

Studies in Tourism and Travel Management:

Embracing Change, Incorporating Technology, and Meeting Industry Needs in the New Millenium

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As we move towards the new millennium, the challenge for universities offering programs of study in tourism and travel management is to provide avenues for learning which are reflective of the needs of the travel and tourism industry and of the technology now available. Importantly, while innovation is a key, any degree program must continue to provide suitable training and education for students such that they are "workplace ready" upon graduation.

Many human resource managers and small business executives in the tourism and travel fields today perceive that a high proportion of entry level managers (primarily new graduates from degree programs) are insufficiently prepared in the use of information technology and specifically lack the ability to cope in a 'global industry'. In seeking to address such concerns, staff of the Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Property Management at the Ipswich Campus of the University of Queensland, have been involed in redeveloping the business degree programs in tourism and travel. The programs are designed to equip students with the core competencies that will enable them to become the business and industry management professionals of the future: consumer oriented, entrepreneurial and with an excellent understanding of the application of information technology to their industry.

Central to this program development has been a move away from the more traditional face-to-face mode of delivery to encompass one that incorporates a more flexible delivery of learning materials and a greater use of information technology. The philosophy underpinning this new mode will go beyond a traditional, narrow, delivery focussed approach, to one which encompasses an educational philosophy and a set of strategies, and a variety of media and technologies for teaching and learning. Courses have been redesigned and redeveloped to increase student access to a wide variety of stimulating learning resources and delivery media. The environment is therefore student centred and learning focussed.