



Building blocks for a well-rounded tourism student

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Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the building blocks that need to be incorporated in tourism qualifications to produce well-rounded students. This study is grounded on the view that with the right set of knowledge, skills, and qualification, the doors to tourism employment can be opened. Many higher education institutions have established programmes and extended programmes to negotiate students' transition into higher education, and beyond. However, these higher education institutions (HEIs) face many challenges, due to the ever increasing student numbers that have nearly doubled in recent years; uneven quality; high student drop-out rate among first-generation students; and more recently, the 'fees must fall movement'.

Despite these challenges, higher education institutions are expected to remain engines for the development of human capital. Indeed, one of the purposes of higher education is to produce graduates who have skills that are highly regarded by employers and that enable these graduates to contribute to the social capital and the country's prosperity. Thus, the goal of this study is to investigate the existing building blocks, with a particular focus on the building blocks that the School of Tourism and Hospitality, in the Faculty of Management, at the University of Johannesburg uses to assist students in becoming well-rounded in relation to the tourism industry.

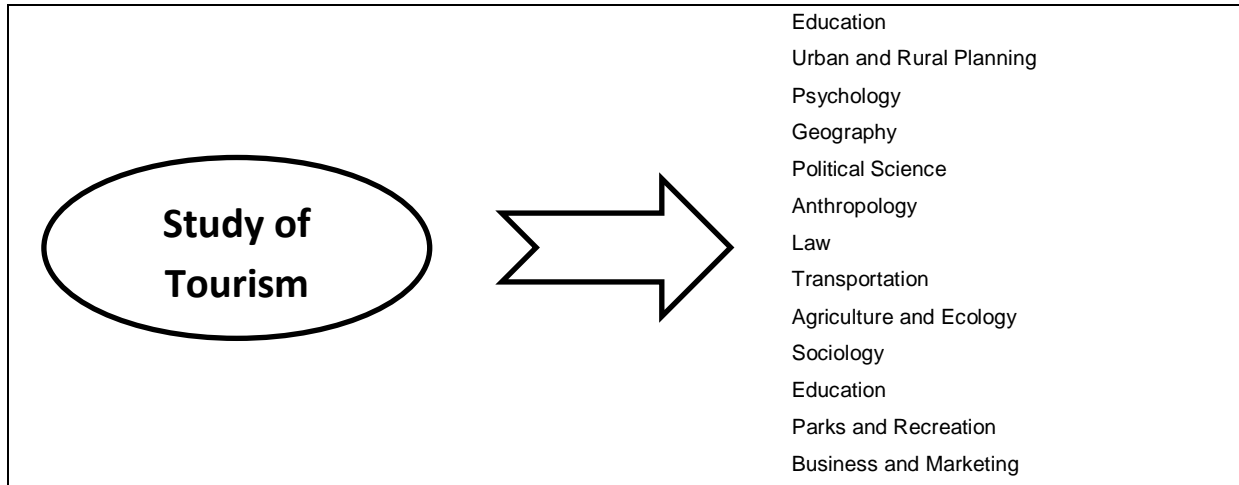
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Introduction

Researchers emphasise the need to view tourism not only as a business, but also as a system approach (Leiper 1979:400). What is evident in the tourism industry is that it involves more than the study of holiday-makers. The tourism industry is complex and therefore difficult to define. Indeed, tourism is a multi-disciplinary field of study; it involves input and support from various disciplines. This means that there is no overarching academic agreement on how to approach the study of tourism. Thus, tourism is not easily recognised as a subject because some analysts view it as an industry, while others consider it as a subject or process (Page & Connell, 2009). Additionally, academics argue that tourism is conceptually weak due to a lack of consensual laws or principles relating to the study of tourism.

Clearly, there is no universally-accepted definition of tourism because it is perspective-dependent, in that it could be viewed from a geographical, economic, physiological, social, or even a cultural perspective. All these perspectives will have different definitions and views on how to approach tourism. Figure 1 represents a framework for education. Jafari and Ritchie (1981) suggested how to appreciate the multi-disciplinary nature of the tourism industry and stressed the fact that tourism can be studied from the abovementioned different perspectives.

Figure 1: Framework for tourism education



Jafari & Ritchie (1981)

The tourism industry is indeed complex as it comprises of a variety of overlapping sectors. Similarly, higher education institutions have their own complexities which will now be discussed.

Higher Education Institutions in South Africa versus the tourism industry

Higher education has had to try to redress the social inequity resulting from the fact that students who enter its institutions are generally poorly prepared. Hence, the government has appealed to higher education to play a fundamental role in developing capacity, in order to offer greater support to first generation students. The latter are the first in their families to study at a higher education institution. Additionally, higher education institutions need to create innovative partnerships with businesses, the tourism industry, and communities so as to become more responsive and flexible in terms of curriculum development (Wakelin-Theron & Groenewald, 2004; National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2011; Council of Higher Education (CHE), 2013). It must be noted that this situation is not peculiar to South Africa; many higher education institutions around the world are under increased pressure to boost their effectiveness in order to enhance the quality of education (Morgan & Houghton, 2011). However, it must be stressed that tourism education is a relatively new discipline and that students believe that they will gain employment within the tourism industry which is said to have a critical-skills shortage and is characterised by limited research outputs and easy access (DHET, 2012).

Stakeholders from both the tourism industry and academia argue that higher education institutions should add unique values to students, besides imparting them with theoretical knowledge (Roberts, 2009; Ito, 2014). Students need to be equipped with technical, managerial, and personal skills to be able to function effectively within any tourism enterprise (Wakelin-Theron, 2015). Ferns' (2010) study on graduate employability, teaching staff, as well as employers' and tourism graduates' perceptions revealed that the traditional assessment methods used at higher institutions cannot adequately capture students' ability to apply generic skills in a practice-based environment. To date, many tourism qualifications have failed to achieve status parity, both nationally and internationally; generally, they have been undervalued both within and outside of academia. Given the increase in the global demand for future tourism leaders, higher education cannot afford to ignore the quality issues (Roberts, 2009).



Nevertheless, Abeysekera (2006) notes that work-integrated learning (WIL) is a costly exercise, because it implies additional staffing, travel and accommodation costs, and general administration to monitor students. Furthermore, class sizes do have an impact on the delivery of practical education and partnership agreements. However, additional building blocks have been identified, in an effort to assist student. These different types of building blocks – with unique values – are to be imparted in different education delivery methods. The latter include career services, active learning, internship, studentship, work-integrated learning, partnerships, and life-long learning. Each of these building blocks will now be discussed as part of the literature review.

Building blocks to assist students

Career services

Many higher education institutions have developed employability strategies and assist students with career development initiatives which are either stand-alone (Student Career Services) or integrated within a qualification (Rae, 2007). These institutions provide students with information, advice and guidance, as well as support in the form of search for work placement opportunities (Pegg, Waldock & Hendy-Isaac, 2012). Additional support is offered in terms of self-presentation and communication skills so as to develop self-confidence; graduate career guidance, access to the tourism industry, vocational or professional practitioners input, e.g. guest-speakers, and mentoring; access to and participation of higher education institutions and the tourism industry in professional career events, workshops, conferences, and networks (Kumar, 2007; Rae, 2007; McKeown & Lindorff, 2011); and assist students with career development and management. Kumar (2007:10) stresses the lack of a “single predetermined opportunity” that suits a student or graduate in every way; instead, there may be many choices that are suitable and possible.

Active learning

Active learning is a new concept related to problem/project-based learning (PBL). It is central to the development of self-directed learning and employability development. According to Prince (2004), active learning is linked to any structure that engages students in the learning process, meaningful learning activities, and deeper thinking about what they are doing. Prince (2004) identifies a number of elements of active learning which include traditional education practices, such as homework/assignments, practice, or activities that are introduced into the classroom. For Kapur (2012), active learning involves class discussions, so as to think and share, as well as written exercise, collaborative learning, class, games, and the traditional method of learning by teaching. Littlejohn and Watson (2004) stress that work-related, high-quality case studies, which apply general business skills within the tourism context, embrace active learning. It suffices to note that problem-based learning has received considerable attention as a means to increase students' knowledge, skills, and employability attributes. This is because it is deemed effective in developing students' analytical and problem-solving skills (Roberts, 2009; Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin & Zehrer, 2013).

Work-Based Learning / Internships / studentships

Littlejohn and Watson (2004) equate work-based learning to practical work experience, work placement, field of practicum, professional placement, cooperative education/learning, or experiential learning activities. However, small differences that set work-based learning apart have been identified. Work-based learning could also be regarded as work done as part of an academic programme, while still on campus, but which needs to be completed before graduation. Additional work-based learning helps to develop a broad range of life-skills – notably attitudes and standards that are in line with the individual's career aspiration (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004; Roberts, 2009; Akomaning, Voogt & Pieters, 2011). According to Wang and



Ryan (2007), most tourism students or graduates believe that it is advantageous to have work-based learning when seeking permanent employment in the tourism industry. In this regard, higher education institutions have started to promote comprehensive curricula which include practical experience in the form of internship programmes (Koc Yumusak, Ulukoy, Keilic & Toptas, 2014). Increasingly, higher education institutions value the role of practical training in their tourism qualifications and strive to develop efficient and effective internship programmes for students (Koc *et al.*, 2014). It suffices to note that internships are funded by government – in partnership with a higher education institutions. Internships aim at providing students with work experience, and assisting in increasing their likelihood to get long-term employment within a tourism-related sector (Koc, *et al.*, 2014). Internships also enable higher education institutions to work closely with the tourism industry. Some of the main benefits of internship placements are that students experience employment and, where appropriate, accept responsibility for the completion of tasks and the supervision of colleagues (Parlenthiran, Bhattarai, Geng & Deng, 2006; Richardson, 2009; Akomaning *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, through internships, students gain insight into management and are believed to improve their self-awareness, self-management, and self-confidence in solving problems. Work-based learning can take various forms, namely, studentship, work-integrated learning, internship and, lately, volunteering to assist students who cannot be placed in a work-based learning position. This is generally due to such factors as geographical location, exposure to the workplace, or simply the insufficiency of companies that are willing to assist. The next section discusses voluntourism work.

Voluntourism

Volunteer work is generally considered an altruistic activity where an individual or groups provide services without expecting financial compensation. Sometimes students do volunteering work by giving their time for a good cause, specifically in the tourism industry – hence the term voluntourism. Although students do not get paid, they develop skills and gain work experience. Holmes (2006) confides that students themselves have reported that they had benefitted from volunteer work and practical work-integrated learning within a tourism environment. Students further indicated that it had supported their research project and had enabled them to build contacts within the tourism industry.

Partnership agreements

Partners are also important, they enable higher education institutions to understand the tourism industry's needs in order to nurture its skills demand. Prokou (2008) underscores that partnerships improve curriculum innovation and bridge curricular gaps. Nonetheless, Akomaning *et al.* (2011) stresses that the tourism industry's views on collaboration, placement, duration, and assessment do not matter; however, they recognise that partnerships need to be strengthened. Strong partnerships with the tourism industry constitute a key differentiating factor for any higher education establishment. The status of the tourism industry will remain unchanged, unless this industry works closely with higher education institutions to develop highly-skilled managers (Rae, 2007; Roberts, 2009; Solnet, Robinson & Cooper, 2007; Koc *et al.*, 2014).

According to Ferns's (2010) study, the employer's voice is of significant importance as it enhances the status of higher education as a mechanism for addressing the needs of an increasingly globalised and knowledge-driven society (Ferns, 2010). Given the applied nature of the tourism industry, it is critical that the knowledge delivered to students be shared by higher education and the tourism industry, be it formally or informally. Examples of knowledge-sharing include guest lecturers speaking to students about tourism industry careers, products, challenges, and rewards from a specific sector, as well as students being given the opportunity to network with industry partners. To these can be added panel discussions that could take



place at workshops organised by the tourism industry or higher education institutions. Barrows and Johan (2008) emphasise that the delivery of quality education, applied research, and the development of strong ties with the tourism industry contribute to professionalism. High quality partnerships will produce graduates who will transform the tourism industry (Solnet *et al.*, 2007; Morgan & Houghton, 2011; Tymon, 2013). The primary objective of such partnerships is to enable the tourism industry to be actively involved in and to assist higher education, at the highest level or on an international scale, with the recruitment and placement of students – both before and after graduation (Roberts, 2009; Tymon, 2013). Committee members play a critical role in the continuous evaluation of the quality of the content of the curriculum that forms the basis of a tourism qualification. The tourism industry members also participate in a range of established partnership activities which take place at higher education institutions.

Moreover, partnerships with the tourism industry are also beneficial to academics in that they provide research and professional development opportunities through professional networks, industry fora and conferences, workshops, joint research projects, and management development programmes (Tymon, 2013). In this regard, ongoing engagement with the tourism industry is an integral component of higher education's strategy, vision, and mission. Indeed, building better partnerships helps to open new employment markets for graduates (Wang, Ayers & Huyton, 2010). In turn, improved partnerships provide employers with more information, in advance, on different types of graduates, and promote the connection between employers and higher education institutions (Wen, 2011). This results in improved graduate employment. The designing of an inclusive curriculum which would produce graduates with employability attributes depends on the strengthening of partnerships between the tourism industry and higher education (Cranmer, 2006; Zehrer & Mosenlechner, 2009). Attention will now be turned to lifelong learning as a career advancement initiative.

Lifelong learning

Graduate employability has become a concern for both the providers of educational services and the graduates who want to enter the contemporary world of work – which is characterised by rapid technological advances that have the potential to create a variety of jobs not yet thought of. This brings forward the concept of lifelong learning, which entails preparing graduates for a lifetime of change and development (Purcell, Wilton & Elias, 2007). The objective of a Learning Society is to utilise education and training as means of providing tourism-related solutions through the mixing of formal qualification and personal skills. In this regard, Andrews and Russell (2012) as well as Hartley (2011) stress the imperative for students to be equipped with advanced rather than basic IT skills, including digital literacy. Littlejohn and Watson (2004) cite rapidly changing social, economic, and political environments as the reason for a lifelong learning that enables individuals to remain competent. The initiation of the lifelong learning process has resulted in higher education gaining increased importance, which comes with far-reaching implications (Kruss, 2004; Zehrer & Mosenlechner, 2009; McKeown & Lindorff, 2011). As such, qualifications should be stimulated through the inputting of practical experience to be gained by introducing professional practices concurrently with or alternatively to studies. Such models require considerable organisation on the part of higher education. Furthermore, these models can only be implemented if both industry and higher education institutions recognise their ability to assist in solving existing problems (Zehrer & Mosenlechner, 2009). At the same time, the course could be stimulated through the input from students' practical work experience of the industry.

The length of study depends on the quality of higher education. It must be emphasised that lengthy courses delay students' entry into the world of work and diminish graduates' adaptability to the new environment (Reisner & Watson, 2010). Higher education is only a stage in the process of lifelong learning. The fact that schools only educate and partially prepare students for lifelong learning has a serious consequence for higher education (HESA,



2009, CHE, 2013). Hence, higher education qualifications should be designed to suit the needs of the labour market and support lifelong learning among local and international students (Reisner & Watson, 2010; Morgan & Houghton, 2011). However, the emphasis on skills has produced changes in the role of higher education. Tourism students have to keep up with the latest innovative developments within the tourism sector (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004; Strietska-Illina & Tessaring, 2005).

A greater achievement in the advancement of technological thinking would be to acquire the ability to look beyond specialist knowledge and adopt an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach to industry practice. Students' general knowledge should be stimulated and developed from school level. However, some authors believe that more exposure or openness to foreign cultures and knowledge of languages should also be taken into account (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004; Wang & Ryan, 2007). Courses relating to these aspects should afford students the opportunity to acquaint themselves with a foreign country and gain some insight into it, as part of their studies (Ferns, 2010; Ito, 2014). Hjalager (2003) notes that the market for student exchange programmes has increased and that these courses are among the most popular in the tourism industry which desperately needs qualified staff to mentor the exchange students. In this way, knowledge would then be extended as part of the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Littlejohn and Watson (2004) suggest four main categories of activities or events which contribute to achieving CPD: 1) work-based activities; 2) courses, seminars, and conferences; 3) self-directed and informal learning; and 4) personal activities outside the work environment (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004). All the above building blocks are highly regarded and recommended to students who study towards a tourism qualification. The discussion will now focus on the School of Tourism and Hospitality (STH) in Faculty of Management (FM) at the University of Johannesburg, in an endeavour to establish the types of building blocks used to support the tourism qualification.

The School of Tourism and Hospitality

The STH, which forms part of the Faculty of Management, is a leading institution focused on equipping students with qualifications and skills that are necessary in the tourism industry. It is an established, recognised, and credible institution. The STH has been in existence for more than four decades. It offers career-driven qualifications – with a unique combination of business insight, operational excellence, and people skills. Diplomas, degrees, and other postgraduate programmes are offered with the ultimate goal of equipping the industry with future fit tourism graduates. The STH has esteemed alumni and excellent industry partnerships. It does offer bursary support for eligible applicants. National and international partnerships provide excellent career prospects for students. Additionally, the STH has a link with tourism and hospitality schools in Europe and the United States of America, notably those at Ravensburg, Penn State, and New York University. Clearly, UJ tourism students have access to impressive study-abroad options which create an endless networking potential for students. Furthermore, the STH has 25 research associates from 19 universities that are either affiliates, or offer or support post-doctoral fellowships to promote academics. The current tourism management qualification is expected to provide more clarity on the outcomes and objectives of a post-doctoral in tourism and when a student will be deemed competent.

The tourism management qualification

A qualification is a planned combination of learning outcomes with a defined purpose that culminates in applied competence. A qualification serves as a basis for further learning in the field of tourism management. A qualification adds value in that it provides employment opportunities – as junior managers – in various sectors of the tourism industry. A qualification further supports the concept and objectives of the South African National Qualification Framework (SANQF). It accommodates all forms of formal and non-formal learning – through



the recognition of the outcomes stated or specified in the framework. A qualification also promotes mobility and articulation through the system of credits. Critical cross-field outcomes which form part of education and training will be referred to in the discussion.

It must be stressed that a qualification will only be awarded to a student who has provided evidence – to the satisfaction of the assessors – that the stated competence of the qualification, as detailed in the specific outcomes, has been achieved. This is realised through education and training in the provider’s learning programmes, or through experience that complies with the specific outcomes (recognition of prior learning). Such a qualification also provides access to further study in tourism management – at NQF level 7. Conversely, a Diploma in Tourism Management is a 360-credit qualification which is situated at NQF level 6. Below is a brief layout of the aforementioned qualification.

Programme name: Diploma Tourism Management

Programme duration: The programme is a minimum of 3 years – fulltime – and includes experiential learning in the last semester of the third year.

Programme content (curriculum)

<u>First year:</u>	<u>Second year</u>	<u>Third Year</u>
Travel and Tourism Practice I, Tourism Development I, Travel and Tourism Management I, Marketing for Tourism I, Cultural Tourism I, and Communication I	Travel and Tourism Practice II, Tourism Development II, Travel and Tourism Management II, Marketing for Tourism II, Tourism Information Management I, and Events Management I or Cultural Tourism II	Travel and Tourism Practice III, Tourism Development III, Travel and Tourism Management III *** Work-Integrated Learning

The following critical cross-field objectives are embedded in the specified outcomes of the different modules:

- Identifying and solving of problems in a manner that demonstrates responsible decision-making, originality, and a critical evaluative approach;
- Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, and community;
- Organising and managing time and activities responsibly and effectively;
- Collecting, analysing, organising, and critically evaluating information;
- Communicating effectively through the use of visual, mathematical, and/or language skills in oral and written presentation;
- Using technology effective and critical use of technology;
- Contributing to the full development of each student as an individual, the subject field, and society at large, by making it the underlying intention of the tourism programme to make students aware of the importance of:
 - reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies that would enable them to learn more effectively;



- participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities;
- recognising the relationship between tourism and social, economic, environmental and political contexts;
- exploring education and career opportunities; and
- developing entrepreneurial skills and opportunities within the tourism/hospitality industry.

Practical Programme Enhancement

Work-integrated learning, as a subject, constitutes an integral part of the programme. It promotes the integration of the theory and the more practical subjects studied on campus (introduction part) and enables students to put them into practice in the workplace (practical application part). It must be noted that students are well-prepared and assisted in finding their placements, and they are closely monitored during their work-integrated learning.

During the first six months of the third year, students formally register for the work-integrated learning module. Registration can only be done once all the other modules have been completed and passed. During these first six months, students are prepared for the world of work. Discussions take place and information about employment trends, job opportunities, and the competencies and skills required for the job to which the prospective employees (students) aspire are detailed. The academic department helps to manage students' careers. Students are advised to make career decisions, and to set career goals. Subsequently, expected stipends/salaries, tax registration procedures, opening of bank accounts, personal safety to and from the work environment, and possible rotation (different operational divisions) of work at a tourism organisation are discussed. Students are then assisted in finding career-planning information. Confidence and self-esteem are built through group discussions. Self-assessment, organisational opportunities, and career counselling are combined during the induction sessions. Additionally, industry guest lecturers speak to students from time to time about recruitment positions, trends within the tourism industry, different tourism sectors, and so forth. Furthermore, compulsory workshops are scheduled on behalf of the students. The four compulsory workshops are on CV Writing, Job Hunting Skills, Interview Skills, and Entrepreneurship Skills. Students receive a manual to complete as the workshops progress (Experiential training manual – with photos). The CV Writing workshop teaches students more about a cover letter, and the type of information that is essential in a CV. Subsequently, the students have to compile a CV, submit it for assessment in order to receive feedback, then the students have to make the recommended corrections; once these are done, the CV is ready to be circulated within the tourism industry.

Workshop two is on Job Hunting Skills. It helps students seek positions within the tourism industry, despite the fact that they often have unrealistic expectations of the tourism industry. In this way, students are confronted with factors that influence organisational choice, namely, intellectual aspects, recognition, job satisfaction, relationships, organisational leadership, corporate culture, and policies. Additionally, students are directed as to where to search for tourism positions (informal and formal), internship, learnership, and voluntary work opportunities. Research indicates that overall evaluations of site visit, perceptions of the location, and host likeability are positively related to job acceptance decisions (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Closer attention is being paid to opportunities abroad, salary brackets, work-hours, and skills that are essential to a particular position, as well as how ethical work conduct should be promoted. A broad class discussion then takes place.

The third workshop is about Interview Skills. Theoretical training is provided during this session. Discussions focus on the initial contact made by the tourism industry to invite the



student to attend an interview. Students are guided on how to answer the phone when the industry establishes contact with them, how to listen for the exact interview times and the location of interviews, how to obtain additional information on the company – prior to the interview, how to dress appropriately for the interview, how to communicate effectively, what type of questions to ask, and how to close-off an interview discussion. Roleplay is facilitated in class.

The last workshop focuses on entrepreneurship. The student is exposed to the characteristics of an entrepreneur to see if he or she could become one. The student is guided in terms of where to knock when he or she is contemplating starting a tourism business in the future. The different types of registration, licensing, business structures, and taxes are briefly discussed. Then, the university is expected to provide additional support to students who would like to continue as entrepreneurs. The lecturer normally advises such students to visit the Academic Development Centre (ADC) which designs theoretical and practical interventions geared towards the development of both academics and students. Indeed, the ADC strives to provide integrated, relevant growth opportunities to students. Additional requests for assistance that the STH received from students in the past, related to driver's licenses, first aid, and swimming lessons, which constituted their skills shortcomings. In the last three years, the Tourism Department provided – in addition – an accredited IT computer programme specialist (AMADEUS) to assist students with tourism industry-recognized qualifications. However, given that this is not part of the academic fee structure, students have to incur additional costs for the Amadeus training. Upon completion of the latter, upon they receive an industry-accredited certificate.

Dedicated academic senior tourism staff member

A dedicated academic staff member has been appointed to assist students within the tourism department. This staff member assists particularly with work-integrated learning guidance, planning, placement and the monitoring of work-integrated learning students. This staff member has a close working relationship with the tourism industry. This enables him to assist students with a 3 to 6 month exposure to the different operational areas of tourism enterprises. The majority of students are normally placed in the tourism industry during the last six months of the year. A close working relationship or a partnership agreement with the tourism industry secures work opportunities. However, the academic person is not solely responsible for the placement of students. The latter and the lecturer work closely together to secure a practical work opportunity position. Sometimes, it happens that a student cannot find a position, due to physical, geographical, personal, and economic circumstances. Thus, a strategy must be elaborated to accommodate this student. The latter may be expected to do voluntourism within his /her geographical area, or – due to small numbers – may be accommodated in the Tourism Department where he or she would assist with research/tutoring/events/field work, and so on.

Nonetheless, once placement has been secured, the student must confirm the work-integrated placement company's details with the UJ STH. Various forms are then completed in support of the work-integrated learning process. The discussion will now progress to the different types of documentation.

Work-integrated learning placement process

The STH markets and promotes work-integrated learning to the tourism industry and the government, and secures accredited workstation placement opportunities. Students are introduced to a range of companies to which they must apply in the hope of securing their own placement. This can also be done via the academic tourism department. The STH facilitates the application and interview process, as required; then students are selected by the various tourism companies, after shortlisting and interview processes have been completed.



Success rate of the placement of students over the years

Students have been successfully placed within the tourism industry over the last eight years. The table below includes the total number of students who have been registered for the module. Specific reference is made if the placement occurred in either the first six, or the last six months of the year. As indicated previously, the placement is only made when a student has completed all their theoretical modules. During 2010 and 2011, the school noticed that students took longer to complete their qualifications. Minor student numbers were accommodated and placed during the first semester.

A total number of placement opportunities can thus be calculated. It must be noted that in some cases, it is lower than the actual registered number. This could be due to personal reasons, incorrect registration, or a lack of placements. Table 1 indicates the number of graduates placed during a particular semester and the tourism sector in which they are doing their work-integrated learning. Different placement categories have been identified over the years, and specific student numbers reflect the actual placement of students in these sectors.

Table 1: Database of working graduates

INDUSTRY	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number of registered students	70	46	59	28	53	56	74	62
SEMESTER 1				10	15	10	26	19
SEMESTER 2				18	37	46	48	40
Placement opportunities	64	39	52	25	52	41	73	59
Advisory committee meeting/curriculum industry liaison					X			X
International placement opportunities	0	0	0	2	0	3	4	3
Transportation: Car rental	5	5	2	2	0		3	
Transportation: Airline / Avis	13	1	0	0	6	16	7	19
Airport management company	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2
Accommodation/Hospitality industry	19	9	15	3	11	7	10	
Tour operator sector	11	5	4	4	4	15	7	2
Travel agency operations	4	4	1	4	4	5	17	13
Destination organisation sector /BODIES/SA Tourism	3	0	5	2	4		5	2
Tourism marketing sector	4	4	1	1	1	0	1	1
Tourism consulting company	0	3	2	1	3	0	2	1
Attraction sector	1	0	0	3	1	5	4	6
Events industry	0	4	5	1	9	8	12	4
Call centre environment	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntourism	0	0	15	0	1		1	0
Research field/ UJ office/ Governmental bodies	0	0	1	2	3	5	1	3
Education	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	2

Source: Researcher, Data on Tourism diploma graduates from the University of Johannesburg – collection period 2008 – 2015

The discussion will now move to industry visits and the monitoring that takes places while students are within the tourism industry.



Visits and monitoring

A dedicated staff member visits students to ensure that their work-integrated learning experience meets the expectations of all partners. The student, their supervisor, and the academic staff member from the STH meet regularly to discuss the progress made. Logbook entries, presentations, or any other agreed upon evidence or artefacts may be used to assess the student's progress. Visits to the workplace are planned and coordinated, and are carried out by appointment. The frequency of these visits will depend on geographical location, costs, and other related factors.

Work-integrated learning documentation

All students receive a work-integrated learning logbook, once placement has been confirmed. This logbook must be completed while they are in the tourism industry. The logbook provides both the student and the supervisor with guidelines on how to progress during the work placement period, as well as on how to complete the logbook documentation. The following is the logbook documentation that both the student and the supervisor need to complete during the placement period.

- Student orientation experience
- Initial identification of skills and shortcomings, as well as exposure
- Monthly progress report and evidence of work per month
- Supervisor's perception of the student
- Student progress
- Supervisor's assessment form
- Supervisor's performance appraisal form
- Lecturer's evaluation form
- Exit interview questionnaire

An open-door policy is established between student and supervisor. The student provides the supervisor with the various documents to be signed. The supervisor signs off the logbook comment on the student's progress and report gaps, provides guidance, lists innovative initiative, and so on. All these comments should be geared towards enhancing the student's growth and guiding him or her.

Student orientation experience: The logbook helps to establish if a student has had an induction session during the first week at the host tourism establishment. Normally, the log sheet reflects words of welcome, the history of the company, company culture, the service philosophy of the organisation, organisation structure, policies, break periods, meal hours, review of rules of conduct and employee handbook (if available), unforeseen absences, introduction to co-workers, supervisor, time and place to report to, a list of frequently-called phone numbers, safety procedures and so forth.

Initial identification of skills and shortcomings: This document guides the supervisor with regard to the types of skills the student should be exposed to as well as those he or she will not be exposed to. It also highlights and establishes the supervisor's opportunities to assist the student with various possible skills. A basic Likert scale is used to identify the rate at which students will be exposed to particular skills. The rating scale varies between 0 = Not applicable, 1 = below the standard – effort is being made, 2 = approaches the standard – with minor adjustments needed, 3 meets the standard with assistance, 4 = meets the standard and is capable to work under supervision, and 5 = exceeds the standard with exceptional capabilities.



Monthly progress report and evidence of work per month: A monthly report is to be completed by each student. The report should be accompanied by evidence of work completed by the students. Various monthly instances that can provide work experience are listed and evidence is provided. Students are afforded a chance to give details on the tasks that they have been exposed to and what they have learnt from them. The probe also covers if the students like the work that they have been exposed to, their skills shortages and what they will do from their side to address these in the next month, as well as evidence of work exposure.

Supervisor's perception of the student: After the first month, the supervisor is requested to provide more details on students, and he or she needs to complete a supervisor's perception document. The latter should reflect the student's progress and details of the contribution the student has made toward the company, as well as the student's initial skills shortage and the recommendation made by the supervisor.

Supervisor's assessment form: A duly completed supervisor assessment document is also included in the logbook. The supervisor is required to rate each student on soft skills/attributes, based on a ten-point Likert-type scale. The Likert method considers a set of the student's soft skills: punctuality, teamwork, attitude, participation, levels of understanding, grooming, practical applications, body language, and overall impact and commitment to the organisation. Below is an example of the Likert scale used.

Outstanding	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Above average	Average	Weak	Poor	Very poor	Unacceptable	NOT APPLICABLE
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Additional logbook documentation includes the below.

Student progress: Another document students need to complete during their work-integrated learning period is a student progress report. The latter elaborates on how the student is progressing and if the student has identified or experienced any problems after the third month. The student also reports on the positive and negative aspects of his or her work experience – notably whether he or she is comfortable with the work environment and his or her superiors.

A supervisor's progress report: After a certain period of practical work has been completed by the student, the supervisor rates the latter based on a number of performance or competence criteria. Again, a Likert scale is used, with ratings that vary between 0 and 6; where 0 = not applicable, 1 = not evident, 2 = below the standard, 3 = further work required, 4 = limited competence, 5 = competent, 6 = exceptional competence.

Supervisor's final assessment report: A supervisor's final assessment document is also completed and included in the logbook. The skills assessed in this document relate to students' interest in the positions, self-confidence, self-discipline, adaptability and attitude, as well as work motivation, written communication, intellectual ability, and management potential.



Application of knowledge and human resource relationship: The supervisor rates each student on soft skills/attributes, based on a five-point Likert-type scale where 0 = not applicable, 1 = fair, 2 = average, 3 = good, 4 = very good, and 5 = excellent.

Lecturer's evaluation: Monitoring takes place from the lecturer's side. The lecturer will phone the student on a regular basis, to establish contact, to intervene when problems arise, and will contact the supervisor for mediation purpose. The lecturer will also contact the supervisor to establish students' progress and shortcomings.

Exit interview questionnaire: Lastly, an exit interview questionnaire is completed by the student, in order to state why he or she wants to remain with the industry, or why he or she wishes to discontinue his or her work placement. This provides the STH tourism department with a basis for assessing how satisfied of the tourism industry UJ tourism students are, as well as the possible hindrances to these students' fulltime employment. The exit interview relates to all the different types of documentation included in the logbook which students submit for assessment and evaluation.

Assessment and evaluation

Formative and summative assessments are conducted. Various assessments take place prior to students going out into the tourism industry for work-integrated learning. However, upon completion of the work-integrated learning period, further assessments and evaluations are performed by supervisors, academic staff from the STH, as well as external moderators. Structured feedback recorded by students and the tourism industry serve as a quality-assurance tool that can be used for review and improvement.

Students submit their logbooks on a specific date. They also have to present to each other in a PowerPoint format. The presentation should cover what they have learnt, the types of skills they have been exposed to, as well as their future progression after the completion of the work-integrated learning practical component. Students refer to the different types of work they have been exposed to, and they comment on both supervisors and the general culture of the organisation. This stimulates a highly-interactive process among the rest of the students who provide in-depth details on the skills they have acquired and used, as well as additional skills they still need to acquire. A presentation mark is awarded to each student as well as a logbook mark. These are combined with the marks of all the assessments and workshops that were attended during the first semester.

Conclusion

The above discussion clearly shows that there is no specific answer to the building blocks for well-rounded tourism graduates; rather, a combination of initiatives from higher education and the tourism industry can contribute to a holistic assistance to students. The advantage of the current process is that it is transparent, flexible, and fair. From higher education's side, tourism academics assist students through theory-driven classes, case studies, specific career workshops, guest lecturers and exposure to the tourism industry, as well as established exchange programmes. In this regard, students need to be motivated, passionate, committed, and willing to work within the tourism industry. The latter assists by providing students with an opportunity to be practically exposed to the world of work. The tourism industry also provides students with a brief orientation that seeks to make them feel welcomed, helps them identify their skills shortages, and confirms the skills that the students are good at.

The identification of the skills that need to be improved gives direction as to how the supervisor and university could better assist the students. It must be however noted, that this is a collective process that aims to assist tourism students. The tourism industry, over the years, has become more familiar with the process and is working well with higher education



institutions to support students involved in work-integrated learning. Moreover, academics have become better equipped to identify and address the needs and expectations of tourism students in the 21 century. Indeed, these academics are well aware of the problems experienced by students and work closely with the tourism industry to address those shortcomings. Various partnership agreements have been signed over the last few years; yet, they cannot be honoured in full. This is due to the present unfavourable economic conditions, high interest rates, low tourism flow numbers due to volatile situations, high crime rate, and so on. Nevertheless, the tourism industry provides additional assistance with awards evenings, renovations and facilities upgrades, or provides guidance relating to students' fieldwork. It must be however be noted that these partnership agreements, which take on many forms, are the only solution available to the work-integrated learning programmer. Through these module-related partnerships, more students are able to gain experience, and some receive permanent employment. Thus, the discussed building blocks need to be expanded so as to better address the challenges faced by both the tourism industry and the students. Experience has shown that these partnerships and building blocks provided by the STH help to achieve the benefits to employers, students, and higher education institutions that offer tourism as a qualification.

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