

27th February 2024

Press Release: White paper on the future of Tourism, Hospitality and Event (THE) education in the UK unveiled.

The white paper, published today, sets out the implications of shifting government policy which risks affecting economy, recruitment and adding to skills shortage.

A White Paper jointly commissioned by the Association for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE), the Council for Hospitality Management (CHME) and the Association for Events Management Education (AEME) has been launched in the UK today. It reports on the future of Tourism, Hospitality and Events (THE) Management education in the United Kingdom (UK), in the context of increased stakeholder pressure and shifting government policy. It outlines implications on the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) sectors, at various levels, including funding, enrolment, progression pathways, and graduate outcomes.

Despite having faced complex challenges over the past years as a direct consequence of Covid-19, THE industries are major contributors to the UK economy, with the travel and tourism industry alone generating £237.1bn towards UK's Gross Domestic Product in 2022 (Statista, 2023). The UK events industry is estimated to be worth £42 bn. The UK events industry provides an estimated 775,000 jobs to the economy (Statista 2023). For the same year, the hospitality industry contributed over £93bn of Gross Value Added directly, and a further £121bn indirectly, being considered the UK's third largest employer, accounting for 3.5m jobs directly in 2022 and a further 3m jobs indirectly (UK Hospitality, 2023). As these industries are gradually recovering, they are now burdened by a sustained recruitment crisis, with increased vacancy rates being recorded across the board as a result of staff and skills shortages that are reportedly exacerbated by Brexit and long-term effects of the Post-Covid19 Great Resignation (Umbrella Training, 2022). Traditionally, THE colleges and universities used to be considered a reliable educational pipeline, constantly delivering workforce to the industry. However, declining trends in undergraduate applications and acceptances over the past five years and the governments' plans to defund Level 3 Travel and Tourism qualifications in 2025, as well as postponing the launch of T-levels in Catering and the lack of T-level qualifications in Events are posing additional concerns, limiting students' pathways towards THE higher education routes. Within the wider environment, imminent changes in immigration policy as well as long-lasting effects of Brexit and the current cost-of-living crisis are adding additional layers of pressure both on THE industries and education providers.

The White Paper sets out the impending need to ensure that THE Management education strategy both at FE and HE levels is informed by current developments in the sector and the wider environment and is supported by government policy that advances, enhances and promotes THE subjects. The White Paper sheds light on the most prominent challenges in THE Management education and provides directed recommendations aimed to inform and support a successful THE Management education strategy for the future.

Dr Peter Robinson, Co-Chair for The Association for Tourism in Higher Education said: "This has been a critical research project - and the first that has been jointly funded by the three subject associations. It provides a clear overview of the challenges facing our sector - for both

education providers and the industries that we serve, all of which face huge recruitment challenges - further highlighting the importance of attracting young people into these sectors.”

Professor Una McMahon-Beattie, Chair of CHME, comments: "The data demonstrates the unquestionable value of tourism, hospitality and events to the economy. Hence, it is an opportunity for us to focus on how our further and higher education provisions can support this continued momentum. This research has brought significant insights into the future direction of tourism, hospitality, and events education. The analysis leads to valid insights and recommendations for us to work collaboratively with industry and government. We are looking forward with optimism to engaging in conversations and debates.”

Adrian Bossey, Chair of AEME said: "Graduating students from tourism, hospitality and events courses provided by Higher Education institutions across the UK provide a highly skilled and motivated workforce for the sector. Their passion, enthusiasm and creativity drives innovation in the move towards a sustainable, world leading future for UK tourism, hospitality and events."

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Please Note the White Paper Is Attached.

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Notes:

The Association for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE) is the subject association for tourism in higher education in the UK. Its objectives include promoting the development and recognition of tourism as a subject of study in the UK at foundation degree, undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels, and encouraging high standards in learning, teaching and research. To this end, it works with other bodies concerned with higher education in the UK such as the Quality Assurance Agency and the Higher Education Academy; it is a Learned Society of the Academy for the Social Sciences.

The Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) is a non-profit organisation representing the interests of our universities and colleges, offering higher education programmes in hospitality and related fields, globally. CHME's core purpose is to foster excellence in international hospitality management education through cutting-edge research, innovative and engaging pedagogies and meaningful collaborations with value-based

education providers and hospitality industry partners. We contribute to the professional development and status of hospitality management education by sharing best practices in research, scholarship, and pedagogy. CHME's values are Hospitable, Responsible, and Supportive.

The Association for Events Management Education (AEME) was established on April 21st 2004 with the aim to advance events education within the UK and overseas. Our objectives are: To provide a voice for events education. To support and raise the profile of the events discipline through the sharing of education and best practice. To provide a discussion forum for issues effecting events education and industry. To establish communication opportunities between events stakeholders. To encourage the development and dissemination of the events management body of knowledge. To support, undertake and disseminate events research. To encourage international exchange of ideas and best practice in events. AEME is a Partner in UKEVENTS (formerly BVEP, the Business, Visits & Events Partnership), a Partner of The Power of Events, and a Founding Partner in the Institute of Event Management (IEM)