

Title - Tourism Management Live Project/Leisure Management Live Project

Keywords - Employability Groupwork, Linking Teaching and Research

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Institution - University of Teesside

Activity - Using a problem based learning approach, students apply theoretical material covered in level one to a live tourism/leisure project. Students work in small groups to fulfill a remit in consultation with local tourism/leisure industry suppliers, and design and conduct appropriate research to complete their task. The module enables students to develop further the skills of research, team working, time management, communication and decision-making introduced in level one core modules.

Group - Level 2 students, BA (Hons) Tourism Management and BA (Hons) Leisure Management

Aim - This module is designed to:

- Provide the student with an opportunity to examine contemporary tourism/leisure management issues and to apply theory to practice.
- Further develop student personal, interpersonal and intellectual skills, with specific reference to conducting secondary research and working as a member of a group.

The module offers real and practical value to students, both as students and future managers. Students are expected to behave as professionals by organising and planning their time and giving commitment to their team.

Context / Background - This module is designed to be compatible with core modules studied on the BA (Hons) Tourism Management and Leisure Management degrees. Students are required to apply skills and knowledge developed in their year one modules, in particular:

- Development and Structure of Tourism
- Characteristics of Tourists
- Introduction to Managing Leisure Operations
- Structure of the Leisure Industry and Contemporary Issues
- Interpersonal and Research Skills for Leisure and Tourism Managers

Example - Students work as part of a team on a live project relevant to a local tourism/leisure provider. They are expected to draw upon knowledge, understanding and skills acquired at level one in meeting this challenge. In particular students will have the opportunity to:

- Apply theory to practice
- Manage their time effectively
- Design and implement a research plan
- Apply problem solving and decision making techniques
- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Use a range of communication skills
- Develop team working skills

Local tourism/leisure providers are invited to offer topics and/or problems that students could investigate. If students already have contacts in the industry, they may approach them, with the Module Leader's prior permission. The projects will then be allocated by the tutor to groups of students.

Students work in teams of 3 or 4 and are responsible for liaising with project sponsors. Subsequently, the students will be responsible for designing and conducting appropriate secondary research. Full academic support will be given to the students to assist in achieving this. There are key lectures throughout the semester but student-academic contact is mainly in the form of group-based tutorials. Feedback is continuous.

Structure of the Module

Week 1:

Introduction to the Module

Distribution of Module Guide and Assessment Package

The Research Process

Week 2:

Allocation of Groups and Topics

Working in Teams

Students are required to:

- Discuss the project in groups, elect a coordinator and determine individual roles
- Discuss research parameters for the project and identify aims and objectives (meet project sponsor if applicable)
- Consider available information sources.

Week 3:

Learning Resource Centre Staff deliver a lecture on sources of electronic information and answer research/ data retrieval related questions.

Groups determine research strategy and responsibilities.

Week 4:

Working in teams, students undertake research

Weeks 4-7:

Students to book tutorial slots with the Module Leader

Week 8/9:
Assessment briefings

Weeks 12-13:
Complete and submit group reports and personal diary
Copy submitted to sponsor.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Work effectively in a group
- Identify, select and apply a range of problem solving and decision-making techniques
- Apply tourism/leisure management theory to practice
- Communicate effectively with tourism/leisure management practitioners
- Develop personal and interpersonal skills
- Identify, select and apply appropriate research strategies

The module is assessed in two ways:

1) Group Project Report (weighted at 75%): All members of the group receive the same mark for the Project Report. While projects vary considerably in content, to maintain consistency throughout the module and meet the requirements of the aims and learning outcomes, all projects are marked against the same assessment criteria.

2) Individual Reflective Diary (weighted at 25%): The Individual Reflective Diary will reflect on personal and interpersonal skills, both at individual and group level, throughout the duration of the group project. Students must demonstrate what they have learned about their own and others' behaviour in a group situation, and discuss what could have been done differently.

Results / Feedback - Students have found it very useful to apply some of the theory learned during year one to a real life industry issue, and there has also been some very positive feedback from the project sponsors (NB - although we use the term 'sponsors', no payment is made by industrial participants). From the industry point of view, as long as sponsors are aware that the standard of work will not be at consultancy level, they are very happy for the students to research into areas of interest to them which they may not have time to do themselves and/or cannot afford a consultant to do. There has been particularly good co-operation with the public sector locally.

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