

INNOVATION IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN

Co-creating a Master Degree program
 with Industry leaders applying
 Action-Learning and Problem-Based
 Learning approaches: the case of the
 University Master Degree in Hotel Management

**LECTURERS PARTICIPATING
 IN THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM**
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 Dr. Albert Fornells | Mr. Jorge Peralta
 Dr. Ricard Santomá

MASTER
 University Master Degree
 in Hotel Management

INDUSTRY
 Leading hotel and hospitality related
 companies

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND FACULTY
 MHM Module leaders

STUDENTS
 International University graduates from
 different nationalities and backgrounds

- Shared interest in developing their career at the management level in the hospitality industry
- Passionate about hotel management
- Strong service vocation
- Open-minded

COMPETENCES OF THE MASTER

- > G01 Decision Making
- > T01 Leadership & Team Building
- > T02 Entrepreneurship
- > T03 Communication Skills
- > T04 Problem Solving
- > E01 Self-confidence in managerial decisions
- > E02 Hotel Industry know-how
- > E03 Financial Management
- > E04 Legal Issues
- > E05 Strategic Marketing
- > E06 Consumer Behaviour
- > E07 Advanced Operations
- > E08 Facility Management
- > E09 Human Resources
- > E10 ICT applied to the Hospitality Industry
- > E11 Innovation and Service Orientation

Description of the educational innovation

The MHM University Master program was designed using a **co-creative model involving industry leaders** in the field, and by applying the action learning (AL) / Problem-based learning (PBL) approaches. These approaches allow the students gain deeper insight into management issues and to their solutions. **Action Learning**, as described by Leonard (2015), is a platform for problem-solving and developing leadership skills that provides a series of disciplined steps to understand what we know and how we can learn about a problem to come up with innovative and tested solutions. **Problem-based learning** is an instructional method of experiential learning, that situates learning in complex-problem solving contexts. It differs from traditional instruction in that PBL engages the student in constructing knowledge and the teacher role moves from a knowledge provider towards a learning facilitator. It is a student-centred pedagogical method in which students learn by the process of solving an open-ended problem within a team. With PBL, students develop **problem-solving skills** and self-directed learning, together with **team-work practice** and flexible knowledge. The problems used are real cases facilitated by the MHM lecturer and the industry collaborator, they can be solved in multiple ways and require an integrated approach. Hmelo-Silver (2004:261) describe it as a technique that has the potential "to help students become reflective and flexible thinkers who can use knowledge to take action".

Each subject is linked to a **specific management challenge** that allows students to have direct contact with the real companies, sharing current challenges and concerns. The participation of the international tourism and hospitality related companies takes different forms: plenary lectures, workshops and visits.

THE INNOVATIVE
 STUDY PLAN IS AS FOLLOWS:



Furthermore, students have the opportunity to take part at an **operational week** which allows the students to immerse themselves in a hotel establishment for a short period of time with the aim of shadowing managers and of understanding what the strategic and operational decisions they face on a day to day basis are.

An **experiential learning** study trip to become acquainted with different hospitality models and exchange impressions with leading hospitality managers (takes place in Semester 1).

A **mentoring** program is offered throughout the course to prepare students for their curricular placement and provide them with tools and feedback to enhance their employability competences.

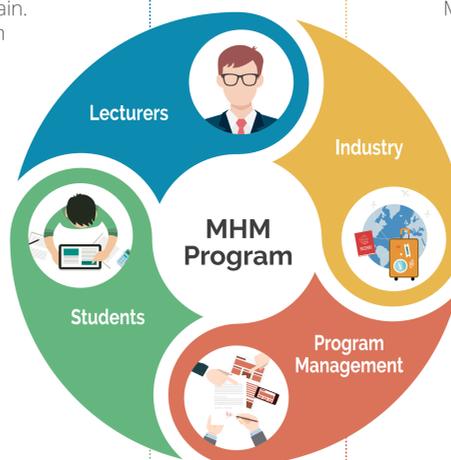
Reflection and evaluation

We have worked along with Ms. Victoria Flo, Financial Manager of Hilton Hotels & Resorts Spain. In the first phase, based on financial information, students have analyzed two hotels with totally different situations and presented their conclusions to the company as if they were consultants. Her feedback was really valuable in terms of the learning experience. In the second phase, the challenge was even greater; students had to value a hotel based on their own projections based on occupancy rate, prices or cost evolution. The learning process of our students changed completely in this approach, I am fully convinced of the benefits of this methodology for the students' learning process.

Dr. Pedro Aznar
 International Financial Management lecturer

It is a very complete program that covers all areas of management within the hotel industry and at the same time gives you the tools to develop leadership skills, in an international context. This program has allowed me to deepen understanding in the field of hospitality and has provided me with the knowledge and abilities I need to become a well-rounded professional in the industry. Focusing on real cases, partnering and working with different companies in the sector through projects along the year are the main attributes of the MHM program.

Ms. Teresa Roig
 MHM Student Class of 2015-2016



My feedback of the MHM program is very positive, because we could present our specific needs for a marketing plan to the students and they worked on detailed investigation and proposals that were very helpful for us during the creation of our new marketing plan for ME Ibiza. I understand that also for students the opportunity to elaborate a truly useful document for a real company is more interesting than just an invented work scenario.

Mr. René Hoeltschl
 General Manager | ME Ibiza - ME Madrid

Companies have presented real challenges to students. Overall it has been a very satisfactory educational experience. A few of the companies, such as ME Ibiza, have implemented the student's outcomes into their strategic plans. Some others have offered our students job opportunities after graduation. The model implies a thorough planning, coordination and evaluation to maximize the benefits for students, companies and lecturers in an open, collaborative environment with knowledge exchange. This implies an iterative process that enhances subsequent editions with the participation of all stakeholders.

Dr. Mónica Cerdán
 Director of Academic Master Degree Programs HTSI

