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EHL CASE STUDY



Unlocking the Benefits of Visiting Faculty in Higher Education

Case study of Guilin Tourism University



桂林旅游学院
GUILIN TOURISM UNIVERSITY

Higher education constantly evolves to meet the demands of a dynamic world, requiring graduates to be adaptable, well-rounded, and prepared for complex challenges. Amid this transformation, the traditional paradigms of teaching and learning are shifting and visiting faculties play a pivotal role as catalysts for change and innovation in academia.

Visiting lecturers, often industry experts, practitioners, or renowned academics, bring a fresh and dynamic dimension to the educational landscape. They step into the classroom or lecture hall, not just as educators but as conduits of real-world experiences, bearers of diverse perspectives, and champions of the latest industry knowledge. This unique blend of expertise and enthusiasm imparts a multitude of advantages for students, faculty members, and the institution itself.

In the context of hospitality education, deeply rooted in practical knowledge, visiting lecturers assume special significance. The hospitality industry thrives on innovation, adaptability, and the ability to deliver exceptional experiences. Therefore, the infusion of expertise from seasoned practitioners and leaders is paramount.

Navigating the Talent Gap in Hospitality Education: A Regional Imperative

As the global hospitality industry continues to evolve, the demand for a skilled workforce has never been more critical. This demand extends to regions like Guilin, Guangxi in China, where rapid growth has created a talent gap.

Local governments have proactively crafted policies to bridge this divide. Guilin Tourism University (GLTU) emerges as a pivotal player, contributing significantly to narrowing the talent gap and driving industry development.

This regional context underscores the urgency of addressing the skills deficit and aligns with the broader discourse on the importance of visiting lecturers in higher education, particularly within the hospitality sector.



Guilin, a major tourism destination in China

Guilin, Guangxi, is renowned for its spectacular scenery and culture. As of the end of 2022, the tourism income accounted for over half of the Guilin GDP for consecutively five years. The annual China ASEAN Exposition on international economic and trade exchange has placed the region as a global MICE destination for 20 years.

Guilin Tourism University

Founded in 1985, GLTU is the key support unit of the United Nations World Tourism Organization in mainland China. GLTU initiated the China-ASEAN Tourism Education Alliance (CATEA). To enhance local tourism and hospitality industries' competitiveness, GLTU has focused on innovating its education in this field.

Investment in Higher Education

The GL International Hospitality Management School embarked on its journey by opening its doors to students in 2015. With a promising vision and dedication, the school secured the official approval of the Ministry of Education in 2016. It wasn't long before it spread its wings and blossomed into a Sino-foreign Cooperation in Running School in 2017, marking the start of an exciting chapter in its educational odyssey.

The project involved a 5-year contract with EHL to support school pre-opening, facilities development, management, faculty, and staff development. In 2019, GL International Hospitality Management entered the first batch of National First-Class Undergraduate Majors, ranking first in hospitality management among Chinese Universities two years later.





Being Part of the EHL Certification Scheme

The EHL Certification Scheme has transformed GLTU. A state-of-the-art teaching building, with an investment of over 106 million Yuan (13.1 million CHF), redefines regional educational standards. It includes a practical hotel with 60 rooms, banquet facilities, three restaurants, and various classrooms.

Over 100 faculty members participated in the Qualified Learning Facilitator (QLF) course—a flagship faculty development program offered by EHL. EHL visiting faculty deliver one-third of the courses, bringing Swiss hospitality expertise to GLTU.

“The cooperation project between GLTU and EHL has achieved remarkable and promising results, improving the international level of our university, expanding GLTU's popularity in the tourism education sector, and helping to expand its reputation and influence among universities in Guangxi and even in China. According to the feedback from the employers, our students are "proficient in the requirements of various hotel positions and high comprehensive quality." The number of students winning awards in various competitions is also increasing year by year. Many parties recognize the quality of our talent training.”

Ms. Na LIN, Former Party Secretary of GLTU

Contributions of the EHL Visiting Professor Program

The EHL Visiting Professor Program, initiated in 2017, harnesses teaching resources and expertise from the EHL (founded École hôtelière de Lausanne). This program facilitated the delivery of over 60 courses by EHL visiting professors, primarily focusing on key business disciplines: Marketing, Finance, Accounting, Economics, Service, Business Communication, and Strategy.

Benefits for Students

1. Exposure to International Teaching Resources and Methodologies

The program provides GLTU students with access to global teaching resources and cutting-edge teaching methodologies, enriching their academic experience.

2. Academic Support from EHL Professors

EHL visiting professors offer valuable academic support, providing guidance and mentorship to students throughout their educational journey.

3. Cultivation of Critical Thinking and a Lifelong Learning Mindset

Students are encouraged to embrace critical thinking, self-learning, and a lifelong learning mindset, essential attributes for success in the dynamic world of hospitality.

4. Enhanced Professional Skills and Increased Employment Competitiveness

Practical training and real-world applications, facilitated by EHL professors, contribute to honing students' professional skills. This, in turn, significantly boosts their competitiveness in the job market, reflected in an impressive 98.21% employment rate in 2019.

6. Cultivation of Cross-Cultural Communication and Collaboration Skills

The program fosters effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration skills among students, preparing them for success in a globalized industry.



Benefits for GLTU Faculty

1. Exchange with EHL Faculty

GLTU faculty members have the unique opportunity to exchange ideas and insights with their EHL counterparts, promoting collaborative learning and sharing of best practices.

2. Class Attendance and Observation of Facilitation Methods

GLTU faculty can attend EHL professor-led classes, allowing them to observe and learn effective facilitation methods firsthand.

3. Balancing Theory and Practical Skills

Through interaction with EHL faculty, GLTU educators gain valuable insights into striking the ideal balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skill development in their teaching.

4. Synergistic Co-Design and Co-Delivery of Lectures

Collaborative efforts between GLTU and EHL faculty lead to the co-design and co-delivery of lectures, resulting in a dynamic learning environment and enhanced pedagogical outcomes.

6. Improved Understanding and Application of Facilitation Skills

GLTU faculty members benefit from a deeper understanding and application of facilitation skills, empowering them to create engaging and effective learning experiences for their students.



After seven years of collaboration, GLTU's students have earned prestigious awards, such as the first prize at the 11th National Tourism College and University Service Skills competition. Graduates have achieved acclaim, with a national ranking increase of 56 places compared to 2022.

In today's dynamic world, the hospitality industry faces elevated customer expectations. EHL remains dedicated to supporting GLTU in nurturing talents equipped with professional knowledge, innovative thinking, entrepreneurship, and adaptability to global change. This enduring partnership between GLTU and EHL demonstrates the profound impact of international collaboration on the academic and professional development of hospitality education students.

"The learning experience in Guilin Tourism University ignited my lifelong passion for contributing to the local and international hospitality industry. During my study, the adequate training rooms are conducive to my understanding of practical tasks in hotels, and further help me have a definite learning object in view. Besides shedding light on theoretical knowledge, every course also shapes my thinking mode, pulling back from the obvious, and digging deeper into hoteliers' psyche. Thanks to this learning experience, I will stay true to my original aspiration, and I am fully confident that all my knowledge and skills are ready for my future career."

Graduate of GLTU



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