UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

"The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme: Enhancing Student Employability?"

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DECLARATION

I, Carolyn McDougall, declare that

(i) The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The International Hotel School is registered with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training as a Private Higher Education Institution. This registration entails accreditation by the Council on Higher Education and one of the requirements for accreditation is that *"The programme has taken steps to enhance the employability of students and to alleviate shortages of expertise in relevant fields, in cases where these are the desired outcomes of the programme."*

The purpose of this study was to assess, from a graduate perspective, whether or not the Diploma in Hospitality Management programme offered by the school met the requirement of the Council on Higher Education.

Skills sought by employers were identified through a review of literature on the topic of 'employability'. These skills were used to compile a research questionnaire sent electronically to the identified sample group. A study was conducted among students who had completed the diploma programme during the years 2008 to 2010. Using a five-point Likert Scale respondents were asked to rate their perception of skills developed through their participation in the diploma programme. In addition to assessing the employability skills, respondents were asked to rate the usefulness to them in their employment of the subjects comprising the diploma programme. Here a four point Rating Scale was used in the questionnaire.

Results of the study have identified areas of weakness within the programme's design and recommendations will be made to the school Academic Board as to suggested actions to be taken in addressing these weaknesses. The programme's syllabi should be reviewed and the curricula content adapted to consider the areas of concern highlighted through this study.

The study identified that the programme goes some way to meeting the requirements of both the Department of Higher education and Training and employers within the hospitality industry.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1   Introduction

In South Africa, all higher education programmes offered by institutions registered with The Department of Higher Education and Training must be accredited by the Council on Higher Education. In order to attain this accreditation, providers must meet stipulated criteria. This study focused on Criterion 18, which requires providers to show evidence that: *"The programme has taken steps to enhance the employability of students and to alleviate shortages of expertise in relevant fields, in cases where these are the desired outcomes of the programme."*

1.2   Motivation for the Study

This study was undertaken in an attempt to establish whether or not, from a student's perspective, The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management programme meets the requirements of Criterion 18.

The stakeholders who will benefit from the results of this study are as follows:

1. **Graduates of The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme**

    Graduates of The International Hotel School will be confident that the knowledge and skills they have acquired in completing the diploma programme will equip them for employment within the hospitality industry in South Africa. In addition, accreditation of the qualification by the Council on Higher Education ensures the integrity of the qualification.

2. Employers within the Hospitality Industry

Gaps in the current curriculum in meeting employer skills requirements have been highlighted during the study. Through revision of the diploma programme these gaps can be addressed thus ensuring that the knowledge and skill content of the curriculum meets the needs of industry. Employers can be assured that the graduates of the school will have been afforded the opportunity to develop required skills and will be able to make a meaningful contribution to their employer's business from the first day of their employment.

3. The International Hotel School

Assessment of the programme in relation to the identified employment needs of the hospitality industry in South Africa has identified 'gaps' in the current curriculum. The value of the study is that school now has reliable data on which it can base a review of the focus and content of the programme. The information received will enable the school's Academic Board to review the curriculum and syllabi of the programme and make adjustments were relevant. The study also provides information which can be used in responding to the quality assurance requirements stipulated by the Council on Higher Education. Being aware of the gaps in their programme design, the school will be able to formulate an action plan to meet the Council on Higher Education's accreditation criterion of enhancing the employability of graduates of the programme. An ability to demonstrate that the programme is accredited and therefore has integrity should attract future students thereby contributing to the sustainability of the school.

4. The Three Cities Group Shareholders

The International Hotel School is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Three Cities Group. As such the school has a responsibility to contribute to the profitability of the Group thereby contributing to shareholder satisfaction. Sustainability of the school and, thereby, profit generation, can be achieved in some measure by providing a qualification that ensures employability of graduates by enhancing the value of the qualification.

As no previous study of this nature has been undertaken by the school, this study provides the benchmark for future studies and can be used as a comparison for the success of the recommendations made should these be implemented.

1.3   Focus of the Study

This study considered only the Diploma in Hospitality Management programme of The International Hotel School. The school offers two full-time higher education programmes and including the second programme in the study could have provided interesting points of comparison.

1.4   Research Questions

The questions to be answered by this study were:

1. Do graduates of the programme believe that the programme equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills, at an appropriate level, to meet the needs of employers within the hospitality industry?

2. Is there a gap in skills development between the current programme content and the needs of industry?

3. How useful are the subjects that comprise the diploma programme to the graduate in their employment?

1.5   Objectives

In line with the research questions to be answered, the objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the percentage of respondents who completed their full qualification;
2. To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry having completed their qualification;
3. To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry who did not complete their qualification;
4. To identify which industries respondents are employed in if not employed in

the hospitality industry.

5. To establish the extent to which respondents believe that the diploma programme equipped them with the skills sought by employers;

6. To highlight which skills required by employers are not developed by the diploma programme.

7. To ascertain how useful the subjects contained in the diploma programme are to the respondents in their employment.

1.6   Research Methodology

The participants in the research were students who had completed their studies in the years 2008 to 2010. The geographical spread of respondents, lack of current contact information and the associated costs of tracking them made the use of probability sampling impractical. The non-probability sampling method, Judgement sampling was considered to be the most appropriate for this study.

A three part, self-completion questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed to collect quantitative data. Part A focused on biographical and employment related information. Part B, using a five category Likert Scale, contained questions relating to the graduate's view of the employability skills acquired during the programme as required by employers. Part C questioned respondents on the usefulness of subjects included in the syllabus of the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme.

Full approval for the study was awarded by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Appendix B).

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The hospitality industry is an entertainment industry and those employed within the industry are expected to provide the entertainment. The hours of work are arduous and those employed within the industry tend to be fairly transient. As a result of this, one of the major limitations of the study was tracking past students and obtaining a response from them.

The research questionnaire was administered electronically and it became apparent that, despite this age of electronic communication, accessing the questionnaire was difficult for some of the respondents, particularly those employed on the cruise liners or who did not have access to the internet at home.

1.8 Summary

Chapter One introduced the stakeholders who stand to benefit from the results of the study and gave the motivation for the study. The focus of the study is The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management and whether or not this programme, from the students' perspective, equips students with the skills required by employers.

The questions to be answered by the research were presented and, in line with the research questions, the objectives of the study were given. Limitations experienced in collecting data were highlighted.

Chapter Two of this work reviews a range of literature related to the topic of graduate employability providing a background to the questions presented in the research tool.

Chapter Three provides reasons for the research method chosen together with the method of sample selection, a description of the sample, data collection strategy and the method of analysing the data collected.

Chapter Four presents the results achieved. Chapter Five discusses the results presented. Chapter Six concludes the work undertaken and provides recommendations to The International Hotel School derived from the results of the research.

The literature reviewed in undertaking this study and developing the research tool will be discussed in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

2.1   Introduction

Over the years much has been written about employer skills requirements of graduates and the question of responsibility in providing opportunity for developing these skills. As will be seen from the following literature review, opinions differ. However, the overriding factor is that, in the current climate of global competitiveness, employers expect their employees to add value to the business from the day they are employed.

It is no longer acceptable for places of higher education to hold the view that their duty is to provide the theoretical knowledge required in the world of work. To remain competitive and ensure that their graduates are attractive to employers, more frequently places of higher learning are adding an experiential component to their education programmes.

Over the years graduates too have changed their expectation of their place of learning. They expect that education programmes will be geared to provide them not only with knowledge and technical skills but also with the 'soft' skills demanded by employers.

People have been renting lodging space in their homes (or stables) to travellers almost since time began. Over the years hotel development has become more sophisticated and competitive. Initially hotels were owned by individuals and they and their family members would staff the hotel. However, as time has passed and hotels have become big business, the need to employ trained and skilled operational and managerial staff has grown (Schonwalder 2000). Just what training and skills are required has been an important topic of discussion between employers, educators and government over the past half century. Below are some of the opinions put forward on this matter over the years by the various stakeholders.

2.2   The Literature Review

2.2.1 Defining Employability

The simplest definition of employability refers to the potential of a graduate to gain employment on completion of their studies. However, on closer inspection this simplistic view can be challenged on many levels. Are employability and employment the same thing? If not, what is the difference? Employment essentially means having a job – being in employment. Employability, as we shall see from the literature reviewed, is much more complex and relates to individual characteristics which enhance the possibility of gaining employment.

Over the years several researchers and writers have proffered definitions of the term *employability*.

A definition of employability derived from the work of Hillage and Pollard (1998:2) states that:

> "…..comprehensively, employment is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment. For the individual, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they use those assets and present them to employers and the context within which they seek work."

Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2002:9) make reference to the *duality of employability,* referring to employability as having an *absolute* and a *relative* dimension. The *absolute* dimension revolves around whether students have the skills, knowledge, commitment and business acumen to be efficient, innovative and productive.

The *relative* dimension of employability is dependent on supply and demand within the employment market. The authors purport that, the concept of employability changes according to economic times When labour is in short supply, the criteria for employment may be relaxed and those who have been previously unemployed for whatever reason may become employable; when there is no shortage of

labour, the criteria for employability become more stringent. In this dimension the employability of an individual is dependant on the employability of others seeking the same employment opportunity (Brown *et al*, 2002:9). In South Africa the scarce and critical skills analysis contained in the Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education Training Authority (previously known as THETA now CATHSSETA) Sector Skills Plan highlights a shortage in the supply of employees at junior and middle management within the hospitality industry (THETA, 2010:55). Considering this shortage in the light of Brown, Hesketh and Williams view on the relative dimension of employability, it could be argued that hospitality management graduates will find employment irrespective of the employability skills they bring to the workplace.

Brown *et al* (2002:31) ultimately define employability as "the relative chance of finding and maintaining different kinds of employment" (2002:11) and argue that, depending on the competition within the job market, it is possible to be employable but to be unemployed.

Harvey (2004:1) proposes that employability relates to the potential of the individual and poses the question "Do graduates have the attributes that will make them employable?". Higher Education institutions provide the opportunities to develop employability skills but it is the responsibility of the individual student to utilise these opportunities to develop their potential for gaining employment. In addition to this, Harvey contends that employability is about learning how to learn and learning for life. In Harvey's opinion (2004:3), employability is not about training for a specific job, it's about empowering learners to become critical, reflective citizens.

Yorke (2006:8), reporting on the work of the United Kingdom's Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team (ESECT), proposes the following definition of employability:

> "Employability is a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation."

Yorke (2006:7) states that employability should not be confused with obtaining a job (employment). Employability implies much more than the mere ability to gain employment. In Yorke's opinion (2006:13), employability implies that the graduate has developed key skills that are sought by employers and is demonstrated by the graduate's ability to apply "a mix of personal qualities and beliefs, understandings, skilful practices and the ability to reflect productively on experience."

Andrews and Higson (2008:413) are of the opinion that employability is a concept which is difficult to articulate and define, a concept which is both complex and vague.

2.2.2 Tradition and the Higher Education Graduate

Historically formal education was the privilege of the wealthy upper-class. Over the years this gradually changed and higher education has become more accessible to individuals irrespective of their social standing or income. However, prior to the mid 1900's, education traditionally entailed a system whereby knowledge and social mores were imposed by educators on scholars allowing little opportunity for practice or application. The American education theorist, John Dewey (1998: 4), recorded that what experience was included in the educational process of his time often bore little resemblance to the requirements of the real world and scholars were bereft of the ability to translate what had been learned into useful practice. Dewey proposed that the purpose of education is to prepare individuals for future responsibilities and success in life. Challenging traditional methods of education, Dewey (1998: 16) concluded that an important factor missing from the education system was the quality of experiences provided to learners. Education should enable the individual to make a positive contribution to society and the economy. This should be achieved within the education system through imparting knowledge and developing skills relevant to the world learners would encounter outside the educational environment (Dewey 1998:3).

According to the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFC) (2003:3) report, prior to the late 1980's and early 1990's when access to higher education was still fairly limited, higher education institutions generally took for granted the fact that their graduates would readily find employment. The function of higher education providers was to impart knowledge to their students; experience in the workplace would provide the skills required for success. The sequence of events in a traditional higher education system is demonstrated by Table 2.1.

Step 1 – The Academic Field	Step 2 – The Educational Field	Step 3 – The World of Work
Academic staff develop new knowledge and thinking in their field or area of specialisation.	Educators select academic topics and concepts for their students to study. They devise methods of teaching and assessing the selected topics and concepts that are appropriate to the students' conceptual development.	Graduates enter the world of work with a theoretical grasp of knowledge and concepts but limited or no ability to transform this to practice.

Table 2.1: Model of a traditional higher education system
(Adapted from Council on Higher Education Monitor No. 12 (2011), *Work-Integrated Learning: Good Practice Guide*, CHE, Pretoria.)

The academics conducted research in their areas of specialisation and from this developed new knowledge and concepts (Step 1). The knowledge and concepts would then be shared within the world of academia and be made available to educators in a variety of ways. From this, the educators would select the knowledge and concepts they felt were relevant to their education programmes. The educators would decide how the knowledge and concepts would be imparted to their students and assessed (Step 2). Finally, on graduating, the student would enter employment armed with a theoretical understanding of knowledge and

concepts encountered during their studies but with little or no ability to put this into practice (Step 3). It would be the job of the employer to provide opportunities that would enable the graduate to convert their theoretical knowledge into practice and experience (Council on Higher Education 2011:8).

This was indeed the case with most graduates finding satisfactory employment within a short time of graduating. The range of employment opportunities available to graduates was fairly well defined and despite a sense among employers that graduates did not have the precise skills they required, most employers took on whatever graduates were available; skills were developed in the workplace.

However, over time there have been calls from Government, industry and higher education agencies and researchers to the higher education institutions for inclusion of key, core, transferable and employability skills within the curricula of their various programmes (HEFCE 2003: 3).

2.2.3 The Move Away from Tradition – the need for improved employability

As reported by Harvey (2004:2), the 1990's saw a shift in academic thinking towards a belief that employability equates to the acquisition of skills, a notion clearly expressed in the Dearing Committee Report of 1997. The initial, general reaction of the academic community was that they wanted no part in skills training. However, over the years, thinking has fortunately moved away from a purely skills based belief in employability and the trend now is to view "employability as a range of experiences and attributes developed through higher level learning".

Kruss (2002:61) indicates that since 1994 South Africa has been influenced in its education policy by the global demand that, to ensure economic and social prosperity, higher education providers should offer programmes responding to the needs and expectations of industry, the state and society. Higher education programmes and curricula are now expected to provide graduates with skills, knowledge and attitudes that would previously have been developed through work experience.

Kruss (2002: 67) explains that, in South Africa, the report and recommendations of the National Commission on Higher Education of 1996 indicated that, whereas in the past higher education institutions had offered a fairly narrow range of programmes, this could not continue. To enable South Africa to compete in a global economy, changes within the existing higher education system were needed. The Commission proposed that higher education institutions would increasingly need to offer a broader range of programmes including ones which enabled the development of vocationally based competencies and skills sought by employers.

This was in keeping with developments within education in other parts of the world. In the United Kingdom the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education was appointed in 1996. The purpose of the committee was to review the higher education system within the UK and make recommendations on changes needed within their higher education system to ensure that within twenty years graduates would be capable of meeting the economic challenges of the country. The Committee was headed by Sir Ron Dearing and the resultant report released in 1997 is generally referred to as *The Dearing Report*. The report stated that, to produce graduates who would be capable of meeting these challenges, partnerships between places of higher learning (universities) and vocational development (technical colleges) would need to be developed. In addition to this, the involvement of industry, commerce and public service would be needed in higher education (Point 3 of the Dearing Report summary).

Point 39 of the Dearing Report summary includes input from employers who emphasised the value of the inclusion of work experience in graduate programmes. Various inputs from employers were unanimous in reporting that they expect graduates to add value in the workplace from day one of their employment. This is a sentiment echoed by employers in the work of Kruss (2002:23).

The Dearing Report contained a number of recommendations for higher education. Recommendation 21 highlights the need for places of higher education to ensure that programmes are designed to ensure that graduates leave their

place of learning having developed a range of *key* and *cognitive skills* required by employers. These skills include communication, numeracy, the use of information technology, learning how to learn and ability in critical analysis and subject specific skills.

This recommendation ties in with one of the definitions of the role of higher education in the 1997 White Paper on Education and Training 3 (WPET 3) (1997: 10). Considering transformation within higher education in South Africa, the WPET 3 defined one of the roles of higher education institutions as the training of "high-level skills". This role requires that higher education institutions produce graduates capable of contributing to the strengthening of the country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. To achieve this, higher education programmes must provide graduates with globally equivalent skills who are socially responsible and conscious of the role they have in contributing to national development and social transformation. Fifteen years later this role still has relevance.

The work of Brown as cited by Kruss (2002:63) differentiated between educating and training for *employment* and *employability*. In his opinion, educating and training for *employment* indicates that skills learned are linked to specifically identified occupations. Educating and training for *employability* places an emphasis on skills that can be applied in a range of occupations thus equipping the graduate for greater mobility and flexibility within the world of work.

Kruss (2002:63) explains the work of higher education providers in preparing graduates for employment as demonstrated in Figure 2.2

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │                                         │
                    │            Skilled Employee             │
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                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                       │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │                                         │
                    │             Work Experience             │
                    │                                         │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                       ┊
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │                  Degree                 │
                    │ (Graduate has theoretical knowledge but no practical experience) │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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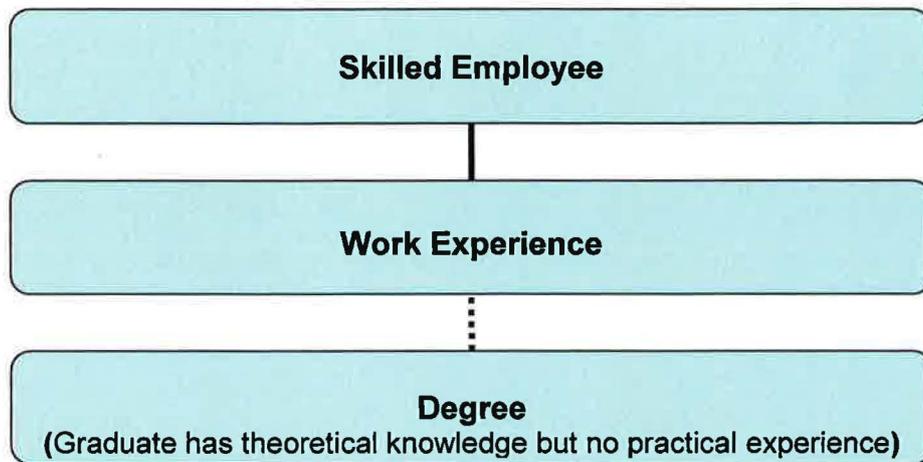
Figure 2.1: Employability model with indirect link to the workplace

Adapted from Kruss, G (2002). *Employment and employability: expectations of higher education responsiveness.* Council on Higher Education (2002) p64

In the past, universities were seen as the providers of higher education with a responsibility to prepare graduates indirectly for employment. The graduate would leave the university with a degree and theoretical knowledge which, once enhanced with specialised practice and experiential knowledge developed in the workplace, rendered the graduate employable.

By comparison, Technikons carried the responsibility of training graduates directly for employment as indicated in Figure 2.2.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │                                         │
                    │            Skilled Employee             │
                    │                                         │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                       │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │                 Diploma                 │
                    │      (Incorporating work experience /   │
                    │          experiential learning)         │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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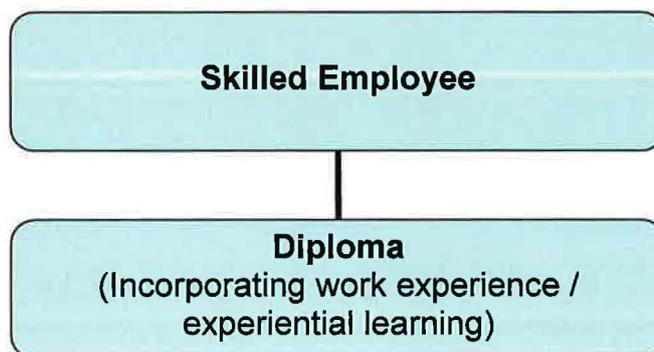
Figure 2.2 Employability model with direct link to the workplace

Adapted from Kruss, G (2002). *Employment and employability: expectations of higher education responsiveness.* Council on Higher Education Colloquium (2002) p65

Technikon graduates acquired theoretical knowledge supported by specialised practice and experiential knowledge gained through the inclusion of structured experiential learning blocks within the learning programme.

In her address at the inaugural meeting of the South African Graduate Recruitment Association the Director of the career development programme at the University of the Cape Town, Anne Short, stated that the employability of graduates can be seen as a measure of how well an institution serves the needs of their students. She also emphasised that 'employability' should be seen as separate to 'jobs for graduates' (Short 2004).

Harvey (2004: 1) refutes this line of thinking when he exhorts the reader to dispense with the idea that employability can be seen as a measure of an institution's performance. While he agrees that this may be common practice, he believes that to gauge an institution's degree of success by the ability of its graduates to find employment is "a poor and misleading indicator".

In line with all of the above, Table 2.2, shown overleaf, illustrates the move away from a traditional higher education system to a progressive higher education system which incorporates the development of employability skills within higher education programmes. This is achieved through the inclusion within the programme of work integrated or experiential learning.

Step 1 – The Academic Field		Step 2 – The Educational Field		Step 3 – The World of Work
		Professionally- oriented education		
Academic staff develop new knowledge and thinking in their field or area of specialisation.		Educators select academic topics and concepts for their students to study. They devise methods of teaching and assessing the selected topics and concepts that are appropriate to the students' professional development.		Graduates enter the world of work with a theoretical grasp of knowledge and concepts combined with an ability to transform this to practice.

Table 2.2 A progressive higher education system including work integrated learning

(Adapted from HE Monitor No. 12 (2011), *Work-Integrated Learning: Good Practice Guide*, CHE, Pretoria.)

In comparison to the system portrayed in Table 2.1, Step 2 of a progressive higher education system focuses on professional development. In this system the inclusion of work integrated learning within the programme produces graduates who should be able to contribute to the world of work from day one of their employment (Step 3).

2.2.4 Identifying Skills Required by Employers

Ease of travel and increasing globalisation has, over the years, created a shift in guest expectations within the hospitality industry. No longer are guests satisfied with a clean room and bed. When a guest stays in a hotel whether travelling for business or leisure, they anticipate that their stay will provide them with an

experience not just a place to lay their head.

Coupled with this is the fact that the hospitality industry is big business and investors are expecting returns on their investment commensurate with their not inconsiderable input. In keeping with business in any other sector, shareholders in the hospitality industry expect that their business interests will be managed in a manner that will ensure the best return on their money.

Maher (2008: 38) reports that a survey among members of the Institute of Directors revealed that the perception of 40% of those surveyed is that graduates are unprepared for the workplace. This is echoed in the work of Jameson (2008: 2) who found that among hospitality industry employers there is a perception that graduates who lacked work experience and 'hospitality specific employability skills' are neither useful nor valuable employees.

Research by Kruss (2002: 84) indicates that employers, be they in the private or public sector, expect that graduates leaving their place of higher education will be employable. The expectation is that the higher education programme will have enabled the individual to develop skills previously learned once the graduate had entered the world of work. It is expected that graduates will have the ability to add value to an organisation from the first day of their employment (Kruss 2002:82).

The Central Office of Information (COI) (2008:2) reports that, the British Government in a bid "to create a stronger and fairer Britain, equipped to face the challenges of the future", commissioned an investigation undertaken by the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) in 2008. One of the issues highlighted by the investigation was that there needs to be engagement between higher education institutions and employers. This engagement should be at a level that would ensure curricula were designed in a manner that would enable skills sought by employers to be developed within the courses presented by higher education institutions. (COI 2008:19) This engagement could include joint collaboration between higher education institutions and employers in the design of course modules that would help develop interpersonal and informal skills expected of graduates entering the workplace (COI 2008:65); the use of

representatives from employers as guest lecturers; or inclusion of employer representatives within the formal structures of the higher education institutions e.g. as members of Advisory Boards.

In South Africa, information provided by employers through their Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report submissions to the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), indicates that South Africa employs approximately 180 000 people within the tourism sector. Of these 63% are employed within the hospitality sub-sector (THETA 2010: 12). The true number of employees is likely to be far in excess of this number as many providers within the sector are Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) who flaunt legislation and do not submit required data regarding their enterprise. The effect of this is that these providers do not appear in any official, national databases. (SSP 2010:9)

By its very nature the hospitality industry is very labour intensive and provides employment opportunities at all levels. Data available from THETA in 2010 indicates that of the 7 248 employees within the sector over the age of 55, 49% are employed within the hospitality sub-sector. Of these 463 represent potential vacancies at management level within the hospitality sub-sector over the next 5 years. These figures do not make any allowance for management vacancies created through anticipated expansion within the industry. The Sector Skills Plan indicates that 1 350 management level employees will be required within various areas of the hospitality industry by the year 2015.

Maher and Graves (2008: 18), in their work on graduate employability, report findings from the British *National Employer Skills Survey 2003*. These findings indicate that employers in the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industry place more emphasis on the corporate and strategic skills of employees at a managerial level than is placed on technical skills.

Maher and Graves also refer to the 2007 Institute of Directors Report which listed the following ten transferable and generic skills rated by their members as most important for graduates (2008: 337):

Transferable and Generic Skills	
1. Honesty and integrity	6. Numeracy skills
2. Basic literacy skills	7. A positive 'can do' attitude
3. Basic oral communication	8. Punctuality
4. Reliability	9. The ability to meet deadlines
5. Being hard working and having a good work ethic	10. Team working and co-operation skills

Table 2.3: Ten most important transferable and generic skills rated by members of the Institute of Directors

This finding supports the conclusion of the Leitch Review of Skills (2006: 41) that 'employability' skills valued by employers include 'communication, motivation, independence, analysis, confidence and problem solving'.

Brown (2002:4) makes reference to the work of Sennett (1998) who states that in line with the move within business for corporations to "become leaner, flatter and prone to rapid restructuring", employers require that employees are equipped not only to meet the needs of their in-house positions but that they must also remain employable in the external job market throughout their working life.

This thinking ties in with the belief expressed by Yorke (2006:3) that employability should not only be considered an attribute of the young graduate but as an attribute that must be "continuously refreshed throughout a person's working life".

2.2.5 Changes within Higher Education to meet Changing Employer Demands – work integrated learning and inclusion of employability skills development within the curriculum.

In 1961 a committee headed by Professor Lord Robbins was appointed in Britain to pursue an answer to the question "what purposes, what general social ends

should be served by higher education?" (Robbins Report 1963: 6). Prior to this, consideration had been given to the responsibility of places of higher education to produce graduates who would contribute to the growth and sustainability of the country's economy in the face of fierce global competition. However, little had been written on the topic and less in the way of research conducted. (Robbins Report 1963: 4)

The Robbins Report (1963: 6) stated that economic progress and retention of a competitive edge are dependent on the acquisition of skills requiring specialist training. This training should come from the places of higher education. Higher education should not only focus on the development of knowledge specialists. Programmes should contain aspects of practical use taught in such a way as to enable the graduate to apply them in a variety of circumstances. This requirement ties in with the expectations of employers highlighted in the previous section.

Kruss (2002: 84) in her research into the responsiveness of higher education institutions to the need for curricula to meet the expectations of employers found that the tacit skills, knowledge and attitudes formerly developed through work experience are now expected to be an integral part of higher education programmes and curricula. Employers expect graduates to enter the workplace and be immediately effective (Kruss 2002: 74). In South Africa this is not only an expectation of employers but also a requirement of the Council on Higher Education (2004:23). However, the general comment from employers was that "South African institutions are not responsive to 'what we would like to see' (Kruss 2002: 81).

Harvey (2004: 2) describes a three pronged model that has emerged within higher education for enhancing student employability. Firstly, higher institutions are including within the curricula, information and practice to assist students in becoming employed e.g. labour market information and practice in developing a *curriculum vitae* and interviewing techniques. Secondly, students are provided with opportunities to develop a range of important, high-level attributes sought by employers – analysis, critique, synthesis and interactive, communication and inter-personal skills. Together with these students are provided opportunities to develop

or strengthen personal traits including flexibility and adaptability, self-organisation and time management, risk-taking and problem solving. Finally, reflection on learning and experiences is encouraged as well as a desire to continue learning even whilst in the world of work.

Point 39 of The Dearing Report (1997) makes specific reference to the need for higher education institutions to identify opportunities within curricula that will enable students to gain exposure to the world of work and help them to reflect on the experiences gained from such exposure. Recommendation 18 of the report is that

> "We recommend that all institutions should, over the medium term, identify opportunities to increase the extent to which programmes help students to become familiar with work, and help them to reflect on such experience."

Moon in Link 11 (2004: 2) states that one of the primary functions of experiential learning is to enable students to develop skills during their years of study that will enable them to quickly become effective in the workplace. In addition, these skills should provide graduates with the ability to continue their development in response to changing demands within their career and life.

Maher reported in Link 11 (2004:7) that, coupled with the expectation of employers that higher education programmes should equip graduates with the skills they require, comes emphasis from government that higher education institutions have an important role to play in ensuring that their graduates add value to the economy.

To remain globally competitive, the Leitch Review (2006: 68) recommends that, higher education institutions need to rebalance their priorities in order to meet the demand for World Class skills. These institutions must make relevant, flexible and responsive provision within their programmes to meet the high skills needs of employers and their employees.

Atkins (1999:267) concurs that from the late 1980s, a good deal has been written in various reports about the need for higher education to embrace the idea of including employability skills into their curricula. This was reinforced by a shift in

government funding towards projects aimed at the inclusion by higher education institution of employability skills in their curricula. Quality assurance systems within the higher education framework also compelled providers to take definite measures to include opportunity within their teaching and assessment processes for students to acquire, develop and practice employability skills (1999: 268).

Atkins (1999: 271) questions the perceived benefits derived from the inclusion of employability skills development in higher education programmes. Academics and students alike show resentment for the time taken from their academic studies for the development of employability skills. Employers are in conflict in their idea of what employability skills are most relevant. The skills requirements of the small, family owned business cannot be compared to the skills needs of a large, multi-national corporation.

At the time of Atkins' writing (1999:275), little research had been done on the efficacy of skills development programmes within higher education. Questions arose about the ability of graduates to transfer skills developed within their study programme to the world of work. Having developed the skills does the higher education provider develop the ability within the student to transfer these skills from the learning environment to the workplace? Atkins maintains that the "greater the difference in terms of task, people and expectations, the lower the likelihood of transfer."

Jameson (2008: 85), in her study of two different cohorts of students in two different academic years following the same programme, found that the background and previous work experience of the students had a definite impact on the need for the inclusion of employability skills development within the curriculum.

Yorke (2006:7) argues that inclusion of workplace experience within the curriculum does not of itself provide a sufficient condition for employability. He indicates that there is no guarantee that during workplace experience the student will develop the requisite cognitive, social and practical skills sought by employers. He states that employability develops from the ways in which the student learns from their experiences.

In South Africa, The Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2004: 23), the statutory accrediting body for higher education, specifies that higher education providers must make a conscious effort to have the value of their programmes acknowledged within the workplace. This requirement is reinforced by the CHE (2011: 4) in their *Good Practice Guide* on work integrated learning which emphasises the importance of "enabling students to integrate theoretical knowledge gained through formal study, with the practice-based knowledge gained through immersion in work or professional context."

Martin and McCabe (2007:31) argue that the 'soft' social and aesthetic skills sought by employers e.g. attitude and appearance, are less suited to manipulation and therefore to inclusion in an academic programme. The writers propose that these skills are best learnt through part- or full-time employment and not through inclusion in a higher education programme.

Nilsson (2007: 11) reports that in some instances, there appears to be a widening 'gap' between the provisions of higher education and the requirements of the world of work. One of the objectives of the study undertaken is to establish if such a 'gap' exists between the Diploma in Hospitality Management programme offered by The International Hotel School and the 'world of work' into which graduates of the school move.

2.2.6 Ask the Graduates

Research commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (2001: 22) considered the idea of employability within the hospitality industry from the graduate's perspective. Despite a perception of employers that "graduates expected too much too early", of the graduates interviewed in the study most were realistic about what employers required of them. Employers included in the research believed that the important characteristics graduates could bring to their employment were intellectual ability, powers of analysis, speed of thinking and a "fresh eye". The graduates on the other hand placed more importance on the general, transferable skills and the workplace experience gained from their

qualification.

The specific skills that graduates believed they had developed from their qualification programme and were of most use to them in the world of work were writing, presentation and time management skills.

Graduates surveyed believed that having a qualification had increased their self-confidence and motivation and had taught them self discipline. In general they believed that having a qualification enhanced their possibility of career progression particularly within a management structure.

The work of Andrews (2008: 414) highlighted that graduates believe that it is important to have a qualification to obtain employment and commented that many of the skills learned during their study programme were of use to them in their employment. The value of work based learning experiences differed in the countries surveyed. Graduates from the UK who had undergone a twelve month work experience reported favourably about the benefit of their work experience to subsequent employment.

The work of Barron (2007: 40) with students studying tourism and hospitality at an Australian university concluded that although the reasons students gave for having part-time employment during their years of study were principally financial, the students reported that the part-time employment did not have a negative impact on their studies. In fact, one of the findings from Barron's work was that students had a desire for their part-time work experiences to be granted formal recognition and credit towards their qualification. This is in line with the thinking of Martin and McCabe (2007: 31) who argue that experience gained through part- or full-time employment is more conducive to the development of the social and aesthetic skills sought by employers in the hospitality industry than trying to include these in an academic programme.

Barron argues that his findings can be paralleled with studies in the UK (2007: 41) He reports that the perspective of students interviewed during his research is that part-time employment during their years of study provides them with an

introduction to the world of work and that their work experiences assist them with development both personally and in their career (2007: 42).

Research by Maher (2008: 38) highlighted the following skills that graduates believe they had not developed during their degree programme: emotional intelligence; initiative; stress tolerance and self-confidence. Academic staff found it surprising that students believed they lacked development in initiative as the programme placed a good deal of emphasis on "independent learning". Maher (2004: 9) reported that students acknowledged that their programme had enabled them to develop the following skills: willingness to learn; independence; self-awareness and reflectiveness.

The results of a study conducted by Martin and McCabe (2007: 35) highlighted the following as reasons given by hospitality students for paid part-time employment in order of frequency of response:

- o To earn money for living costs;
- o To develop practical skills related to the study programme
- o To add to their experience of living in the UK
- o To enhance their employability after graduation
- o To earn money to fund their social life
- o To meet new friends
- o To earn money to assist in paying course fees

The majority of students believed that their part-time employment experiences assisted them in developing skills useful to subsequent employment.

Using Knight and Yorke's three areas of employability skills:

Core skills – numeracy; language skills and global awareness

Personal qualities – self-confidence; independence and stress tolerance

Process skills – problem solving; team-work and applying subject understanding

the skills reported by students to have been developed during their part-time employment are shown in Table 2.4 (most to least developed):

Key skills developed during part-time employment	Rank from most to least developed during part-time work (Mean Value)	Type of skill according to Knight and Yorke
More awareness of how I interact with people	4.1	Personal
Adaptability skills	4.1	Personal
Team-working skills	4	Process
Feeling more comfortable in busy and stressful situations	3.9	Personal
Skills specific to the job	3.7	Process
Communication skills	3.7	Core
Self-confidence skills	3.7	Personal
Time-management skills	3.7	Process
Ability to relate to a wider range of people	3.6	Personal
Language skills	3.5	Core
Problem solving skills	3.5	Process
Self-presentation	3.5	Personal
Independence	3.4	Personal
Practical skills to support your studies	3.3	Process
Commercial awareness	3.3	Process
Computer literacy	1.7	Process

Table 2.4: Students' perception of the aspects of employability most developed during part-time work

(Adapted from Martin, E. and McCabe, S. (2007) *'Part-time Work and Postgraduate Students: Developing the Skills for Employment?'* [online] 6 (2) 29-40. Available from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/johlste> [22 February 2009])

Welbourn & Jameson (2009:453) report that over the past twenty five years much has been written on the topic of graduate employability. Research has been undertaken and many scholarly articles and reports have been written. The focus of the majority of these articles and reports has been the concept of employability from the perspective of higher education, government bodies and the employer. Few studies have focused on the perception of the graduate as to how their qualification and study programme has equipped them for the world of work.

The work of Welbourn and Jameson (2009: 460), focussing on employability from a graduate's perspective, highlighted two themes. These themes were firstly "employability experiences and the individual" and secondly, "employability

experiences and their impact on careers". With regard to "employability experiences and the individual", the authors reported that within the members of their survey group, only one respondent with over twenty years experience in the hospitality industry could explain the concept of employability. To the majority of respondents, employability corresponded to "having a job" and of greater concern was the notion among all respondents that their qualification, the "physical piece of paper", was sufficient to ensure them employment. The authors, supported by a wealth of research and literature on the subject, argue correctly that employability requires much more than a "piece of paper".

Among the respondents there was a reluctance to accept that they may in some way have a responsibility for the development of skills that would enhance their employability. Indeed there was little evidence that the respondents understood that they are responsible for their own career management. Following the theme of "employability experiences and their impact on careers", Welbourn and Jameson (2009: 461) comment that unless graduates can move away from task oriented problem solving and develop a more strategic way of thinking and an awareness of how they can add value to their employer it is unlikely that they will be successful in employment.

2.2.7 An Alternative View of Employability

In his article *Reconsidering Graduate Employability: the 'graduate identity' approach* (*Quality in Higher Education* 2001:111), Holmes asserts that the focus of supporters of the "skills agenda" in reference to employability is flawed in that it presumes the term "skill" to have the same meaning for those in higher education as it does for those in the world of work.

He continues by stating that there is no clear indication that employers require graduates to possess skills *per se* but rather that they require certain *behaviour* of graduates. In Holmes's opinion, the graduate behaviour sought by employers is an ability to perform competently and effectively, to be proactive self-starters who are confident and enthusiastic. He argues that this is *behaviour* and not *skill*.

In developing his theory of graduate identity Holmes explains that to correctly interpret and establish whether or not a graduate's behaviour is meeting the expectation of the employer, certain requirements must be met. These requirements are that firstly, the behaviour must be observed and interpreted within a set of appropriate social practices. Secondly, the identity of involved role players relevant to the social set must be understood, (2001: 114).

It is possible that variances in interpretation created by differing frames of reference could lead to possible misunderstanding between the graduate and employer as to what is expected and what is considered competent performance.

In portraying graduate identity, Holmes explains that the important aspect of graduate identity in relation to employability is not that the graduate has achieved a formal degree. Of importance is whether or not they are "successful in gaining affirmation of their identity as a graduate in relation to the social settings for which this is deemed relevant" i.e. within the world of work, (2001:115).

Atkins (1999:270) contributes to the anti-skills debate by observing that those who are opposed to the skills agenda reject the notion that one of the main responsibilities of providers of higher education is to serve the economy by contributing to the profitability of business through the development of employability skills in their graduates.

Atkins argues that those who support the idea of higher education having a responsibility to equip graduates with employability skills believe that to do so is in the interest of both the graduate and a country's ability to compete in the global economy (1999: 270). However, such a belief supposes some form of 'contract' between providers of higher education and society. The foundation of this contract being that, in return for investment of public monies in higher education, providers are obliged to provide graduates who will help support the country's global competitiveness. Those opposed to the skills agenda do not believe that such a contract exists or that government should dictate the purpose of places of higher learning.

2.2.8 Literature Used in the Development of the Survey Questionnaire

Section B of the research questionnaire which focused on employability skills was developed based on skills identified in the work of Maher and Graves (2008) and Raybould and Wilkins (2005) which focused specifically on the hospitality industry. In addition to this, skills highlighted in the work of Griesel and Parker (2009) were used. This work focused on employability skills across a broad spectrum of businesses within South Africa. In addition to the academic research reported in these publications, job descriptions from hospitality industry employers in South Africa and America together with those of an international cruise line company were utilised.

Maher's research considered the ability of the United Kingdom's higher education system to deliver graduates who would meet the needs of employers. Raybould examined this topic with regard to higher education in Australia and Griesel's work was based on higher education and employers within South Africa.

The hospitality industry is a highly mobile industry with employees moving within their country of origin and also internationally. Graduates of The International Hotel School generally find employment throughout the world. It was, therefore, relevant that employability skills identified in a range of countries were considered in the study.

Griesel and Parker in the Higher Education South Africa report (2009:9) grouped the skills required by employers into 4 categories:
- Basic skills and understanding;
- Knowledge and intellectual ability;
- Workplace skills and applied knowledge; and
- Personal and interactive skills

Maher (2008: 19) utilised a range of thirty nine skills as identified by Yorke and Knight (2006). These skills were categorised into three broad areas:

- Personal qualities;
- Core skills; and
- Process skills.

Alternatively, Raybould (2005: 208) did not categorise the skills identified but ranked them in order of importance.

Irrespective of the method of grouping, categorising or ranking there was definite correlation between the skills utilised by each researcher. The skills identified from the employer job descriptions were matched with those identified by the researchers.

2.3 Summary

Much has been written over the years about the skills required of graduates by employers. In gaining an understanding of this issue it is first necessary to understand what is meant by the term "employability". This chapter has provided a range of definitions of the term.

Insight has been given into the move away from the tradition of formal education being available only to the wealthy upper-class. The view of traditional higher education providers that employment of their graduates was guaranteed by virtue of the fact that they were graduates has been challenged. The need for improved employability has been explained and the skills required by employers identified. The importance of including work integrated learning into the curricula of places of learning has been highlighted with particular reference to the importance of this to the hospitality industry.

Importantly, the view of the graduate has been considered. The specific skills they believe that they have developed from their qualification programmes are writing, presentation and time management skills. The literature reviewed has shown that these skills rank among those expected of graduates by employers.

As will be seen in the following chapter, information derived from the literature

reviewed was used in the development of the research instrument. The skills highlighted as important by employers were included in the research questionnaire.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As evidenced by the previous chapter, over the years much research has been conducted into graduate employability from an institutional and employer perspective. Yorke (2006: 10) indicates that a less well researched aspect of employability is the viewpoint of graduates. Few participants in the employability debate have asked graduates how well prepared they found themselves to be in meeting employer requirements once they had entered the world of work. In this study the question of employability will be considered from the graduate's perspective.

Following a brief consideration of the theory of research processes, this chapter outlines the methodology, data collection process and data analysis method used in this study.

3.2. Aim and Objectives of the Study

All higher education programmes offered by institutions registered with The Department of Higher Education and Training must have been accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). CHE stipulate specific criteria which must be met in order to attain this accreditation. This study focuses on Criterion 18, which requires providers to show evidence that: "*The programme has taken steps to enhance the employability of students and to alleviate shortages of expertise in relevant fields, in cases where these are the desired outcomes of the programme.*"

The aim of this study is to determine whether or not, from a graduate's perspective, The International Hotel School's Diploma: Hospitality Management programme meets the requirements of Criterion 18.

The questions to be answered by this study are:

1. Do graduates of the programme believe that the programme equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills, at an appropriate level, to meet the needs of employers within the hospitality industry?

2. Is there a gap in skills development between the current programme content and the needs of industry?

3. How useful are the subjects that comprise the diploma programme to the graduate in their employment?

The objectives of this study are:
1. To determine the percentage of respondents who completed their full qualification;
2. To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry having completed their qualification;
3. To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry who did not complete their qualification;
4. To identify which industries respondents are employed in if not employed in the hospitality industry.
5. To establish the extent to which respondents believe that the diploma programme equipped them with the skills sought by employers;
6. To highlight which skills required by employers are not developed by the diploma programme.
7. To ascertain how useful the subjects contained in the diploma programme are to the respondents in their employment.

3.3. Research Design and Method

3.3.1 Description and Purpose
The members of the sample group were spread throughout the world. It would have been impossible from a time and cost perspective to conduct the research by any means other than an on-line questionnaire. As the

skills required by employers had been identified and the purpose of the research was to establish whether or not students believed they had developed these skills during their years of study, it was decided to utilise quantitative data rather than qualitative data.

3.3.1.1 *Construction of the Instrument*

Before the questionnaire could be constructed the skills required by employers within the hospitality industry were determined. The information regarding the skills required by employers used in developing the questionnaire was drawn from three main sources:

a) Employers within the South African hospitality industry and America provided job descriptions for varying positions. The skills identified in the employer job descriptions were summarised (Appendix C) and cross-referenced between employers and positions. From this cross-referencing the most commonly required skills were identified. These skills were included in the required skills contained in the questionnaire.

b) Research into specific skills required within the hospitality industry had been carried out in the United Kingdom (Maher: 2008) and Australia (Raybould: 2005). The skills utilised in Maher's work came from a comprehensive list compiled by Yorke and Knight (2006). Those utilised by Raybould (2005: 206) were compiled from a review of literature relating to employability skills and the input of members of six focus groups representing industry management, academic and recent graduates.

c) Research reported by Griesel and Parker (2008) was undertaken by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) in conjunction with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in 2008. This research was not specific to the hospitality industry. The skills identified from the HESA research were categorised in the following manner:

- Basic skills and understanding;
- Knowledge and intellectual ability;
- Workplace skills and applied knowledge;
- Personal and interactive skills;

These same categories were used in the development of the research instrument.

Raybould's research identified fifty two skills required by employers which had been ranked in order of importance to employers. Although all fifty two skills were considered in the comparison table, only the top twenty five of these skills were used in developing the questionnaire.

The skills utilised in the work of Maher (2008: 19) and Raybould (2005:208) and the skills identified from the HESA research together with the common skills identified from the employer job description summary were tabulated for comparative purposes and are recorded in Appendix D.

Finally, the skills found to be common to all sources were identified. These were the skills utilised in formulating the questions contained in the research instrument. These skills are indicated in Appendix E.

Using the information from Appendix E and in order to elicit information required to answer the research questions, the questionnaire was developed consisting of three parts – A, B and C. Part A focused on biographical and employment related data. The purpose of this was to provide information regarding:

- the degree of completion of respondents' qualification;
- the position at which respondents entered the job market, the associated remuneration and the time spent in this position;
- the progression within the job market that respondents had experienced during their employment and the associated remuneration;
- the retention of respondents within the hospitality industry.

Part B contained questions relating to the skills required by employers. A Likert Scale using five response categories was used. The five categories were: 1 = Strongly Agree

2 = Agree

3 = Unsure

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly Disagree

Part C contained questions relating to the usefulness of each subject included in the Diploma: Hospitality Management programme. Using a rating scale, respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of each subject to them in their career. There were four response categories:

1 = Very Useful

2 = Useful

3 = Unsure

4 = Of little value

The purpose of including this question was to determine whether or not there were any redundant subjects within the programme. This information will be used as a basis for review and possible amendment of the qualification curriculum.

3.3.1.2 Recruitment of Study Participants

At the end of the 2008 academic year 108 students had reached the end of three years of study towards the Diploma: Hospitality Management. The number of students reaching the end of three years of study towards the qualification in 2009 was 150 and 148 in 2010. The total number of students reaching the end of three years of study in the period under review was 406. The population for the period of time is therefore four hundred and six.

An e-mail containing a link to the research questionnaire was sent to all students for whom an e-mail address was available. A covering letter explained that participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous and that participants could withdraw from the research at any time they chose.

3.3.2 Pretesting and Validation

As the questionnaire was to be completed by participants who would have no direct contact with the researcher, it was essential to ensure that there could be no confusion as to what was required of respondents. Respondents to the final questionnaire could be based anywhere in the world. It was therefore decided to conduct a pilot test of the survey questionnaire using current students. This would enable face to face interaction and feedback.

Once designed the questionnaire was pre-tested on a group of current students. Six current second year students from the IHS Sandton campus were asked to participate in pretesting the questionnaire. Access to the questionnaire was enabled in the school's computer laboratory and the researcher was present during the trial.

The questions in Section A of the questionnaire are pertinent to a respondent's completion of the qualification, initial employment and current employment. As the respondents in the pre-test are currently still studying, they were asked to make up their responses in this section.

The questions in Section B of the questionnaire are relevant to the identified skills required by employers. Students were asked to answer the questions in this section as truthfully as possible with reference to their own experience of the course content completed at this stage of their studies.

Section C of the questionnaire questions the relevance of the subjects comprising the qualification and the Experiential Learning component of the programme to the respondent's employment. The students were asked to relate the subjects they had completed at this stage of their studies to the work situations they had experienced during the Experiential Learning blocks they had so far completed.

Once all students had completed the questionnaire a feedback session was

held to enable the students to comment on their experience of the questionnaire and make suggestions on the format and content.

In the initial introduction to the questionnaire it was stated that it should take between ten to fifteen minutes for respondents to complete the questionnaire. During the trial run, respondents took between five and eight minutes to complete all questions. The introduction was amended to state that respondents should take between five and ten minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The students commented that the questionnaire was too "wordy" which had led them to lose interest before they had finished reading some of the questions. The wording of the questionnaire was reworked to make the questions more streamlined.

Through the course of the Diploma: Hospitality Management programme students engage in four ten-week blocks and one twenty-week block of Experiential Learning. During this time the students are placed in industry and work within specific areas of a hotel. Although formally referred to as Experiential Learning, the students refer to these work placements as "Practical Experience". The Students believed that the term "Experiential Learning" would be confusing to respondents and so the term "Practical Experience" was substituted in the questionnaire.

A spelling error in question twenty four was highlighted and corrected.

In particular instances the students believed that they possessed some of the skills sought by employers. However, these skills had not been developed as a result of their participation in the Diploma: Hospitality Management programme. The students believed that the skills had been acquired during their secondary school experience, from their home environment, from interaction with their peers or other social groups or from work experience external to their current study programme. The questionnaire did not allow respondents an opportunity to explain this which

could create a false impression where respondents would answer "no" to the question "do you believe that the Diploma: Hospitality Management programme equipped you with the following skill?"

3.3.3 *Administration of the Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was first sent to students in early September. After the first week only forty three responses had been received. A reminder containing the questionnaire link was sent out to the students which elicited a further thirty five responses. At the end of week two an additional reminder was sent out again containing the questionnaire link. A further five responses were received following this reminder.

As a month had passed since the initial questionnaires were sent out it was felt that no more responses would be received. No further reminders were sent out and a total of one hundred responses were received.

3.4 Participants and Location of the Study

The participants in this study were students who exited the Diploma: Hospitality Management programme at the end of their third year of study in the years 2008 to 2010. Not all of the participants are graduates as some have not completed all requirements of the qualification. However, for the purpose of this study the term graduate will be used to denote all students who completed three years of study towards The International Hotel School's Diploma: Hospitality Management irrespective of whether or not the qualification was achieved.

The three year programme includes sixty weeks of Experiential Learning. Students reaching the end of the programme therefore have a range of work experience in all areas within a hotel. Students who have not fully completed their qualification were included in the study as it is possible to obtain employment within the industry without a qualification.

Once graduates have completed their years of study many are employed within the South African hospitality industry. However, there are many who find

employment in the industry internationally and on cruise ships. It is impossible to restrict the study to one locality as respondents are spread throughout the world. For this reason an on-line, self-completion questionnaire was chosen as the method of data collection.

3.5 Data Collection Strategies

3.5.1 Selecting the Sample Size

Probability sampling is most strongly associated with good research practice (Bryman 2008: 176) where each element of a population has a known, non-zero probability of being selected for the sample (Maree and Pietersen 2007:172). The geographical spread of students, lack of current contact information and the associated costs in tracking them made the use of probability sampling impractical.

As it was impractical to use probability sampling in this research, non-probability sampling methods were considered with Judgement Sampling being deemed the most suitable to this study.

- o *Judgement Sampling* – Sekaran (2003:277) and Saunders (2009:237) explain that judgement sampling allows the researcher to use their judgement of who will be best able to answer the research questions as a basis for sample selection. Sekaran (2003:285) expands this explanation further by indicating that a judgement sampling design is useful where it is vital to obtain specialised, informed information on the research topic. Cavana (2001:263) states that judgment sampling is the best method to use when there is a limited number of people with the information required.

Judgement Sampling was deemed to be the most suitable for the following reasons:

- The research considers the contribution to student employability made by The International Hotel School's Diploma: Hospitality Management;

- The writer has selected the students believed to be best able to provide the required information; and

- Only students who have achieved this qualification or completed the three years of study towards the qualification will be able to provide specialised knowledge of how they believe the qualification equipped them with the skills required by employers.

The chosen sample included students who had completed three years of study towards the Diploma: Hospitality Management in the years 2008 to 2010 and who had a valid email address.

Names of students and last known e-mail addresses were drawn from the school's database. Table 3.1 indicates the total number of students reaching the end of their third year of study during the period under review.

	2008	2009	2010	Total
Number of Students completing three years of study	108	150	148	**406**

Table 3.1 Number of students completing three years of study in the period December 2008 to December 2010

Of the four hundred and six names in the database, no e-mail addresses were available for eighty three of the students. These students were excluded from the research. Once the survey was dispatched a further fifty three students were excluded as the email addresses on record were obsolete. This reduced the number of possible respondents to two hundred and seventy.

The sample size was thus two hundred and seventy or sixty seven percent of the population.

3.5.2 Description of the Sample

There was no way of telling before the survey was dispatched which e-mail addresses from the school's database where obsolete.

The sample included respondents who are working within the hospitality industry in South Africa. There were also respondents who are working in foreign countries and on the cruise liners but still within the hospitality industry. Some of the respondents are no longer employed within the hospitality industry.

3.5.3 Method of Collecting Data

The Hospitality Industry is a highly mobile industry and past students could be employed anywhere in the world. Due to the possible wide geographical dispersion of respondents, it would be impossible to conduct structured interviews with the subjects. Therefore, a self-completion questionnaire was chosen as the method of data collection. The questionnaire was loaded onto the data collection system, Survey Monkey. Respondents completed the questionnaire on-line and submitted it electronically on completion.

3.6   Analysis of the Data

3.6.1 Reliability

As explained by Bryman and Bell (2007:40) 'reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept'.   According to the authors, three aspects concerned with the assessment of the reliability of a measure which must be considered are:

- Stability – is the measure stable over time? If a questionnaire is administered to a sample group and then re-administered to the same group at a later date, the results achieved from the second administration must be consistent with those achieved in the first administration.
- Internal Reliability – are the indicators that comprise the scale or index consistent? Where a number of indicators are included in a study with the aim of measuring a single construct, there should be a high level of consistency between the indicators.

- Inter-observer Consistency – is there consistency in the decisions of multiple observers? Absence of conflict in any form is important where there is more than one person involved in the collection or interpretation of data.

The research questionnaire in this study contains a number of indicators formulated to measure a single construct – does the Diploma: Hospitality Management enhance student employability? Pietersen and Maree (2007:216), explain that the coefficient used to measure the internal reliability of a research instrument is Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This coefficient is based on inter-item correlations where a strong correlation is indicated by a coefficient close to one while a poor correlation will be indicated by a coefficient close to zero.

The internal reliability of the indicators in the research questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha.

3.6.2 The Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Pearson's correlation coefficient is an indication of the strength of the linear relationship between two quantitative variables (Pietersen & Maree 2007:234).

Bryman and Bell (2007: 362) give the following explanation of the value of a Pearson coefficient:
- The value of the coefficient will be between zero and one. A zero value indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables. The closer to one a value is the stronger the relationship indicated. A value of one indicates a perfect relationship.
- The coefficient will either have a positive or a negative value indicating the direction of the relationship i.e. whether the relationship is positive or negative.

Pearson's *r* will be utilised to examine the relationships between variables in the research questionnaire.

3.7   Summary

This chapter described the methods used in selecting the research sample, developing the research questionnaire, data collection and analysing the data obtained.

An on-line, self completion questionnaire was developed using information obtained from the literature review of the skills required of graduates by employers. The questions were structured in a manner that would obtain information about the required skills from the respondents' perspective.

The questionnaire was administered to the graduates of The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management programme from the years 2008 to 2010 and the data obtained is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR
Presentation of Results

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results received from the research questionnaire will be presented. A total of one hundred responses were received but not all respondents answered all questions. Where questions were unanswered these have been excluded from the results calculations. In some instances the number of respondents who did not answer the question is indicated.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Reliability Testing

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the research questionnaire in this study contained a number of indicators formulated to measure a single construct – does the Diploma: Hospitality Management enhance student employability? To assist in answering this question, the internal reliability of the indicators in the research questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

To enable Cronbach's alpha to be correctly calculated, it was necessary to identify and exclude responses where all variables had not been responded to. This information is indicated in Table 4.1.

		N	%
Cases	Valid	73	73
	Excluded*	27	27
	Total	100	100

* Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Table 4.1: Valid cases used in the calculation of Cronbach's alpha

A total of one hundred responses were received to the questionnaire. An evaluation of the responses highlighted that there were 27 respondents who had not responded to all forty one variables included in the questionnaire. This number was excluded from the calculation of Cronbach's alpha. The resultant Cronbach's alpha is indicated in Table 4.2.

Cronbach's alpha	N – Variables
0.994	41

Table 4.2: Cronbach's alpha calculated for a total of 41 variables

A reliability coefficient of 0.994 was achieved for the questionnaire used in this study. In terms of the interpretation of Cronbach's alpha values indicated in Table 3.5, the value of 0.994 represents excellent internal reliability for this instrument.

4.2.2 Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)

The relationships between a range of variables from the research questionnaire were examined using Pearson's *r*.

Table 4.3 demonstrates the relationship between the variables, "Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level6)" and "Which IHS campus did you attend?"

		Pearson Correlation 1	

		Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6)?	Which IHS Campus did you attend?
Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6)?	Pearson Correlation	1	.381**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	92	90
Which IHS Campus did you attend?	Pearson Correlation	.381**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	92

** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.3: Correlation between programme completion and campus attended

The correlation (*r*) between "Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6)" and "Which IHS campus did you attend?"

Is 0.381. This coefficient shows that there is a strong, positive relationship between the two variables. The probability (p) of this correlation coefficient is 0.000. As it is less that 0.05 this implies that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

4.2.3 Biographical Information of Respondents

Although much of the biographical information was not relevant to this study, the information allows for comparison of responses across campuses, gender and years of study. The information collected could be used for secondary research at a later date.

Tables 4.4 to 4.9 and Figures 4.1 to 4.6 present the biographic data of the respondents. Only valid percentages were utilized in formulating the tables and figures.

Campus Attended

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.1 indicate the campus attended by respondents

Q.2 – Which IHS Campus did you attend?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cape Town	28	28	31.1	31.1
	Durban	15	15	16.7	47.8
	Sandton	47	47	52.2	100.0
	Valid: Total	90	90	100.0	
Invalid	Non-respondents	10	10		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.4: Campuses attended by respondents

Campus Attended by Respondents
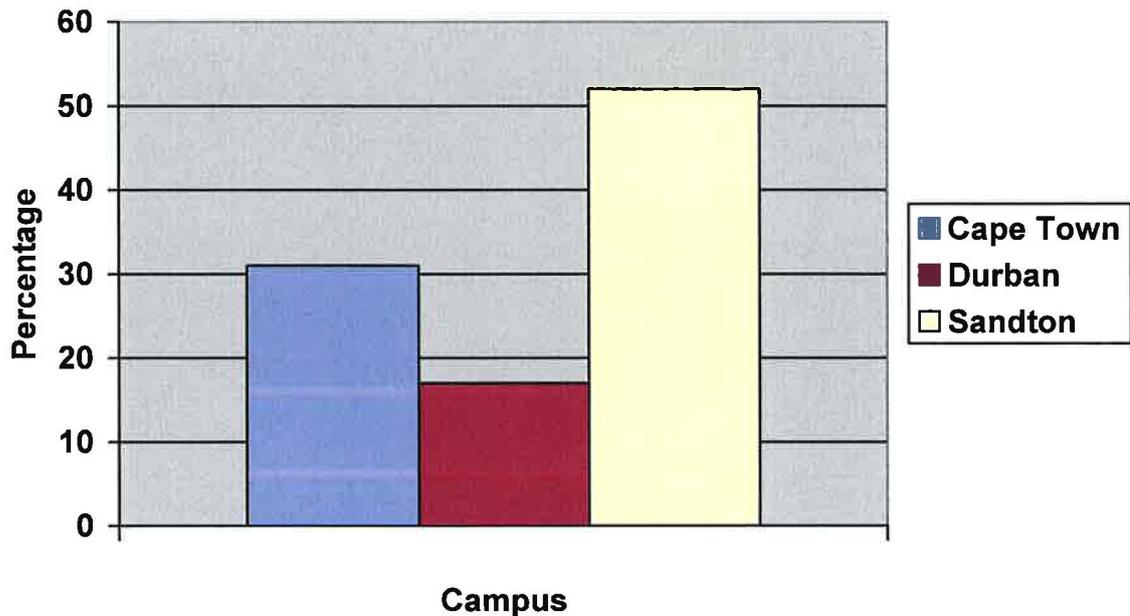
Figure 4.1: Comparison of campuses attended by respondents

Table 4.4and Figure 4.1 reveal the dispersion of the campus that the respondents in this research attended. The majority of participants in this research attended the Sandton campus at 52.2%, Cape Town follows at 31.1% and Durban is at 16.7%. 10 of the respondents did not indicate which campus they attended.

Years of Study

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.2 indicate the years in which the respondents studied.

Q3. – When did you study at IHS?

	Year	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	2006-2008	24	24	27.59	27.59
	2007-2009	32	32	36.78	64.37
	2008-2010	31	31	35.63	100.00
	Valid: Total	87	87	100.00	
Invalid:	Non-respondents	13	13		
Combined Total		100	100		

Table 4.5: Respondents' years of study

Year of Study of Respondents
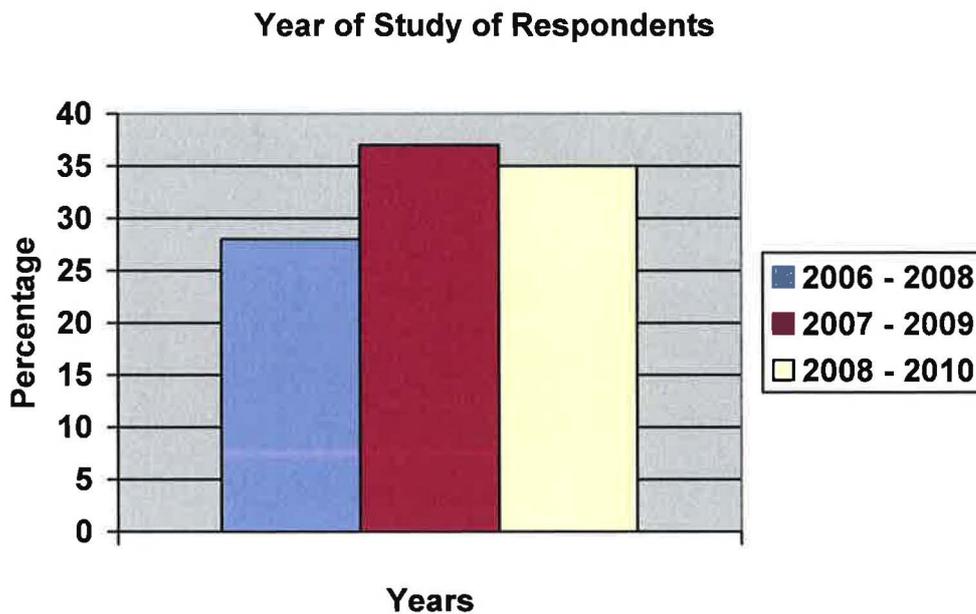
Figure 4.2: Comparison of years of study for respondents

27.59% of the respondents studied from 2006 – 2008; 36.78% studied from 2007 – 2009; and 35.63% studied from 2008 – 2010. 13 of the respondents did not indicate their years of study.

<u>Gender of Respondents</u>

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.3 reveal the gender dispersion of respondents in this research.

Q. 4 – Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	59	63.4	64.1	64.1
	Male	33	35.5	35.9	100.0
	Total	92	98.9	100.0	
Invalid	Non-respondents	8	1.1		
Combined Total		93	100.0		

Table 4.6: Gender of respondents

Gender of Respondents
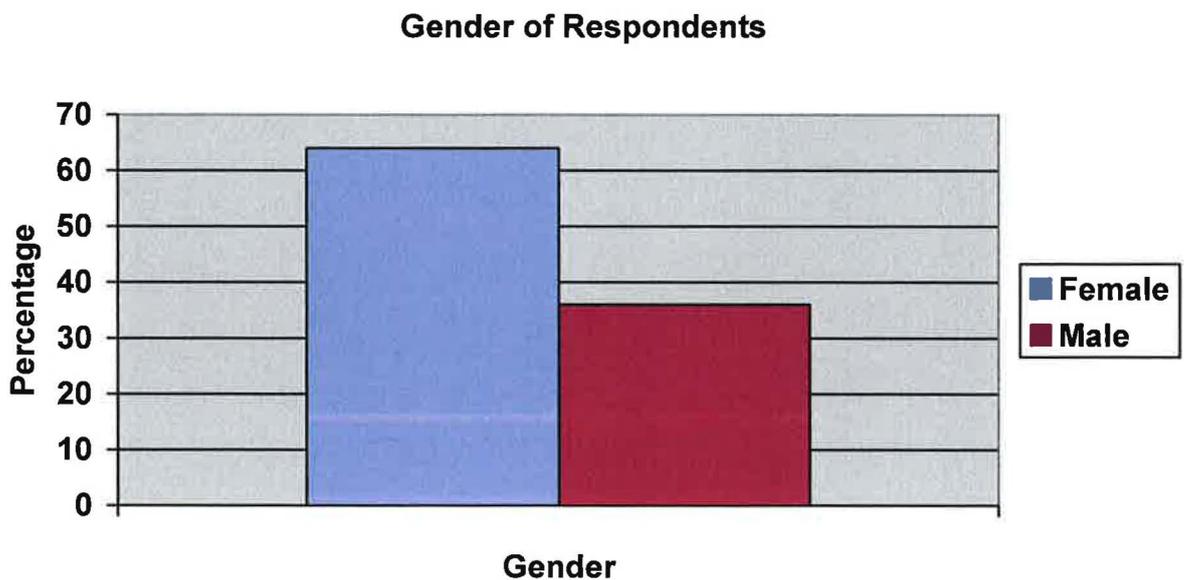
Figure 4.3: Gender dispersion of respondents

The participants in this research are 35% male and the majority at 65% are female. 8 of respondents did not reveal their gender.

Age of Respondents

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.4 reveal the age dispersion of respondents in this research.

Q. 5 – In what age group are you?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-24	74	79.6	80.4	80.4
	25-28	18	19.4	19.6	100.0
	Total	92	98.9	100.0	
Invalid:	Non-respondents	8	1.1		
Combined Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.7: Age of respondents

Age Dispersion of Respondents
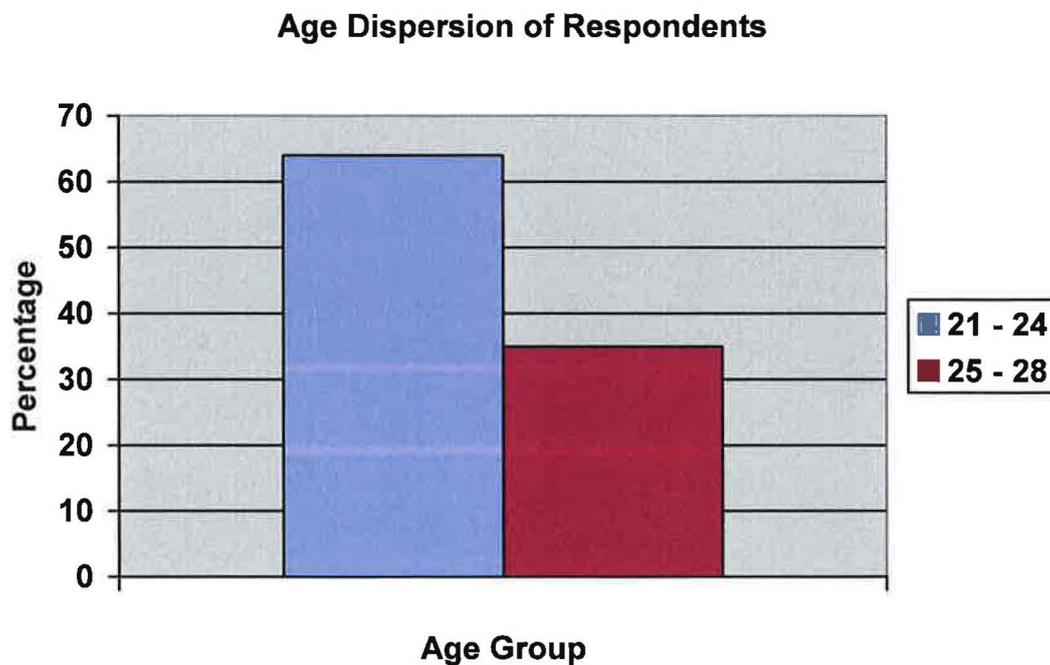
Figure 4.4: Age dispersion of respondents

The largest percentage of the respondents fell in the 21-24 years group (80.4%) and 19.6% of the respondents fell into the grouping 25-28 years. 8 of the respondents did not reveal to which age-group they belonged.

Completion of Diploma Programme

Table 4.8 and Figure 4.5 reveal whether or not the respondent completed the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6).

Q.6 – Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	76	76	82.6	82.6
	No	16	16	17.4	100.0
	Total	92	92	100.0	
Invalid	Non-respondents	8	8		
Total		100	100		

Table 4.8: Diploma programme completed or not

Diploma Programme Complete or Incomplete
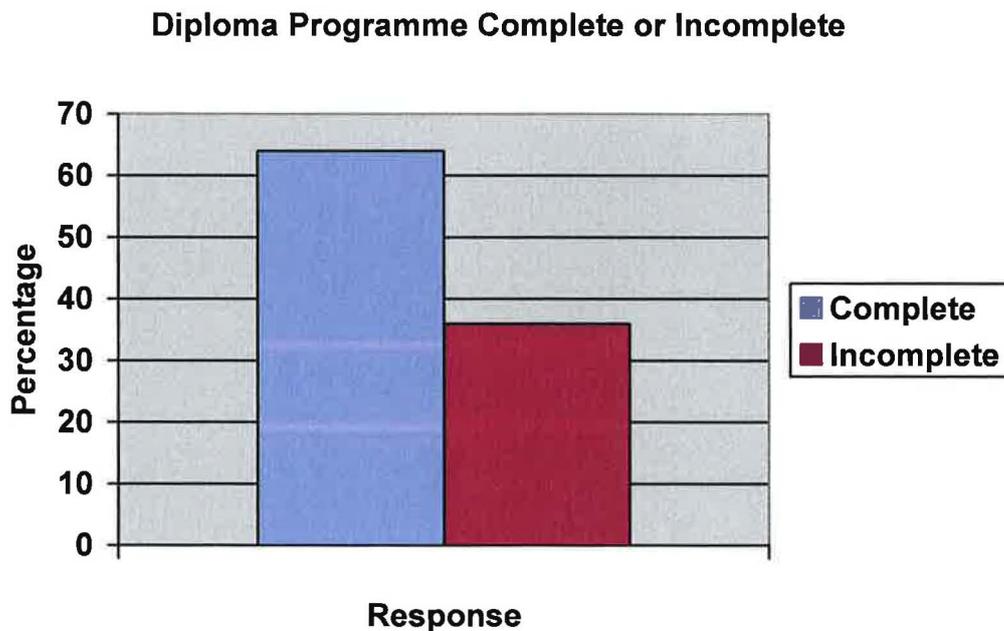
Figure 4.5: Completion of diploma programme

82.6% of the respondents answered that they had completed the diploma programme and 17.4% responded that they had not completed the programme. 8 of the respondents did not answer this question.

Current Employment

Table 4.9 and Figure 4.6 reveal whether or not the organization that the respondent is working for currently is involved in the hospitality industry.

Q.11 – Is the organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	74	74	83.1	83.1
	No	15	15	16.9	100.0
	Total	89	89	100.0	
Invalid	Non-respondents	11	11		
Combined Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.9: Current employment in the hospitality industry or not

Respondent Currently Employed in the Hospitality Industry
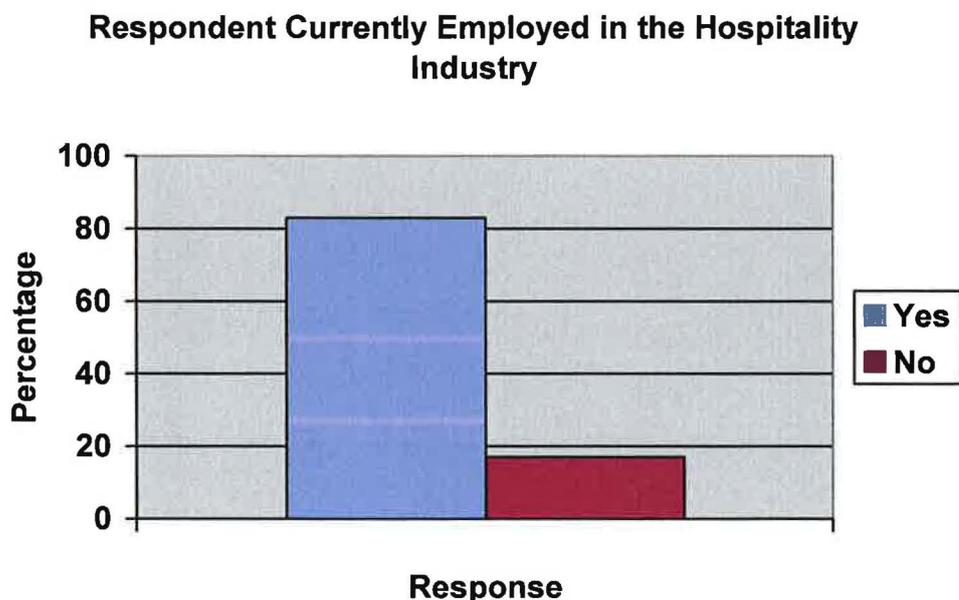
Figure 4.6: Comparison of hospitality industry employment

The majority of the respondents, 83.1% answered that they are currently employed in the Hospitality Industry. 16.9% of respondents indicated that they were not currently employed in the industry. 11 respondents did not answer this question.

4.2.3 Meeting the Objectives of the Study

Cross-tabulations were used in this section and graphical information on the cross-tabulation results is provided.

4.2.3.1 Objective 1

To determine the percentage of respondents who completed their full qualification.

Q.4 – Gender	Q.6 – Programme completed?	Cape Town Count	Cape Town % G*	Durban Count	Durban % G*	Sandton Count	Sandton % G*	Total Count	Total % T*
Female:	Yes	13	23	12	21	25	44	50	55
	No	2	4	0	0	5	9	7	8
	Total	15	26	12	21	30	53	57	63
Male:	Yes	11	33	2	6	12	36	25	28
	No	2	6	1	3	5	15	8	9
	Total	13	39	3	9	17	52	33	37
Total:	Yes	24	27	14	16	37	41	75	83
	No	4	4	1	1	10	11	15	17
	Total	28	31	15	17	47	52	90	100

The table header above spans: **Q. 2 – Which IHS campus did you attend?** with sub-columns Cape Town, Durban, Sandton, Total.

G* = percentage of total number of students per gender; T* = percentage of total student number

Table 4.10: Comparison of campus attended and completion of Programme
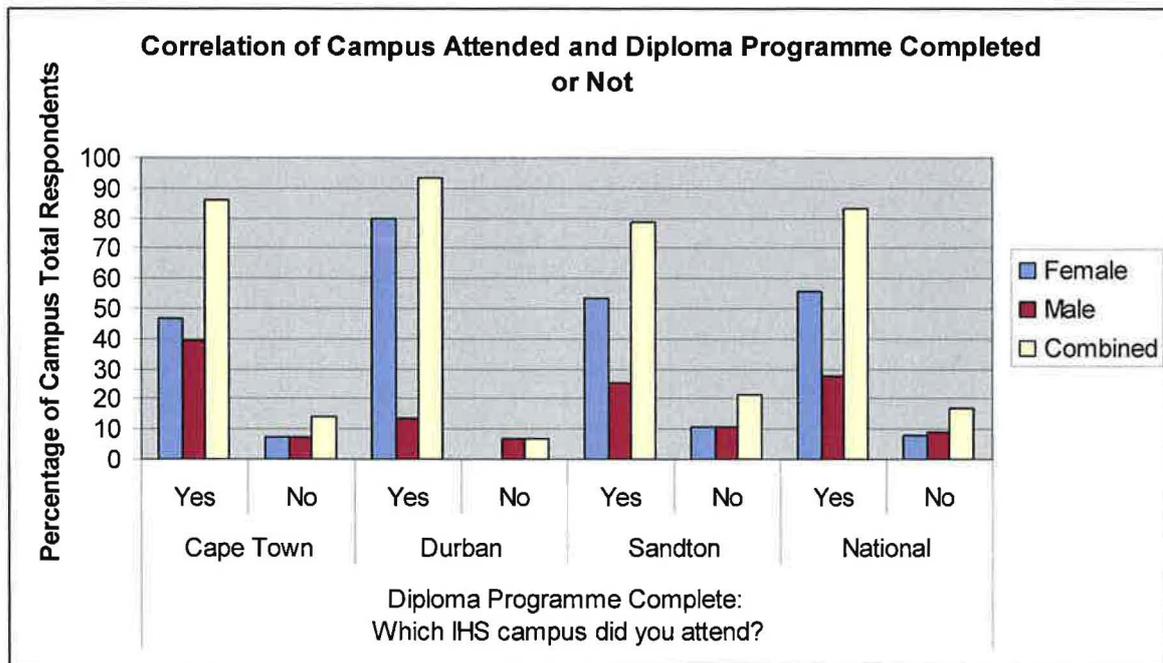
Figure 4.7 Comparison of campus attended and completion of Programme

4.2.3.2 Objective 2

To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry having completed their qualification.

Q.4 – Gender	Q.6 – Diploma Programme completed?		Q. 11 – Is the organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?		
			Yes	No	Total
Female	Yes	Count	41	10	51
		%	80.39	19.61	100
Male	Yes	Count	21	3	24
		%	87.50	12.50	100
Total	Yes	Count	62	13	75
		%	82.67	17.33	100

Table 4.11: Comparison of whether respondents who completed their qualification are still employed in the hospitality industry or not
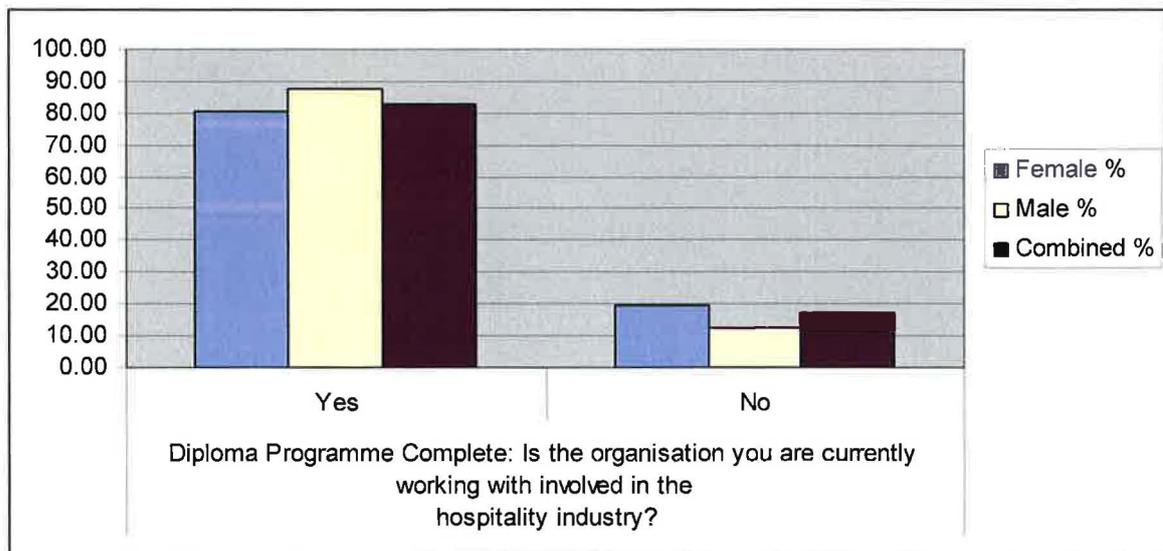
Figure 4.8: Comparison of whether respondents who completed their qualification are still employed in the hospitality industry or not

4.2.3.3 Objective 3

To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry who did not complete their qualification.

Gender	Diploma Programme completed?		Is the organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?		
			Yes	No	Total
Female	No	Count	7	0	7
		%	100	0	100
Male	No	Count	5	2	7
		%	71.43	28.57	100
Combined	No	Count	12	2	14
		%	85.71	14.29	100

Table 4.12: Comparison of whether respondents who did not complete their qualification are still employed in the hospitality industry or not
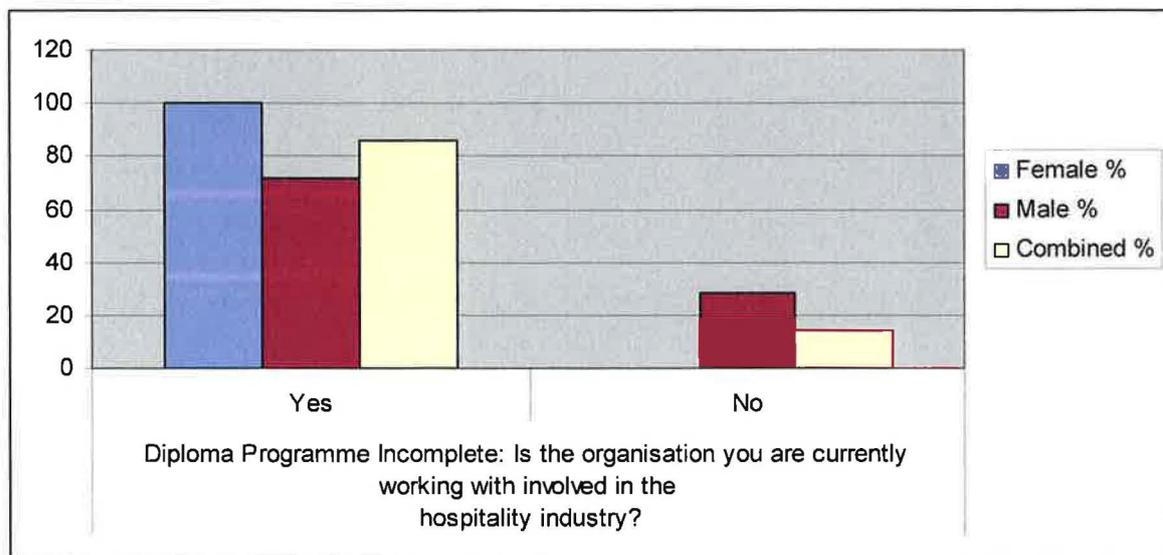

Figure 4.9: Comparison of whether respondents who did not complete their qualification are still employed in the hospitality industry or not

4.2.3.4 Objective 4

To identify which industries respondents are employed in if not employed in the hospitality industry.

16.9% of the respondents indicated that they are not currently employed in the hospitality industry. The respondents indicated that they are employed in the following industries:

Respondent	Response	Current Position
1613762615	Export / Import	Manager
1605890594	Still studying	Student
1602510825	Not stated	Sales Representative
1580700428	Advertising	Not stated
1580290871	Distribution & Transmission	Public Relations
1580200893	Teaching	Teacher
1580120831	Tourism Industry	Sales Consultant
1579593317	Sales and Marketing	Not stated
1575395017	Publishing & Consultancy	Project Coordinator
1567803470	Mining Resources	Corporate Responsibility Consultant
1567652112	Retail	Assistant to Accounts Manageress
1567583844	Agricultural sector	Managing Director
1567567365	Exhibitions and Events	Senior Coordinator - Events and sponsorships
1567539605	Trading	Creditor Controller
1567061463	Unemployed	NA

Table 4.13: Industries where respondents are employed if not in the hospitality industry

4.2.3.5 **Objective 5 and Objective 6**

5. To establish the extent to which respondents believe that the diploma programme equipped them with the skills sought by employers.

6. To highlight which skills required by employers are not developed by the diploma programme.

Tables 4.14 to 4.17b and Figures 4.10 to 4.13 present information regarding the respondents' perceptions of the development of the skills required by employers through the Diploma Hospitality Management programme.

Basic Skills and Understanding

	Use a range of computer software	Use industry specific information systems	Write appropriate reports & correspondence	Correctly interpret written reports, instructions and correspondence	Communicate effectively & in a businesslike manner	Clearly & confidently present information	Prepare, implement & interpret budgets, financial statements & cost controls	N	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Strongly Agree	27.6	15.8	19.7	19.7	44.0	29.7	14.5	7	**24.4**
Agree	59.2	63.2	43.4	53.9	46.7	63.5	36.8	7	**52.4**
Unsure	6.6	10.5	21.1	14.5	1.3	2.7	25.0	7	**11.7**
Disagree	5.3	7.9	11.8	9.2	6.7	4.1	18.4	7	**9.1**
Strongly Disagree	1.3	2.6	3.9	2.6	1.3	0.0	5.3	7	**2.4**
Combined:									
Strongly agree, agree	86.8	79.0	63.1	73.6	90.7	93.2	51.3	7	**76.8**
Unsure, Disagree and strongly disagree	13.2	21.0	36.8	26.3	9.3	6.8	48.7	7	**23.2**
Skill developed: (Yes: agree score > agree mean)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No		

Table 4.14: Development of Basic Skills and Understanding

Basic Skills and Understanding Developed
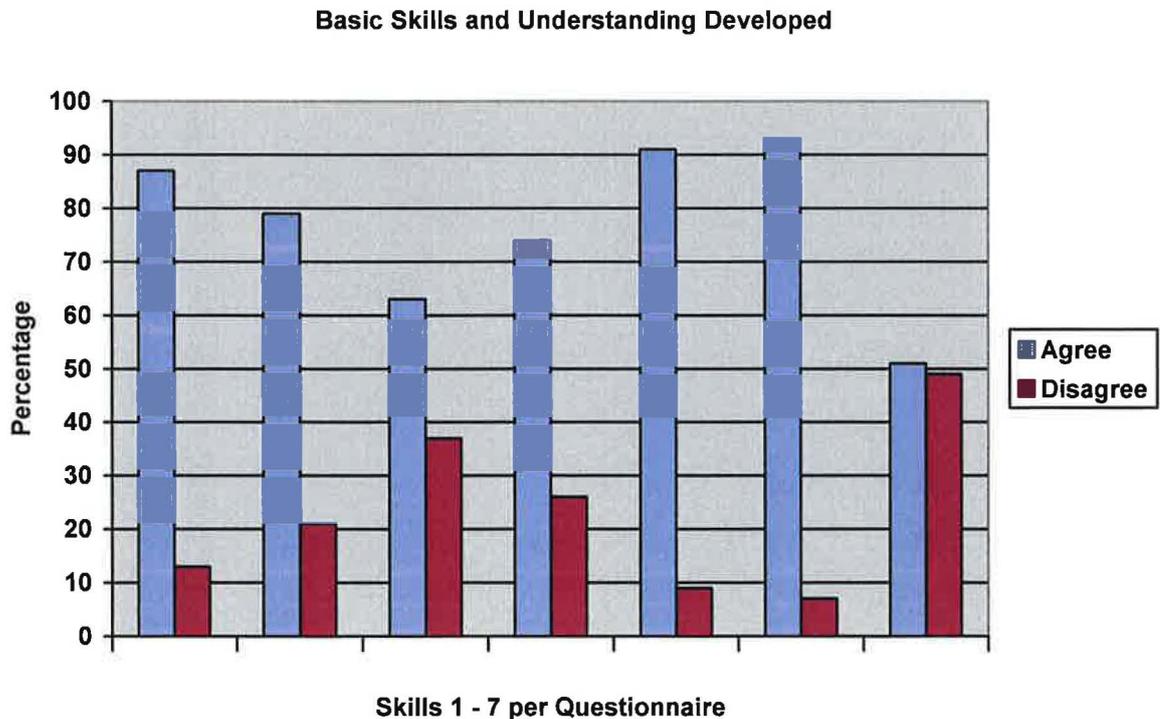
Figure 4.10: Development of Basic Skills and Understanding

Knowledge and Intellectual Ability

	Define problems, establish facts and draw valid conclusions	Interpret verbal instructions or extract relevant information from conversations	Gather information from various sources	N	Mean
	1	**2**	**3**		
Strongly Agree	18.2	26.0	20.8	3	21.7
Agree	70.1	64.9	59.7	3	64.9
Unsure	5.2	5.2	13.0	3	7.8
Disagree	6.5	3.9	3.9	3	4.8
Strongly Disagree	0.0	0.0	2.6	3	0.9
Combined:					
Strongly agree, agree	88.3	90.9	80.5	3	86.6
Unsure, Disagree and strongly disagree	11.7	9.1	19.5	3	13.4
Skill developed: (Yes: agree score > agree mean)	Yes	Yes	No		

Table 4.15: Development of Knowledge and Intellectual Ability

Knowledge and Intellectual Ability Skills Developed
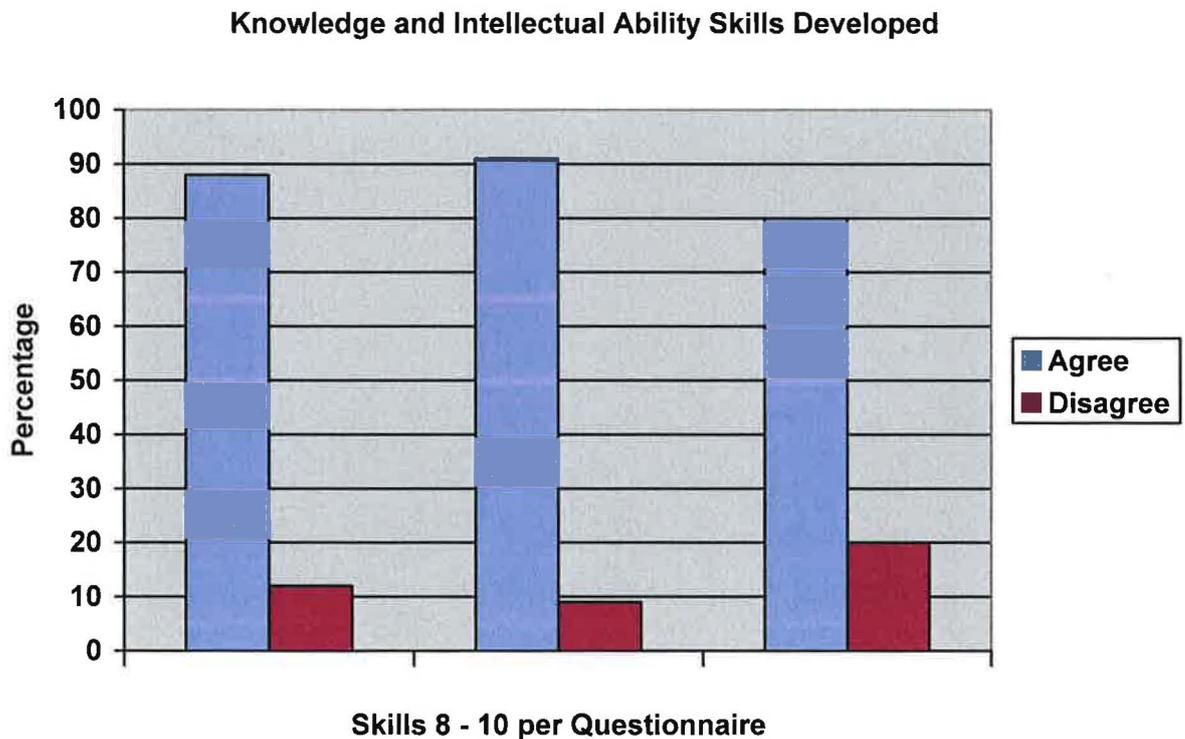
**Figure 4.11: Development of Knowledge and Intellectual Ability**

Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge

	Deal effectively with customers' problems (1)	Operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations (2)	Implement internal control systems in response to an identified problem (3)	Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests (4)	Know and comply with industry and situational specific legislation (5)	Plan, assign and direct work (6)	Handle employee grievances, manage employee problems and resolve contentious issues (7)	Supervise, motivate and encourage employees in accordance with the organisation's policies and applicable legislation (8)	Develop practical skills relevant to the industry (9)	Understand the need for revenue generation (10)	N	Mean
Strongly Agree	37.7	28.6	23.4	31.2	17.1	28.6	18.4	31.6	40.8	42.9	10	30.03
Agree	50.6	57.1	53.2	57.1	57.9	54.5	50.0	50.0	46.1	46.8	10	52.33
Unsure	6.5	13.0	16.9	7.8	19.7	11.7	22.4	13.2	6.6	2.6	10	12.04
Disagree	3.9	0.0	5.2	2.6	3.9	3.9	6.6	3.9	5.3	5.2	10	4.05
Strongly Disagree	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.6	1.3	1.3	2.6	10	1.56
Combined:												
Strongly agree, agree	88.3	85.7	76.6	88.3	75.0	83.1	68.4	81.6	86.9	89.7	10	82.36
Unsure, Disagree and strongly disagree	11.7	14.3	23.4	11.7	24.9	16.9	31.6	18.4	13.2	10.4	10	17.65
Skill developed: (Yes: agree score > agree mean)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes		

Table 4.16: Development of Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge

**Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge Developed**
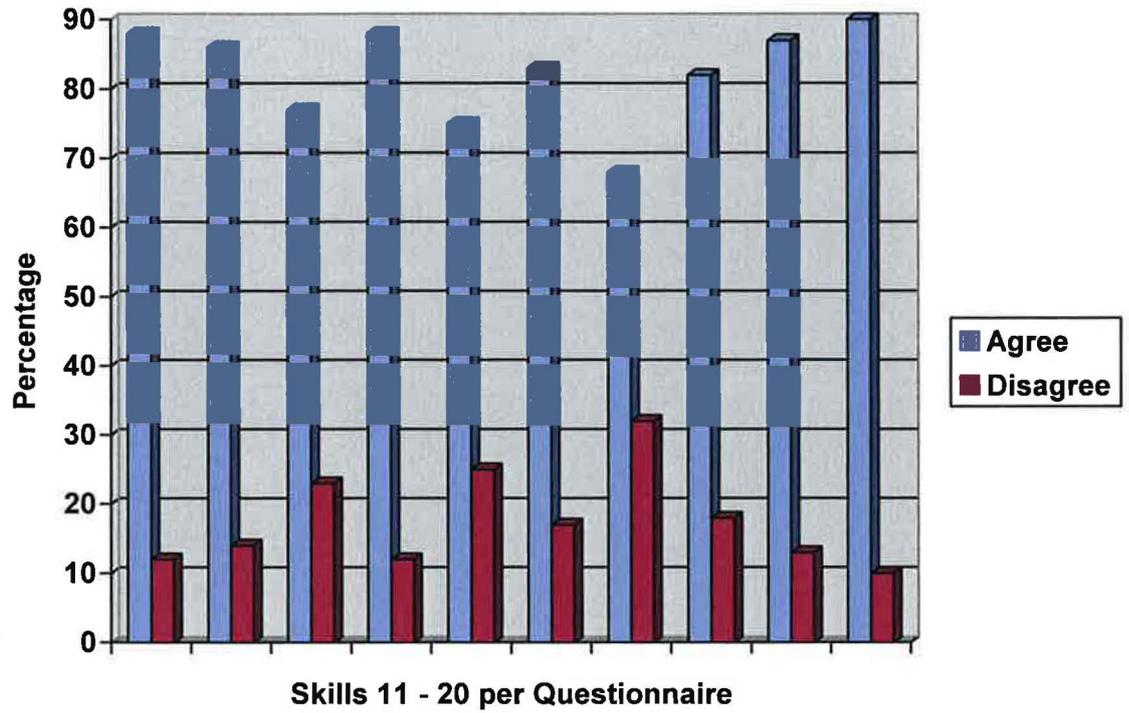
Figure 4.12: Development of Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge

Personal and Interactive Skills

	Work without close supervision	Understand your own strengths, weaknesses, values and aims	Recognise the need for life-long learning to meet the demands of employment and life	Anticipate and meet guests' needs	Recognise the need for strong attention to detail	Demonstrate a creative approach to problem solving	Be original or inventive and apply lateral thinking	Prioritise, organise and complete work within set deadlines	N	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Strongly Agree	39.0	36.8	37.7	53.2	48.1	30.3	31.2	41.6	8	37.4
Agree	54.5	55.3	49.4	40.3	39.0	51.3	50.6	53.2	8	50.1
Unsure	1.3	2.6	5.2	3.9	6.5	11.8	11.7	2.6	8	6.5
Disagree	3.9	3.9	6.5	1.3	5.2	5.3	5.2	1.3	8	4.6
Strongly Disagree	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	8	1.3
Combined:										
Strongly agree, agree	93.5	92.1	87.1	93.5	87.1	81.6	81.8	94.8	8	87.5
Unsure, Disagree and strongly disagree	6.5	7.8	13.0	6.5	13.0	18.4	18.2	5.2	8	12.5
Skill developed: (Yes: agree score > agree mean)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes		

Table 14.17a: Development of Personal and Interactive Skills

Personal and Interactive Skills

	Demonstrate empathy in dealing with guests and staff	Accept and adapt creatively to change	Work constructively with others on a common task	Communicate appropriately with members of a workgroup	Give and receive feedback on performance	Set personal objectives and develop a career plan	Maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment	Display confidence in dealing with challenges in employment	N	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Strongly Agree	40.8	32.9	39.0	37.7	31.2	31.2	37.7	29.9	8	37.4
Agree	47.4	51.3	50.6	50.6	50.6	49.4	55.8	51.9	8	50.1
Unsure	7.9	11.8	3.9	6.5	7.8	11.7	1.3	7.8	8	6.5
Disagree	2.6	2.6	5.2	3.9	7.8	6.5	3.9	9.1	8	4.6
Strongly Disagree	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	8	1.3
Combined:										
Strongly agree, agree	88.2	84.2	89.6	88.3	81.8	80.6	93.5	81.8	8	87.5
Unsure, Disagree and strongly disagree	11.8	15.7	10.4	11.7	18.2	19.5	6.5	18.2	8	12.5
Skill developed: (Yes: agree score > agree mean)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		

Table 4.17b: Development of Personal and Interactive Skills

# Personal and Interactive Skills Developed
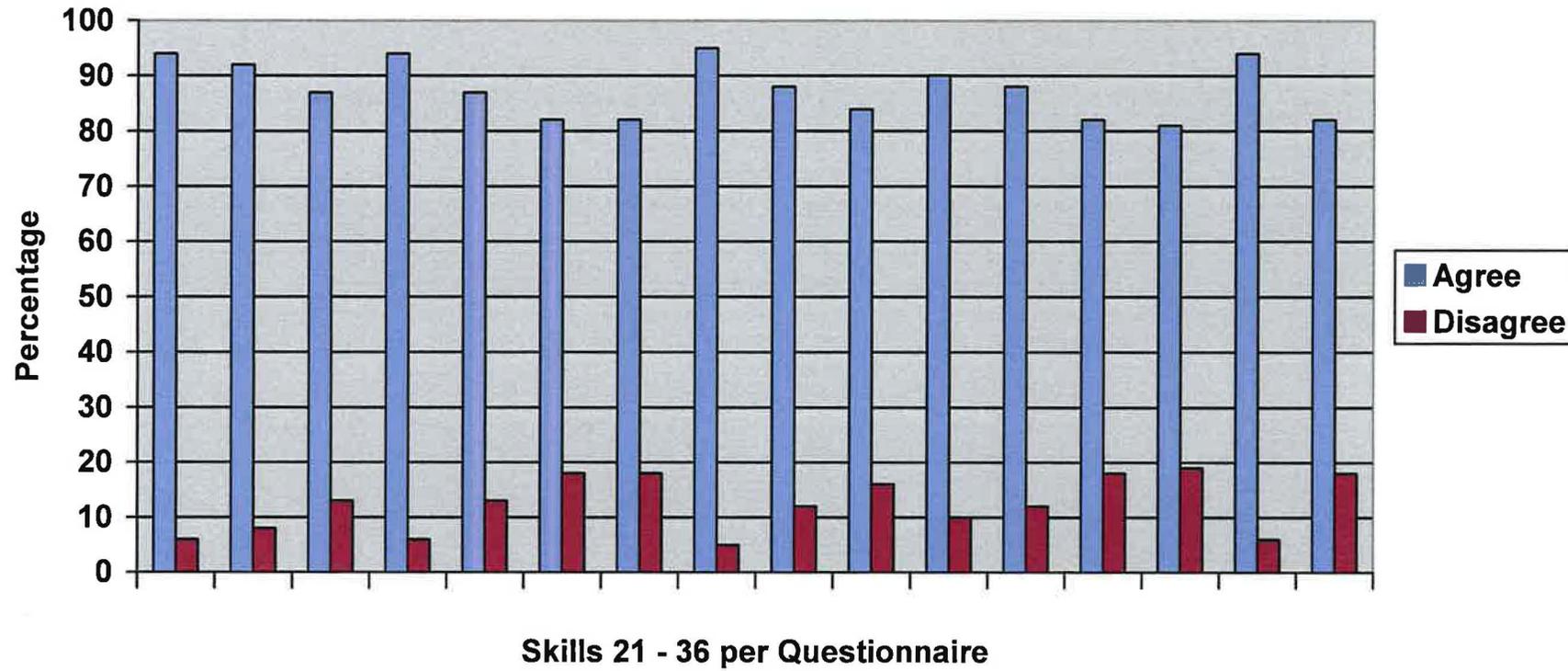
Figure 4.13: Development of Personal and Interactive Skills

4.2.3.6 **Objective 7**

To ascertain how useful the subjects contained in the diploma programme are to the respondents in their employment.

The subjects of each successive year have been grouped and the valid percentage response rates calculated for each of four measures of "usefulness". Non-respondents were not included in this analysis. The measure of "usefulness" used were:

- Very useful
- Useful
- Unsure
- Of little value

The results are as shown in Tables 4.18 to 4.21 and illustrated in Figures 4.14 to 4.17.

First Year Subjects

First Year Subjects	Hospitality Today	Supervision in the Hospitality Industry	Food & Beverage Management	Bar & Beverage Management	Food & Beverage Service	Life Skills / Tertiary Orientation	Food Production Theory & French Culinary Terms	Computers	Property Management System - Opera	N	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Very Useful	21.33	44.00	49.33	45.33	46.58	9.59	40.54	52.00	32.00	9	34.30
Useful	52.00	46.67	45.33	46.67	39.73	34.25	32.43	34.67	37.33	9	36.86
Unsure	12.00	6.67	2.67	4.00	6.85	26.03	13.51	10.67	16.00	9	9.15
Of Little Value	14.67	2.67	2.67	4.00	6.85	30.14	13.51	2.67	14.67	9	8.57
Combined:											
Useful	73.33	90.67	94.67	92.00	86.30	43.84	72.97	86.67	69.33		71.16
Not useful	26.67	9.33	5.33	8.00	13.70	56.16	27.03	13.33	30.67		17.73
Subject Useful: Subject score > mean	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No		

Table 4.18: Percentage rating of usefulness of First Year Subjects

Usefulness of First Year Subjects
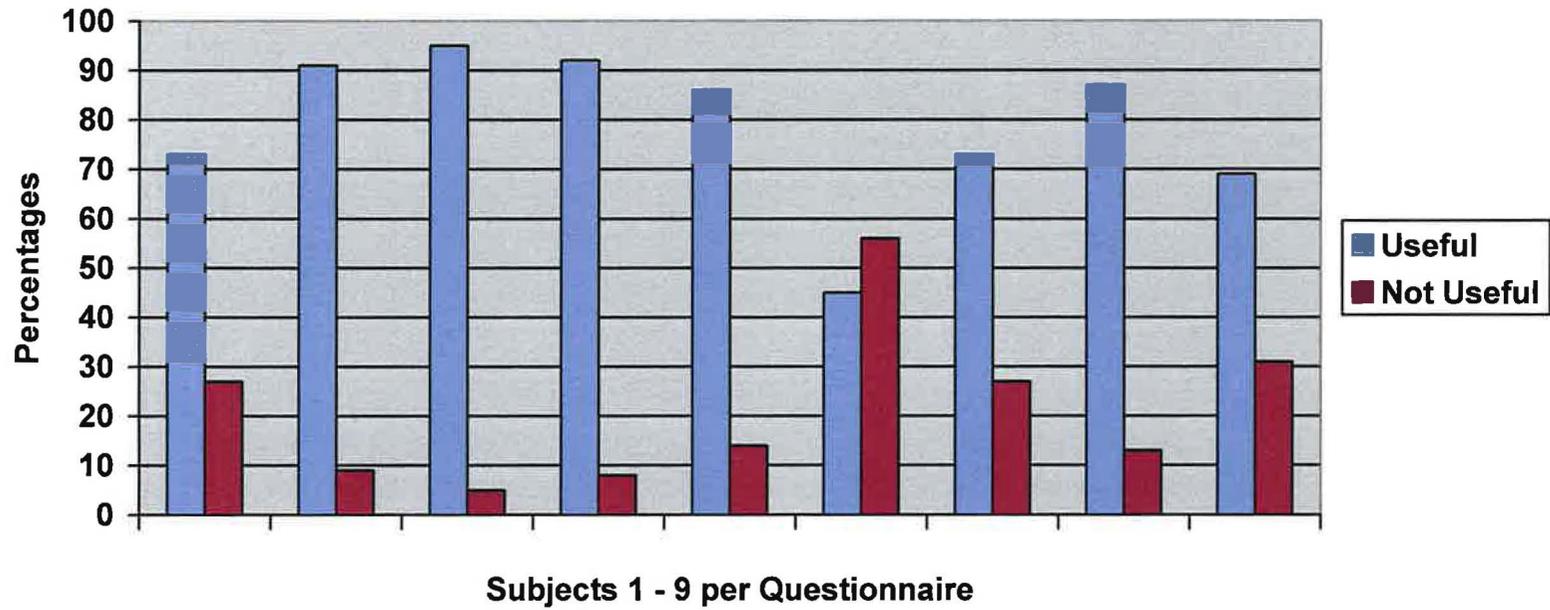
Figure 4.14: Usefulness of First Year Subjects

Second Year Subjects

Second Year Subjects	Managing Front Office Operations	Managing Housekeeping Operations	Hospitality Facilities Management & Design	Hospitality Sales and Marketinng	Communications 1 & 11	Guest Care - Spirit of Hospitality	Introductory French	N	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Very Useful	46.67	41.89	29.73	48.00	14.67	17.57	13.51	7	30.29
Useful	40.00	37.84	47.30	34.67	48.00	48.65	37.84	7	42.04
Unsure	5.33	9.46	13.51	14.67	21.33	16.22	13.51	7	13.43
Of Little Value	8.00	10.81	9.46	2.67	16.00	17.57	35.14	7	14.23
Combined:									
Useful	86.67	79.73	77.03	82.67	62.67	66.22	51.35		72.33
Not useful	13.33	20.27	22.97	17.33	37.33	33.78	48.65		27.67
Subject Useful: Subject score > mean	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		

**Table 4.19: Percentage rating of usefulness of Second Year Subjects**
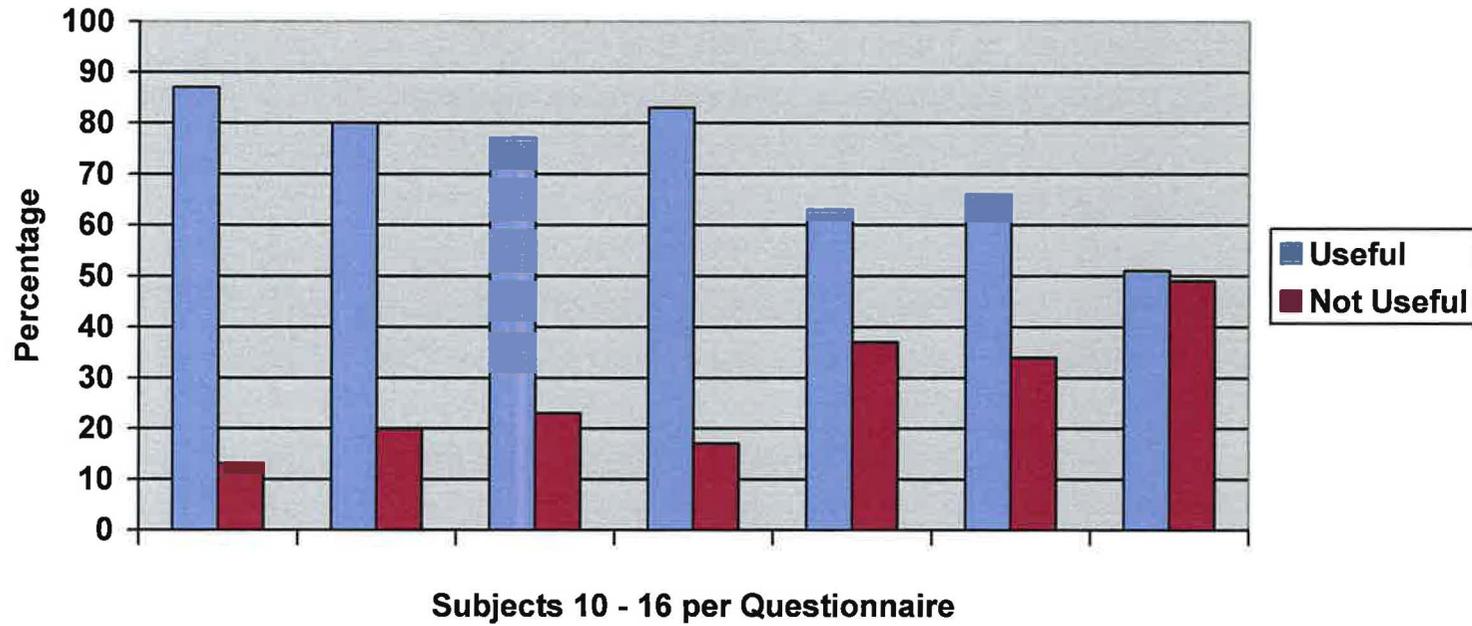
Figure 4.15: Usefulness of Second Year Subjects

Third Year Subjects	Training and Development in the Hospitality Industry	Managing for Quality / Leadership & Management in the Hospitality Industry	Basic Hotel and Restaurant Accounting	Purchasing / Planning & Control for Food & Beverage Operations	New Business Development	Communications 111 / Personal Career Preparation	Labour Law / Legal Requirements	Current Hospitality Trends	N	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Very Useful	21.33	44.00	49.33	45.33	46.58	9.59	40.54	52.00	8	38.59
Useful	52.00	46.67	45.33	46.67	39.73	34.25	32.43	34.67	8	41.47
Unsure	12.00	6.67	2.67	4.00	6.85	26.03	13.51	10.67	8	10.30
Of Little Value	14.67	2.67	2.67	4.00	6.85	30.14	13.51	2.67	8	9.65
Combined:										
Useful	73.33	90.67	94.67	92.00	86.30	43.84	72.97	86.67		80.06
Not Useful	26.67	9.33	5.33	8.00	13.70	56.16	27.03	13.33		19.94
Subject Useful: Subject score > mean	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes		

Table 4.20: Percentage rating of usefulness of Third Year Subjects

Usefulness of Third Year Subjects

Subjects 17 - 24 per Questionnaire
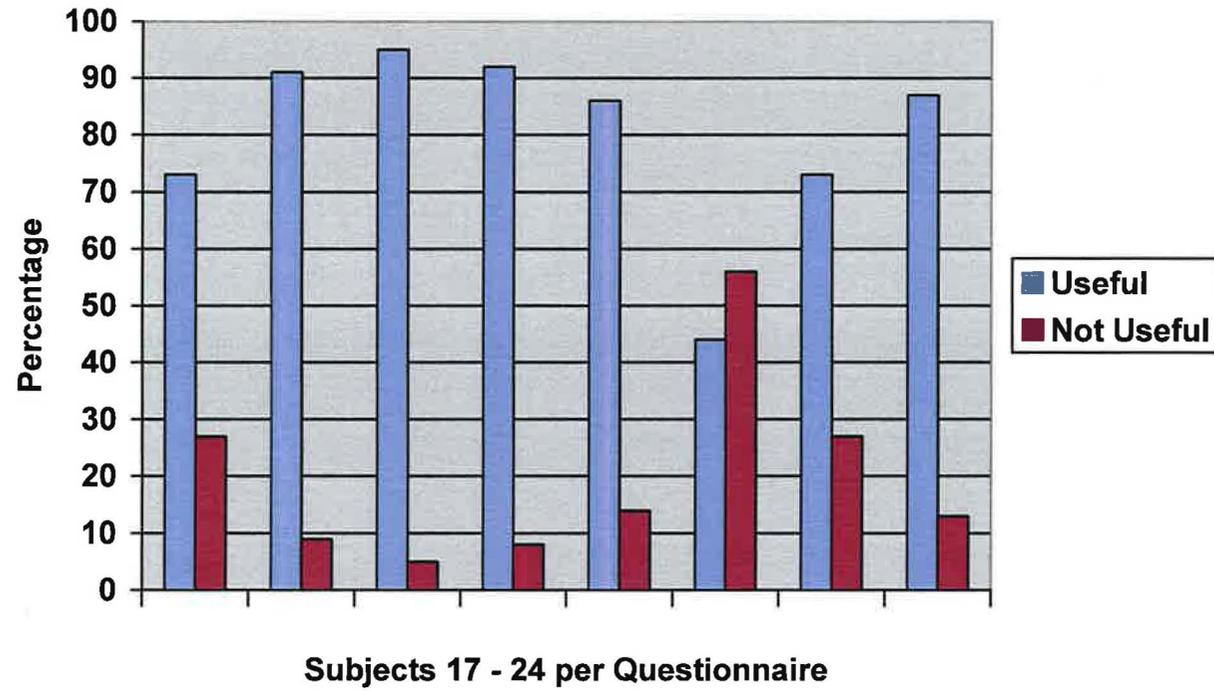
Figure 4.16: Usefulness of Third Year Subjects

4.2.3.7 Experiential Learning

A combined total of 98.7% of respondents reported that they found the experiential learning component of the programme useful (86.7% = very useful; 12% = useful). 1 respondent indicated that they had found the experiential learning component to be 'of little value'.

Usefulness of Experiential Learning Component
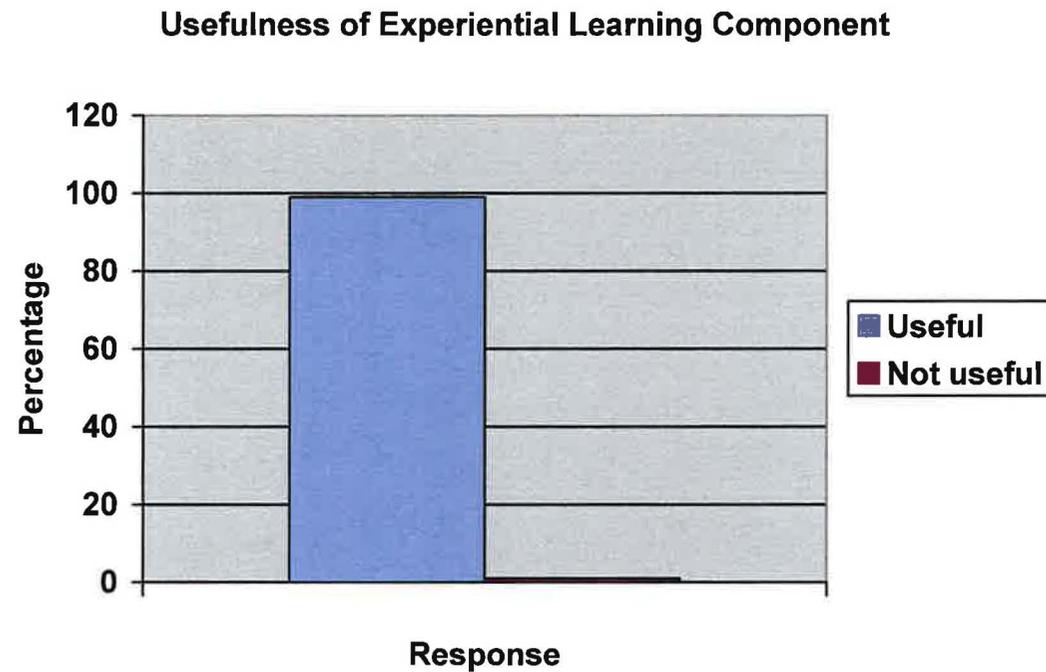
Figure 4.17: Usefulness of Experiential Learning Component

4.3 Summary

The preceding tables provide the data obtained from this study and the figures provide a graphical representation of this data. The following chapter will consider this data and utilise it to assess whether or not the objectives of the study have been met and the research question answered.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The results of this research will be examined to establish whether or not The International Hotel School's Diploma: Hospitality Management programme meets the requirements of Criterion 18 for programme accreditation as required by the Council on Higher Education. Criterion 18 stipulates that a programme must have "taken steps to enhance the employability of students......." (CHE 2004:23).

5.1.1 Biographical Information of Respondents

The International Hotel School has three campuses, Cape Town, Durban and Sandton in Johannesburg. Of the one hundred respondents on ninety answered the question regarding which campus they had attended. Using the ninety who responded to the question as the sample size, it was established that 31.1% of respondents attended the Cape Town campus, 16.7% attended the Durban campus and 52.2% attended the Sandton campus. The students included in the study were from the groups who completed three years of study in the period 2008 to 2010. As the Sandton campus has the largest number of students of the three campuses it could be assumed that the response from this campus would be the highest. However, this was not tested in the research and no evidence is available to support this assumption.

Three years of completion of studies were included in the sample, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Of the total response thirteen respondents did not answer this question and the actual response frequency was adjusted accordingly. 27.59% of the respondents completed their studies in 2008, 36.78% completed their studies in 2009 and 35.63% of respondents to the question "When did you study at IHS" completed their studies in 2010.

The student gender demographic in 2011 for the Diploma: Hospitality Management programme (IHS Annual Report 2011 to the Department of Higher Education and Training) indicate that 59.47% of the students are female and 40.53% of the students are male. The respondents who answered the research question on gender were 64.1% female and 35.9% male. Of the total respondents eight did not answer the question on gender.

Regarding the age grouping of respondents the groups possible were:
- 21 – 24 years old
- 25 – 28 years old
- 29 years old and older

Again eight respondents did not answer this question. Of those who did answer the question, 80.4% were in the grouping 21 – 24 years old. The majority of students entering the Diploma: Hospitality Management programme are school leavers who would generally complete their studies at age 21. Given that the maximum time between completing studies in 2008 and answering the questionnaire in 2011 is three years, this majority is to be expected.

It is possible to gain employment within the hospitality industry with no formal qualification. Of the respondents who answered the question "Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6)?" 82,6% had completed the programme and 17.4% had not. Eight respondents did not answer this question. Of all the respondents to the questionnaire only one is currently unemployed. This respondent is female and did complete the programme. No analysis was made of the positions held by respondents compared to whether or not they had completed their qualification.

To the question "is the organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?" 83.1% of the respondents who answered the question answered that they were. 16.9% of the respondents are not employed in the hospitality industry. The range of industries these respondents are involved with is shown in Table 4.13 Eleven respondents did not answer this question. In a personal interview DH King, Managing Director of The International Hotel School, stated that the management of the school views the Diploma in Hospitality

Management programme as a generalist management programme (C McDougall, 14.10.10). Considering the positions held by those not currently working within the hospitality industry, it could be argued that the employability skills developed on the programme have assisted them in their current employment. However, this was not tested in this research.

5.1.2 Meeting the Objectives of the Study

5.1.2.1 Objective 1

To determine the percentage of respondents who completed their full qualification. As can be seen from Table 4.8, 82.6% of the respondents who answered the question "Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6)?" responded that they had completed the programme. 17.4% of those who answered the question did not complete the programme and eight respondents did not answer this question. As indicated by Table 4.10, this question was cross-tabulated with the question "Which IHS campus did you attend?" and with the gender of respondents.

The result of this cross-tabulation indicated that 55% of the total respondents who completed the programme were female and 28% were male. Of the total female respondents, those who completed the programme were 23% from the Cape Town campus, 21% were from the Durban campus and 44% were from the Sandton campus. 33% of male respondents completed the programme and were from Cape Town campus, 6% were from the Durban campus and 36% were from the Sandton campus.

The percentage of respondents who completed their programme has been established from the results achieved indicating that this objective has been met.

5.1.2.2 Objective 2

To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry having completed their qualification.

Table 4.9 indicates that 82.67% of respondents who answered the question "Is the

organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?" completed the programme and are still employed in the hospitality industry. 80.39% of the female respondents and 87.50% of the male respondents completed the programme and are still in the hospitality industry.

The percentage of respondents who are still employed within the hospitality industry is significant. This objective has been met.

5.1.2.3 Objective 3
To establish the percentage of respondents still employed within the hospitality industry who did not complete their qualification.

Table 4.12 indicates that 85.71% of respondents who answered the question "Is the organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?" positively did not complete the programme. 100% of the female respondents and 71.43% of the male respondents who did not complete the programme are still employed in the hospitality industry.

From the information received, this objective has been achieved.

5.1.2.4 Objective 4
To identify which industries respondents are employed in if not employed in the hospitality industry.

Respondents were forthcoming with information on their current employment if they were not employed within the hospitality industry.
As indicated in Table 4.9 16.9% of those who answered the question "Is the organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?" are no longer involved in the industry. Table 4.13 details where those not employed in the industry are working.

Only one respondent who is not currently employed in the hospitality industry did not indicate which industry they were currently employed in or if they were in fact employed at all. This objective has been met.

5.1.2.5 Objective 5

To establish the extent to which respondents believe that the diploma programme equipped them with the skills sought by employers.

The work of Griesel and Parker (2009:6) categorised the skills sought by employers into four categories:

- Basic skills and understanding;
- Knowledge and intellectual ability;
- Workplace skills and applied knowledge; and
- Personal and interactive skills

These categories were used to group the employability skills utilised in this research. A five point Likert scale was used in the research questionnaire and respondents were asked to indicate their perception of how the diploma programme had developed the required employability skills. The five points used were:

- Strongly agree;
- Agree;
- Unsure;
- Disagree; and
- Strongly disagree

The skills in each category were examined using the valid frequency percentages for each of the five assessment points. The mean for each assessment point was calculated in each category and the achieved score compared to this. Where a skill scored below the mean of the assessment point in the category, it would be deemed that this skill had not been sufficiently developed within the programme.

For the purpose of this analysis the assessment points 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were grouped together as indicating agreement with a statement in the questionnaire i.e. that the skill had been developed within the programme.

Respondents who indicated that they were 'unsure' whether or not a skill had been developed within the programme were deemed to disagree with the statement and 'unsure' was grouped with 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' to indicate disagreement with a statement in the questionnaire.

Where a skill rated higher on the combined 'agree' than the combined 'agree' mean for the skill category, the skill was deemed to have been developed. Where a skill rated lower on the combined 'agree' than the combined 'agree' mean, the skill was deemed not to have been developed. The values achieved are indicated in Tables 4.14 – 4.17b. The results are as follows.

Basic Skills and Understanding

Skill	Achieved
Use a range of computer software	Yes
Use industry specific information systems	Yes
Communicate effectively & in a businesslike manner	Yes
Clearly & confidently present information	Yes

Of the seven skills assessed in this category four (57%) were deemed to have been developed.

Knowledge and Intellectual Ability

Skill	Achieved
Define problems, establish facts and draw valid conclusions	Yes
Interpret verbal instructions or extract relevant information from conversations	Yes

Of the three skills assessed in this category two (66.66%) were deemed to have been developed.

<u>Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge</u>

Skill	Achieved
Deal effectively with customers' problems	Yes
Operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations	Yes
Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests	Yes
Plan, assign and direct work	Yes
Develop practical skills relevant to the industry	Yes
Understand the need for revenue generation	Yes

Of the ten skills assessed six (60%) were deemed to have been developed.

<u>Personal and Interactive Skills</u>

Skill	Achieved
Work without close supervision	Yes
Understand your own strengths, weaknesses, values and aims	Yes
Anticipate and meet guests' needs	Yes
Prioritise, organise and complete work within set deadlines	Yes
Demonstrate empathy in dealing with guests and staff	Yes
Work constructively with others on a common task	Yes
Communicate appropriately with members of a workgroup	Yes
Maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment	Yes

Of the sixteen skills assessed in this category, eight (50%) were deemed to have been developed. A success rate of 50% is not acceptable and indicates an area of concern.

Overall only 55.66% of the skills assessed are deemed to have been developed. The objective has been achieved in that the extent to which skills are deemed to

have been developed has been established. However, as indicated in the recommendation, this is an area for concern in terms of the aim of the study.

5.1.2.6 Objective 6

To highlight which skills required by employers are not developed by the diploma programme.

The same methodology was applied in identifying skills that had not been developed as was applied in identifying skills that had been developed. In reviewing this objective, where a skill rated lower on the combined 'agree' than the combined 'agree' mean, the skill was deemed not to have been developed. The values achieved are indicated in Tables 4.14 – 4.17b. The results are as follows.

Basic Skills and Understanding

Skill	Achieved	Comment
Write appropriate reports & correspondence	No	The score achieved (63.1%) is significantly lower than the mean (76.8%) indicating that this is an area of concern and requires significant intervention.
Correctly interpret written reports, instructions and correspondence	No	The score achieved (73.6%) is marginally lower than the mean (76.8%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.
Prepare, implement & interpret budgets, financial statements & cost controls	No	The score achieved (51.3%) is significantly lower than the mean (76.8%) indicating that this is an area for concern and requires significant intervention.

Knowledge and Intellectual Ability

Skill	Achieved	Comment
Gather information from various sources	No	The score achieved (80.5%) is marginally lower than the mean (86.6%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.

Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge

Skill	Achieved	Comment
Implement internal control systems in response to an identified problem	No	The score achieved (76.6%) is significantly lower than the mean (82.36%) indicating that this is an area for concern and requires significant intervention.
Know and comply with industry and situational specific legislation	No	The score achieved (75%) is significantly lower than the mean (82.36%) indicating that this is an area for concern and requires significant intervention.
Handle employee grievances, manage employee problems and resolve contentious issues	No	The score achieved (68.4%) is significantly lower than the mean (82.36%) indicating that this is an area for concern and requires significant intervention.
Supervise, motivate and encourage employees in accordance with the organisation's policies and applicable legislation	No	The score achieved (81.6%) is marginally lower than the mean (82.36%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.

Personal and Interactive Skills

Skill	Achieved	Comment
Recognise the need for life-long learning to meet the demands of employment and life	No	The score achieved (87.1%) is negligibly lower than the mean (87.5%) no intervention recommended. The importance of this should be reinforced by staff on an ongoing basis.
Recognise the need for strong attention to detail	No	The score achieved (87.1%) is negligibly lower than the mean (87.5%) no intervention recommended. The importance of this should be reinforced by staff on an ongoing basis.
Demonstrate a creative approach to problem solving	No	The score achieved (81.6%) is marginally lower than the mean (87.5%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.
Be original or inventive and apply lateral thinking	No	The score achieved (81.8%) is marginally lower than the mean (87.5%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.
Accept and adapt creatively to change	No	The score achieved (84.2%) is marginally lower than the mean (87.5%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.
Give and receive feedback on performance	No	The score achieved (81.8%) is marginally lower than the mean (87.5%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.
Set personal objectives and develop a career plan	No	The score achieved (80.6%) is marginally lower than the mean (87.5%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.

Display confidence in dealing with challenges in employment	No	The score achieved (81.8%) is marginally lower than the mean (87.5%) indicating that minimal intervention should rectify this.

Sixteen of the skills required by employers are not developed within the Diploma Hospitality Management programme. This represents 44.44% of the skills tested. The objective has been achieved however; this result should be a matter of concern to The International Hotel School.

5.1.2.7 Objective 7

To ascertain how useful the subjects contained in the diploma programme are to the respondents in their employment.

The Diploma: Hospitality Management programme comprises an academic component which includes twenty four subjects completed over a three year period. In addition to the academic component the programme includes an Experiential learning component. Students spend two blocks of ten weeks duration each in industry during their first and second years of study. In the third year of study students spend a single block of twenty weeks in industry during the second semester having completed their academic component during the first semester of the third year.

The subjects were grouped into the years of study in which they fall. A four point Likert scale was used in the research questionnaire and respondents were asked to indicate their perception of how useful each subject within the diploma programme was to them when they joined the world of work. The four points used were:

- Very useful;
- Useful;
- Unsure; and
- Of little value

The subjects in each year were examined using the valid frequency percentages for each of the four assessment points. The mean for each assessment point was calculated in each category and the achieved score compared to this. Where a subject scored below the mean of the assessment point in the category, it would be deemed that this subject was not useful to the respondents.

For the purpose of this analysis the assessment points 'very useful' and 'useful' were grouped together as indicating that the subject was 'useful' to the respondents. Respondents who indicated that they were 'unsure' whether or not a subject was useful were deemed to disagree with the statement and 'unsure' was grouped with 'of little value' to indicate that the subject was 'not useful' in the workplace to the respondents.

Where a subject rated higher on the combined 'useful' score than the combined 'useful' mean for the subject, the subject was deemed to be useful to the respondent in the workplace. Where a subject rated lower on the combined 'useful' score than the combined 'useful' mean, the subject was deemed not to be useful. The values achieved are indicated in Tables 4.18 – 4.20. The results are as follows.

First Year Subjects

Subject	Useful	Comment
Hospitality Today	Yes	
Supervision in the Hospitality Industry	Yes	
Food & Beverage Management	Yes	
Bar & Beverage Management	Yes	
Food & Beverage Service	Yes	

Subject		Comment
Life Skills / Tertiary Orientation	No	The score of 43.84% is significantly lower than the mean of 71.16%. Retention of this subject within the syllabus should be evaluated.
Food Production Theory and French Culinary Terms	Yes	
Computers	Yes	
Property Management System - Opera	No	The score of 69.33% is significantly lower than the mean of 71.16%. Retention of this subject within the syllabus should be evaluated.

Second Year Subjects

Subject	Useful	Comment
Managing Front Office Operations	Yes	
Managing Housekeeping Operations	Yes	
Hospitality facilities Management & Design	Yes	
Hospitality Sales & Marketing	Yes	
Communications 1 & 11	No	The score of 62.67%% is significantly lower than the mean of 72.33%. Retention of this subject within the syllabus should be evaluated.
Guest Service – Spirit of Hospitality	Yes	
Introductory French	No	The score of 51.35% is significantly lower than the mean of 72.33%. Retention of this subject within the syllabus should be evaluated.

Third Year Subjects

Subject	Useful	Comment
Training & Development in the Hospitality Industry	Yes	
Managing for Quality / Leadership & Management in the Hospitality Industry	Yes	
Basic Hotel and Restaurant Accounting	Yes	
Purchasing / Planning & Control for Food & Beverage Operations	Yes	
New Business Development	Yes	
Communications 111 / Personal Career Preparation	No	The score of 43.84% is significantly lower than the mean of 80.06%. The score of 56.16% for 'not useful' against a mean of 19.94% clearly indicates that this subject has no value to the respondents. Retention of this subject within the syllabus should be evaluated.
Labour Law / Legal Requirements	No	The score of 72.97% is significantly lower than the mean of 80.06%. Retention of this subject within the syllabus should be evaluated.
Current Hospitality Trends	Yes	

Experiential Learning

Over the three years of the programme students spend forty weeks Experiential Learning in industry.

99% of the respondents indicated that this experience was useful to them when they entered the world of work.

The objective has been achieved in that the degree of usefulness of each subject within the programme has been established.

5.2 Summary

The information obtained from the data collected during this study has relevance for the school and may impact on the future success of this programme.

Analysis of the results obtained from the research indicates that all seven objectives in this study have been met. Areas of concern have been highlighted. The recommendations contained in the following chapter are based on the findings presented here and are made in support of the continued success of the school and its students.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1   Introduction

Although this study was undertaken in part fulfilment of the writer's Master of Business Administration requirements, the research has particular relevance to the school. Enhancing the employability of graduates is a requirement for accreditation of a higher education provider by the Council on Higher Education. Factual evidence is required that a provider is meeting this requirement. The data collected for this study provides such evidence for The International Hotel School.

6.2   Has the Problem Been Solved?

The overall aim of this study was to determine whether or not The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management programme meets the requirements of accreditation Criterion 18 as stipulated by the Council on Higher Education.

The questions to be answered by this study were:

1. ***Do graduates of the programme believe that the programme equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills, at an appropriate level, to meet the needs of employers within the hospitality industry?*** The results show that graduates believe that only 55.66% of the required skills are developed through the programme.

2. ***Is there a gap in skills development between the current programme content and the needs of industry?*** The results adequately answered this question.   There surely is a gap as 44.44% non achievement is not an acceptable standard.

3. ***How useful are the subjects that comprise the diploma programme to the graduate in their employment?*** Of the twenty four subjects included in the programme, six were considered by the respondents to be of no use to them in the workplace. These subjects should be reviewed in terms of the value they add to the programme.

It can therefore be concluded that the problem has not been solved. However, information has been obtained which, if acted upon, will be of value in resolving the shortcomings of the programme.

6.3   Implications of this Research

Registration of The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management is due for renewal in 2012. The findings of this study will be useful in highlighting any amendments to the programme that should be considered for inclusion in the re-registration process.

The findings of the study will be relayed to the school's Academic Board to provide statistical information that should be of value to them in their decision making processes regarding this programme.

6.4   Recommendations to Solve the Research Problem

Of the thirty six employability skills utilised in the study, only 55.66% were viewed by the respondents as being developed through participation in the Diploma in Hospitality Management programme. It is recommended that the Academic Board and faculty of the school review their syllabi in terms of providing the skills required by employers.

It could be argued that in view of the Scarce and Critical Skills requirements within the hospitality industry, graduates of the school will be employable without any change to the syllabi. However, ultimately this would be a short-sighted view with respect to the continued registration of the school for this programme. In addition to this, as the number of graduates from competitor higher education providers increases and therefore the selection pool increases, employers may not be as willing to employ graduates of this school.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Studies

- The current study considered only the Diploma in Hospitality Management programme offered by The International Hotel School. The school offers a second diploma programme at NQF Level 6, the Diploma in Professional Cookery and Kitchen Management. By and large the two programmes run in tandem with very little variance in syllabi. Given the outcome of this study, it would be pertinent to conduct a similar study among the graduates of the Diploma in Professional Cookery and Kitchen Management programme.

- This study considered contribution of the Diploma in Hospitality Management programme to student employability from the student's perspective. It would be relevant to conduct a future study that considered the employer's point of view and their reasons for employing graduates and non-graduates from the school.

- One of the main difficulties with this study is the highly mobile nature of employees within the hospitality industry and the work hours of employees. Several students responded to the call for action by sending an email explaining that, although they would like to participate in the study, their hours of work and access to internet connectivity precluded them from doing so. Most graduates return to the school in March each year for Graduation. Future studies could harness this opportunity for direct interaction with the graduates for data collection.

- No allowance was made in this study for the possibility that some of the employability skills required by employers may have been developed outside of the diploma programme. There are students who join the programme after having taken a "gap" year where they have worked either in the industry or in other industries. Where respondents answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' regarding skill development, this could mean that the skills was developed elsewhere and not that the respondent does not possess the skill. The research instrument must be designed to take cognisance of this possibility.

6.6 Summary

In terms of the data collected, the question of whether or not the Diploma Hospitality Management programme enhances student employability has not been conclusively answered. From a graduate perspective, there are many of the skills required by employers that are not developed through this programme. The data collected highlights the need for re-evaluation of the syllabi of subjects included in the programme and, in fact, the continued inclusion of some of the subjects within the programme.

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26 August 2011

Mrs C McDougall   (207521033)
Graduate School of Business
Faculty of Management Studies
Westville Campus

Dear Mrs McDougall

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0762/011M
PROJECT TITLE: *"The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme: Enhancing Student Employability?"*

In response to your application dated 18 August 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.
PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Ms G Manion
cc: Mrs C Haddaon, Management Studies, J Block, Westville Campus

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

98

Founding Campuses: ▪ Edgewood ▪ Howard College ▪ Medical School ▪ Pietermaritzburg ▪ Westville

Enhancing Student Employability

I need your informed consent before we continue...

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Master of Business Administration Research Project
Researcher: Carolyn McDougall (082 – 338 0756)
Supervisor: Gill Manion (031 – 260 3380)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

"The International Hotel School's Diploma in Hospitality Management: Enhancing Student Employability?"

The purpose of this survey is to solicit information regarding your belief of how well the programme equipped you with the skills required by employers. The information and ratings you provide us with will go a long way in helping to highlight gaps in knowledge and skills between the current programme content and the needs of industry. The questionnaire should only take 10-15 minutes to complete. In this questionnaire, you are asked to indicate what is true for you, so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any question. Work as rapidly as you can. Make sure not to skip any questions.

*1. DECLARATION:

I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

PART A- Tell me about yourself...

2. Which IHS Campus did you attend?

◯ Cape Town

◯ Durban

◯ Sandton

3. When did you study at IHS?

	From	To
Duration		

4. Gender?

◯ Female

◯ Male

5. In what age group are you?

◯ 21 - 24

◯ 25 - 28

◯ 29 and older

*6. Did you complete the Diploma in Hospitality Management Programme (NQF Level 6)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

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More about yourself...

7. Which component/s did you NOT finish?

☐ IHS Diploma   ☐ AH&LA Diploma   ☐ Experiential Learning (Practical)

8. Why is your course incomplete?

[ ]

9. If you would like to complete your qualification, please provide your email address indicating your permission for this to be forwarded to IHS.

Email Address: [ ]

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About your employment...

10. What is the name of your current employer?

[   ]

*11. Is the organisation you are currently working with involved in the hospitality industry?

◯ Yes

◯ No

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More about your employment...

12. If NO, please indicate what industry.

[   ]

13. What is your current position?

[   ]

14. How long have you been in this position?

◯ Less than 6 months

◯ 6 months - 1 year

◯ 1 - 2 years

◯ 2 - 5 years

◯ More than five years

15. What was your first work placement (job/ position) after leaving IHS?

[   ]

16. How long were you in this position?

◯ Less than 6 months

◯ 6 months - 1 year

◯ 1 - 2 years

◯ 2 - 5 years

◯ More than 5 years

17. If IHS offered a one-year Advanced Diploma (NQF Level 7), would you be interested?

◯ Yes

◯ No

18. Please provide your email address indicating your permission for this to be forwarded to IHS.

Email Address: [   ]

19. What was your average salary per month in your first year of work?

◯ Less than R5,000

◯ Between R5,000 - R10,000

◯ Above R10,000

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20. What is your current salary?

◯ Less than R5,000

◯ R5,001 - R10,000

◯ R10,001 - R15,000

◯ R15,001 - R20,000

◯ Above R20,000

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PART B- Skills sought by employers...

Research in South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia and America has indicated the skills sought by employers in graduates entering the world of work. The following questions reflect these skills.

Please answer the question below in relation to the skills learned during the Hospitality Management Diploma Programme.

21. In the area of basic skills and understanding, do you believe that the subjects included in The International Hotel School's Hospitality Management Diploma programme enabled you to:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Use a range of computer software?	O	O	O	O	O
2. Use industry specific information (computer) systems?	O	O	O	O	O
3. Write appropriate reports and correspondence?	O	O	O	O	O
4. Correctly interpret written reports, instructions and correspondence?	O	O	O	O	O
5. Communicate effectively and in a businesslike manner?	O	O	O	O	O
6. Clearly and confidently present information?	O	O	O	O	O
7. Prepare, implement and interpret budgets, financial statements and cost controls?	O	O	O	O	O

22. In the area of knowledge and intellectual ability, do you believe that the subjects included in The International Hotel School's Hospitality Management Diploma programme enabled you to:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8. Define problems, establish facts and draw valid conclusions?	O	O	O	O	O
9. Interpret verbal instructions or extract relevant information from conversations?	O	O	O	O	O
10. Gather information from various sources?	O	O	O	O	O

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23. In the area of workplace skills and applied knowledge, do you believe that the subjects included in The International Hotel School's Hospitality Management Diploma programme enabled you to:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. Deal effectively with customers' problems?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
12. Operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
13. Implement internal control systems in response to an identified problem?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
14. Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
15. Know and comply with industry and situational specific legislation?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
16. Plan, assign and direct work?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
17. Handle employee grievances, manage employee problems and resolve contentious issues?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
18. Supervise, motivate and encourage employees in accordance with the organisation's policies and applicable legislation?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
19. Develop practical skills relevant to the industry?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
20. Understand the need for revenue generation?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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24. In the area of personal and intercative skills, do you believe that the subjects included in The International Hotel School's Hospitality Management Diploma programme enabled you to:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21. Work without close supervision?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
22. Understand your own strengths, weaknesses, values and aims?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
23. Recognise the need for life-long learning to meet the demands of employment and life?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
24. Anticipate and meet guests' needs?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
25. Recognise the need for strong attention to detail?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
26. Demonstrate a creative approach to problem solving?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
27. Be original or inventive and to apply lateral thinking?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
28. Prioritise, organise and complete work within set deadlines?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
29. Demonstrate empathy in dealing with guests and staff?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
30. Accept and adapt creatively to change?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
31. Work constructively with others on a common task?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
32. Communicate appropriately with members of a workgroup?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
33. Give and receive feedback on performance?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
34. Set personal objectives and develop a career plan?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
35. Maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
36. Display confidence in dealing with challenges in employment?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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PART C- How would you evaluate the curriculum?

25. Please rate the subjects covered in the Hospitality Management Diploma programme in terms of usefulness to you in your career.

	Very useful	Useful	Unsure	Of little value
1. Hospitality Today	○	○	○	○
2. Supervision in the Hospitality Industry	○	○	○	○
3. Food & Beverage Management	○	○	○	○
4. Bar & Beverage Management	○	○	○	○
5. Food & Beverage Service	○	○	○	○
6. Life Skills / Tertiary Orientation	○	○	○	○
7. Food Production Theory & French Culinary Terms	○	○	○	○
8. Computers	○	○	○	○
9. Property Management System - Opera	○	○	○	○
10. Managing Front Office Operations	○	○	○	○
11. Managing Housekeeping Operations	○	○	○	○
12. Hospitality Facilities Management and Design	○	○	○	○
13. Hospitality Sales & Marketing	○	○	○	○
14. Communications 1 & 11	○	○	○	○
15. Guest Care – Spirit of Hospitality	○	○	○	○
16. Introductory French	○	○	○	○
17. Training & Development in the Hospitality Industry	○	○	○	○
18. Managing for Quality / Leadership and Management in the Hospitality Industry	○	○	○	○
19. Basic Hotel & Restaurant Accounting	○	○	○	○
20. Purchasing / Planning and Control for Food &	○	○	○	○

Beverage Operations

21. New Business Development	○	○	○	○
22. Communications 111 / Personal Career Preparation	○	○	○	○
23. Labour Law / Legal Requirements	○	○	○	○
24. Current Hospitality Trends	○	○	○	○
25. Experiential Learning (Practical)	○	○	○	○

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Summary of Skills Required of Graduates by Employers within the Hospitality Industry Indicated in Job Descriptions

Extra Bold Group	Three Cities Management	Frenchman's Creek	Yachts of Seaborne
Grade 12 – essential Formal tertiary industry related qualification – desirable	Formal hotel management qualification	College Degree or equivalent years of experience	Formal degree or extensive work experience On-board experience a plus
Broad based experience - essential	Experience	Relevant experience	Comparable experience; Thorough practical knowledge of operations
	Confident	Public speaking and presentation ability	
	Assertive		
Attention to detail – essential	Strong attention to detail		
	Strong leadership traits	Ability to plan, assign and direct work; Staff training;	Ability to
	Good understanding of quality standards		Focus on quality standards and exceeding guest expectations
		Ability to add and subtract two digit numbers and to multiply & divide by 10's and 100's; Ability to perform the above using American money, weights & measures; Ability to apply concepts of fractions, percentages, ratios and proportions to practical situations.	
	Ability to interpret basic financial statements and reports		Ability to understand, analyse and interpret financial results
	Understanding of budgets and cost controls	Good overview of budgets	

	Knowledge of revenue management		Focus on revenue generation
	Intermediate computer literacy: Word, Excel; Outlook & Powerpoint	Computer knowledge: Word & Excel	
Proficiency in a Property management System (Opera) – high importance but position specific	Proficiency in a Property management System (Opera; Jade)		
	People management skills	Supervision of 2 or more employees in accordance with the organisation's policies and applicable laws;	
	Basic IR management skills	Rewarding and disciplining staff;	
	Passion for exceptional hotel standards and service excellence		Ability to plan, execute and follow up on activities that will enhance the guests' experience
	Learning culture		Proof of continuing education
Interpersonal skills - essential			
Communication (written & verbal) – high importance		Good spoken and written English; Correct use of grammar; Ability to write reports and correspondence;	Strong command of the English language; Good verbal and written skills
Analytical thinking – medium importance		Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions; Ability to interpret an extensive variety of technical instructions in mathematical or diagram form and deal with several abstract and concrete variables;	
Time management – high importance			Ability to organise and complete work in accordance with deadlines
Problem solving – high importance		Addressing complaints and problem solving	

Decision making – high importance			
Innovation – high importance			Ability to innovate and foster creativity
Team work – high importance			Ability to build a strong team
		Knowledge of industry specific legislation	Knowledge of industry and situational specific legislation
		Physical fitness; good hearing and vision	

Summary of the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required of Graduates by Employers Indicated from Research and Job Descriptions

HESA Document	UK Study	Australia Study	Employer Job Specifications
(Highest to lowest per category)	1 – 10 Personal Qualities 11 – 22 Core Skills 23 – 39 Process Skills	(Ranking of importance of 52 skills indicated)	(Level of importance not always shown)
Basic Skills & Understanding			
Technical ability; **Computer literacy**; Ability to find & access information	**Computer literacy**: ability to use a range of software (23)	Use standard office applications e.g. word processors, spreadsheets, databases (20); Use electronic communications and data search applications (25)	Intermediate **computer literacy**; Proven proficiency in industry specific information systems
Proficiency in English; **Written communication** skills; **Oral presentation** skills	**Reading** effectiveness: recognition and retention of key points (11); **Written communication**: clear reports, letters, etc written specifically for the reader (19); **Language skills**: possession of more than a single language (14); **Oral presentations**: clear and confident presentation of information to a group (20); **Explaining**: both orally and in writing (21)	**Communicate effectively** and in a businesslike manner using the telephone (12); **Write effective** business communications including business letters, internal memos and e-mails (23); Write a standard operating procedure (SOP) (31; Write a simple business report (35); Conduct staff briefing (43); Make a business presentation to internal or external stakeholders (44); Conduct and facilitate interviews (50)	**Verbal communication skills** – high importance; **Written communication skills** – high importance; Ability to write appropriate reports and correspondence
Prior exposure to work; Knowing the organisation		Undertake "off the job" learning experiences (36)	Broad based experience - essential
Ability to use information; Ability to handle large amounts of information; Ability to use new information	**Information retrieval**: ability to access different information sources (13)	Interpret and summarise a business or industry report (39)	

Numeracy and quantitative literacy	**Numeracy**: ability to use numbers at an appropriate level of accuracy (12)		
		Demonstrate time management (7)	
Knowledge and Intellectual Ability			
Interest in ideas and desire to continue learning			
Rapid conceptualisation of issues; Ability to follow and construct logical arguments	**Listening**: focused attention in which key points are recognised (18); **Arguing for** and /or justifying a point of view or a course of action (35)	Demonstrate **listening** skills (5); Defend or argue a case convincingly in a small group (42);	
Understanding of core principles; General knowledge about local and **global affairs**; Subject and discipline knowledge	**Global awareness**: in terms of both cultures and economics (22)		
Critical and analytical ability; Intellectual flexibility and adaptability; Ability to relate a specific issue to the broader whole; Ability to summarise key issues	**Critical analysis**: ability to 'deconstruct' a problem or situation (16)	Systematically trace and identify operational problems (18); Identify facts relevant to particular issues or problems (22); Conduct a simple strategic analysis for a business unit (45)	Analytical thinking – medium importance; Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions; Ability to interpret an extensive variety of technical instructions in mathematical and diagram form and deal with several abstract and concrete variables
			Learning culture
Understanding of economic and business realities	**Commercial awareness**: understanding of business issues and priorities (24)	Develop business unit goals that are congruent with the organisation's goals (34); Understand and interpret business performance measures and operating reports (37); Understand and interpret simple cost benefit analysis (38); Understand and interpret legislation relevant to the business (40); Understand and interpret business or	Financial and business acumen; Ability to interpret basic financial statements and reports; Preparation and implementation of budget and cost controls; Knowledge of revenue management; Focus on revenue generation

		economic forecast data (47); Prepare an operational budget for a business unit (49); Plan a business project including scheduling and resource allocation (46)	
Enquiry and research skills; Ability to formulate and check hypotheses and assumptions		Demonstrate file management and data management skills (41); Demonstrate information search skills (48); Use tables, graphs and charts to communicate information (51); Design and implement basic primary research (52)	
Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge			
An appropriate approach to problem solving		Operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations (3)	Problem solving ability – high importance
Ability to apply knowledge to new situations	**Applying subject understanding**: use of disciplinary understanding from HE programme e.g. marketing, finance, human resource management, etc. (30)	Apply knowledge to different contexts (29)	
Ability to choose appropriate information to address problems		Deal effectively with customers' problems (1); Implement internal control systems in response to an identified problem (24)	
Ability to plan and execute tasks independently	**Planning**: setting of achievable goals and structuring action (29)		
Ability to monitor and evaluate own work related actions	**Reflectiveness**: the disposition to reflect evaluatively on the performance of oneself and others (10)		
Ability to devise ways to improve on own actions			
Ability to recognise a problem situation			
Understanding of changing workplace practices			

Ability to deal with different cultural practices	**Ability to work cross-culturally**: both within and beyond the UK (26)	Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests (8)	
Ability to relate specific issues to wider organisational context	**Political sensitivity**: appreciates how organisations actually work and acts accordingly (25)		
			Knowledge of industry and situational specific legislation;
Personal and Interactive Skills			
Openness and flexibility	**Adaptability**: ability to respond positively to changing circumstances and new challenges (6)	Give and receive feedback on performance (15)	
Self-motivation and initiative	**Self awareness**: awareness of own strengths and weaknesses, aims and values (2); **Independence**: ability to work without supervision (4); **Self-management**: ability to work in an efficient and structured manner (15)	Work without close supervision (10); Set personal objectives (16)	Supervision of two or more employees in accordance with the organisation's policies and applicable laws
Willingness to learn	**Willingness to learn**: commitment to ongoing learning to meet the needs of employment and life (9) **Malleable self theory**: belief that attributes (e.g. intelligence) are not fixed and can be developed (1)	Learn independently and as a member of a team (17); Develop a personal career plan (21)	Learning culture
Creativity and innovation	**Creativity**: ability to be original or inventive and to apply lateral thinking (17)	Anticipate client needs (6); Adapt creatively to change (13)	Strong attention to detail
Ability to relate to a wide range of people		Demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff (4)	Interpersonal skills essential
Contribution to teambuilding and work	**Teamwork**: can work constructively with others on a common task (39)	Plan an employee roster(26)	Teamwork – high importance; Ability to build a strong team;

Ability to network			
Sense of identity and self-confidence	**Self-confidence**: confidence in dealing with the challenges in employment and life (3)		Confident; Assertive
Negotiation and mediation skills	**Negotiating**: discussion to achieve mutually satisfactory resolution of contentious issues (38); **Influencing**: convincing others of the validity of one's pint of view (34)	Handle employee grievances and manage employee problems (19)	Strong people management and IR skills
Leadership ability	**Prioritising**: ability to rank tasks according to importance (28); **Acting morally**: has a moral code and acts accordingly (31); **Coping with ambiguity and complexity**: ability to handle ambiguous and complex situations (32); **Problem solving**: selection and use of appropriate methods to find solutions (33	Communicate appropriately with other members of a workgroup (9); Motivate and encourage employees (11) Ensure compliance with health & safety, hygiene, licensing and other regulations (14) Delegate responsibility and authority (27) Manage meetings to ensure productivity (30) Provide one on one staff coaching (28) Provide one on one staff counselling (32) Provide effective small group training (33)	Strong leadership traits; Ability to plan, assign and direct work; Decision making – high importance; Innovation – high importance; People management skills; Staff training; Basic IR management skills; Rewarding & disciplining staff
Appreciation of different cultural contexts	**Ethical sensitivity**: appreciates ethical aspects of employment and acts accordingly (27)	Maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment (2)	Interpersonal skills - essential
	Emotional intelligence: sensitivity to others' emotions and the effects they can have (5); **Stress tolerance**: ability to retain effectiveness under pressure (7)		
			Time management – high importance; Ability to organise and complete work in accordance with deadlines
			Attention to detail; Good understanding of quality standards; Ability to exceed guests' expectations

Summary of Skills Sought by Employers within the Hospitality Industry

	Area of Competence	Required Competence – Graduates must be able to:
	Basic Skills and Understanding	
1	**Computer Literacy 1**	use a range of software
2	**Computer Literacy 2**	use industry specific information systems
3	**Written communication**	write appropriate reports and correspondence
4	**Interpretation**	correctly interpret written reports, instructions and correspondence
5	**Verbal communication**	communicate effectively and in a businesslike manner
6	**Oral presentations**	clearly and confidently present information
7	**Financial and Numeric Skills**	prepare, implement and interpret budgets, financial statements and cost controls
	Knowledge and Intellectual Ability	
8	**Critical analysis**	define problems, establish facts and draw valid conclusions
9	**Listening skills**	interpret verbal instructions or extract relevant information from conversations
10	**Information acquisition**	gather information from various sources
	Workplace Skills and Applied Knowledge	
9	**Problem solving 1**	deal effectively with customer's problems
10	**Problem solving 2**	operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations
11	**Problem solving 3**	implement internal control systems in response to an identified problem
12	**Ability to work cross-culturally**	demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests
13	**Legislation**	know and comply with industry and situational specific legislation
14	**Planning**	Plan, assign and direct work
15	**Negotiation and mediation skills**	handle employee grievances, manage employee problems and resolve contentious issues

16	Supervision	supervise, motivate and encourage employees in accordance with applicable legislation and the organisation's policies
17	Technical ability 1	develop practical skills relevant to the industry
18	Technical ability 2	Understand the need for revenue generation
	Personal and Interactive Skills	
19	Independence	work without close supervision
20	Self-awareness	Understand their own strengths, weaknesses, values and aims
21	Willingness to learn	recognise the need for life-long learning to meet the demands of employment and life
22	Service culture 1	anticipate and meet guests' needs
23	Service culture 2	recognise the need for strong attention to detail
24	Creativity 1	demonstrate a creative approach to problem solving
25	Creativity 2	be original or inventive and able to apply lateral thinking
26	Time management	prioritise, organise and complete work within set deadlines
27	Empathy	demonstrate empathy in dealing with guests and staff
28	Change	accept and adapt creatively to change
29	Teamwork 1	work constructively with others on a common task
30	Teamwork 2	communicate appropriately with members of a workgroup
31	Performance management	give and receive feedback on performance
32	Self-motivation	set personal objectives and develop a career plan
33	Professionalism	maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment
34	Confidence	display confidence in dealing with challenges in employment

26 August 2011

Mrs C McDougall   (207521033)
Graduate School of Business
Faculty of Management Studies
Westville Campus

Dear Mrs McDougall

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Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.
PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Ms G Manion
cc: Mrs C Haddaon, Management Studies, J Block, Westville Campus