
Operational Controls	4.3	Managerial Communications	4.3	Operational Controls	4.2
Guest Services	4.3	Food & Beverage Management	4.0	Other: Internship	4.2
Forecasting & Budgeting	4.2	Operational Controls	4.0	F & B Management	4.0
Sales Techniques	4.1	Forecasting & Budgeting	3.9	Forecasting & Budgeting	4.0
Other: Internship	4.0	Sales Techniques	3.8	Other: Supervision	4.0
F & B Management	4.0	Computer Applications	3.7	Sales Techniques	3.9
Computer Applications	3.7	Other: Field Experience	3.6	Computer Applications	3.7
Marketing	3.3	Strategic Planning	3.5	Marketing	3.3
Rooms Division Management	3.3	Marketing	3.4	Rooms Division Management	3.2
Development Planning	3.2	Rooms Division Management	3.1	Strategic Planning	3.2
Hospitality Law	3.2	Hospitality Law	3.0	Hospitality Law	3.1
Strategic Planning	3.0	Research Skills	2.8	Development Planning	2.9
Research Skills	2.1	Tourism Promotion	2.7	Research Skills	2.5
Tourism Promotion	2.1	Development Planning	2.6	Tourism Promotion	2.4

APPENDIX B

Skills ranked by importance to be learned in an educational setting from study 1 & 2 and combined. Study 1 n=48, Study 2 n=83 Combined Study n=131.

Study 1		Study 2		Study 1 & 2 Combined	
Skill	At School	Skill	At School	Skill	At School
Research Skills	.81	Hospitality Law	.89	Research Skills	.93
Hospitality Law	.76	Research Skills	.88	Hospitality Law	.89
Tourism Promotion	.71	Development Planning	.80	Tourism Promotion	.79
Strategic Planning	.69	Computer Applications	.80	Computer Applications	.69
Marketing	.67	Tourism Promotion	.71	Strategic Planning	.67
Forecasting & Budgeting	.63	Strategic Planning	.67	Development Planning	.65
Development Planning	.63	Marketing	.59	Marketing	.61
Computer Applications	.63	Forecasting & Budgeting	.53	Forecasting & Budgeting	.55
Rooms Division Management	.58	Operational Controls	.47	Operational Controls	.44
F & B Management	.50	Employee Training	.41	Rooms Division Management	.43
Operational Controls	.50	Sales Techniques	.40	Sales Techniques	.39
Sales Techniques	.46	Rooms Division Management	.37	F & B Management	.38
Leadership	.40	F & B Management	.31	Employee Training	.33
Managerial Communications	.40	Managerial Communications	.28	Managerial Communications	.27
Staffing	.35	Leadership	.20	Leadership	.25
Employee Training	.31	Employee Relations	.16	Employee Relations	.19
Employee Relations	.27	Guest Services	.16	Guest Services	.18
Guest Services	.19	Staffing	.11	Staffing	.18

APPENDIX C

Skills ranked by importance to be learned on the job from study 1 & 2 and combined. Study 1 n=48, Study 2 n=83 Combined Study n=131.

Study 1		Study 2		Study 1 & 2 Combined	
Skill	On Job	Skill	On Job	Skill	On Job
Guest Services	.81	Staffing	.71	Guest Services	.74
Employee Training	.76	Employee Relations	.70	Staffing	.69
Employee Relations	.71	Guest Services	.67	Leadership	.64
Managerial Communications	.69	Leadership	.65	Managerial Communications	.63
Staffing	.67	Managerial Communications	.58	Employee Relations	.60
Hospitality Law	.63	F & B Management	.48	Employee Training	.60
Tourism Promotion	.63	Employee Training	.45	Sales Techniques	.51
Leadership	.63	Rooms Division Management	.43	F & B Management	.49
Sales Techniques	.58	Sales Techniques	.43	Rooms Division Management	.45
F & B Management	.50	Operational Controls	.41	Operational Controls	.45
Operational Controls	.50	Forecasting & Budgeting	.34	Tourism Promotion	.42
Rooms Division Management	.46	Strategic Planning	.25	Forecasting & Budgeting	.37
Forecasting & Budgeting	.40	Marketing	.20	Hospitality Law	.36
Computer Applications	.40	Tourism Promotion	.20	Marketing	.26
Development Planning	.35	Computer Applications	.13	Strategic Planning	.26
Marketing	.31	Development Planning	.12	Computer Applications	.26
Strategic Planning	.27	Hospitality Law	.08	Development Planning	.24
Research Skills	.19	Research Skills	.07	Research Skills	.12

APPENDIX D

Course Evaluation for Industry Demanded Skills

Course Title:				
Skill	Does Program Specifically Teach Skill? Y or N OR N/A	How intense is skill taught in course? On a scale of 1 – 5. (1 BEING NOT INTENSE AND 5 BEING MOST INTENSIVE)		Notes
Research Skills	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Hospitality Law	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Tourism Promotion	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Computer Applications	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Strategic Planning	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Development Planning	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Marketing	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Forecasting & Budgeting	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Operational Controls	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Rooms Division Management	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Sales Techniques	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
F & B Management	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Employee Training	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Managerial Communications	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Leadership	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Employee Relations	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Guest Services	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Staffing	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
TOTAL YES		TOTAL POSSIBLE	18	
TOTAL NO		SUBTRACT N/A		
TOTAL N/A		TOTAL REALIVENT TO COURSE	/	

APPENDIX E

Example 1 of model that can be used to evaluate if the skills being taught in class mirror the skills that are deemed as important by the industry.

Course Evaluation for Industry Demanded Skills

Course Title: Quantity Food Production (QFP)				
Skill	Does Program Specifically Teach Skill? Y or N OR N/A	How intense is skill taught in course? On a scale of 1 – 5. (1 BEING NOT INTENSE AND 5 BEING MOST INTENSIVE)		Notes
Research Skills	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		While research is done, it's not taught
Hospitality Law	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		Law is not applicable to this course
Tourism Promotion	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Computer Applications	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Strategic Planning	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Development Planning	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Marketing	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Forecasting & Budgeting	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Operational Controls	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Rooms Division Management	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		Not applicable to this course
Sales Techniques	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
F & B Management	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Employee Training	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Managerial Communications	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Leadership	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Employee Relations	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Guest Services	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
Staffing	Y N N/A	5 4 3 2 1		
TOTAL YES	15	TOTAL POSSIBLE	18	
TOTAL NO	1	SUBTRACT N/A	2	
TOTAL N/A	2	TOTAL REALIVENT TO COURSE	15/16	Teaching 94% of relevant skills in this course.

APPENDIX F

Example 2 of model that can be used to evaluate if the skills being taught in class mirror the skills that are deemed as important by the industry.

Course Evaluation for Industry Demanded Skills

Course Title: Lodging Administration				
Skill	Does Course Specifically Teach Skill? Y or N OR N/A	How intense is skill taught in course? On a scale of 1 – 5. (1 BEING NOT INTENSE AND 5 BEING MOST INTENSIVE)		Notes
Research Skills	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 4 <u>3</u> 2 1		
Hospitality Law	Y N <u>N/A</u>	5 4 3 2 1		No law in the admin of lodging
Tourism Promotion	Y N <u>N/A</u>	5 4 3 2 1		No promotion in admin of lodging
Computer Applications	<u>Y</u> N N/A	<u>5</u> 4 3 2 1		
Strategic Planning	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1		
Development Planning	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1		
Marketing	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 4 <u>3</u> 2 1		
Forecasting & Budgeting	<u>Y</u> N N/A	<u>5</u> 4 3 2 1		
Operational Controls	<u>Y</u> N N/A	<u>5</u> 4 3 2 1		
Rooms Division Management	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1		
Sales Techniques	Y N <u>N/A</u>	5 4 3 2 1		No sales in the admin side of lodging
F & B Management	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 4 <u>3</u> 2 1		
Employee Training	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1		
Managerial Communications	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1		
Leadership	<u>Y</u> N N/A	<u>5</u> 4 3 2 1		
Employee Relations	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1		
Guest Services	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 4 <u>3</u> 2 1		
Staffing	<u>Y</u> N N/A	5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1		
TOTAL YES	15	TOTAL POSSIBLE	18	
TOTAL NO	0	SUBTRACT N/A	3	
TOTAL N/A	3	TOTAL REALIVENT TO COURSE	15/18	100 % of relevant skills are being taught

