

Innovative Hospitality Skilling Programs

A Tourism & Hospitality Case Study

The *School of Food* runs a selective chef apprenticeship that prepares talented young chefs for a long-term culinary career.

The School of Food, Bristol - UK

The *School of Food* program demonstrates the effectiveness of additional pastoral care and ongoing support in contributing to successful apprentice completions.

The *School of Food* runs a selective chef apprenticeship that prepares talented young chefs for a long-term culinary career. In acknowledgement of the value of human capital and the role of training in addressing shortages in the industry, the 12-month Commis Chef Intermediate Apprenticeship is run in partnership with local restaurants and the Weston College of Further and Higher Education in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Expectations of chefs have evolved and today, they are expected to be good at running a business as well as being a good cook. To address this, the School of Food curriculum is extensive, incorporating cookery and knife skills, nutrition, and financial aspects of working in a kitchen. In addition, College tutors support other aspects of the apprentice's future career by teaching functional skills in English, maths, and Information Communication Technology.

Weekly masterclasses, run by local Michelin-starred chefs, convey in-depth butchery, fish mongering and desserts skills. Each apprentice is also paired with a professional chef in a formal mentorship. The mentor chef provides regular assessments and workplace visits to inspire, talk about their career path, impart information about industry trends, and monitor progress.

In April 2019, the *School of Food* apprentices graduated with a 100% pass rate, and 95% achieving a distinction. At completion, all apprentices were employed full-time, and 90% had earned a promotion.

Applying the model in Australia

In Australia, a National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) report supports the view that group training organisations (GTOs) exhibit improved apprentice and trainee completion rates when compared with 'direct' employers of an apprentice or trainee. This is attributable to the level of pastoral support that GTOs provide, which can often be more difficult for direct employers, particularly small businesses, to provide. The additional support may include weekly site visits with apprentices or trainees; improved working conditions; and support being provided by long-term GTO staff. GTOs as well as some large organisations can also provide rotation between, or transfers to, different host employers or parts of the organisation.

Within Western Australia, the Hospitality Ambassador Program was delivered in 2018 and 2019 by Hospitality Group Training in partnership with Tourism Western Australia and support from FutureNow. Through interactive cooking demonstrations from young chefs working in Perth's finest kitchens, the Program has communicated principles of realistic job advice to secondary school students.

References

1. <http://www.school-of-food.co.uk/>
2. NCVET, Completion rates for group training organisations and direct employers: how do they compare? 11 October 2011