

# **GUIDELINES 9**

## **BENCHMARKING AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

**D Botterill  
J Tribe  
July 2000**

The question of what constitutes a degree in tourism has provoked considerable debate in British higher education. Explorations of this topic have provided a consistent thread in the work of the NLG over the past seven years. Guideline 9 reports the latest twist in the tale and offers readers an opportunity to place the recent production of a benchmark statement in the wider framework of ideas about curriculum space. The Guideline is in two parts. The first part reproduces John Tribe's keynote paper to the Sixth Annual Conference of the NLG held at the University of Luton in December 1999. The membership of the NLG contributed greatly to the process that resulted in the publication of the QAA's Benchmark statement for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism in May 2000. In the second part of Guideline 9, readers will find extracts specific to tourism, taken from the benchmark statement.

### **Forward**

#### **Part 1**

#### **The National Curriculum for Tourism Higher Education**

The Tourism Curriculum has finally arrived. Its parents are the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) and the NLG (National Liaison Group for Higher Education in Tourism). The consultant obstetricians are David Airey, David Botterill and Brian Wheeler. There is an official tourism curriculum for the new millennium – an inevitable consequence of the move from elite to mass from higher education. This is a landmark occasion, because whilst tourism courses have proliferated in higher education (HE), they have been curiously absent in the realms of HE officialdom. For example as recently as 1998 it was impossible to get statistics from HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) on tourism undergraduate numbers. Indeed tourism is still almost totally obscured in the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise). Is it in with Geography or other “traditional disciplines”, or with Business and Management (UoA: Unit of Assessment 43) or Sports-related Studies (UoA 69)? But forget 43 and 69 – 25 is the new magic number for tourism for subject review and benchmarking. Here it sits with its new friends Hospitality, Leisure, Recreation and Sports. Unit 25 denotes a key phase in its development. Of course in reality tourism has been in higher education for along time – since 1968 as a final year option of the BSc (Hons) Hotel and Catering Administration course at the University of Surrey in 1968 (CNAA: Council for National Academic Awards, 1993:70). Postgraduate programmes were offered at two UK universities in 1972 (Airey, 1997:9), and specialist tourism courses were introduced at degree level in 1986 at Dorset Institute and Newcastle Polytechnic (CNAA, 1993:70). And from that point growth was rapid.

### **Introduction**

Three key questions arise from this initial scene-setting:

1. How has the curriculum developed in the absence of official guidance?
2. What has been developed?
3. What are the likely impacts of benchmarking?

But before these are addressed we need to clarify the concept of the curriculum itself.

## **The tourism curriculum and curriculum space**

The term curriculum has taken on a variety of meanings and attention will initially be focused on clarifying its various meanings and its boundaries.

A simple definition of the curriculum can be found in Taylor and Richards (1985) who define the curriculum as that which is taught. More complex definitions include that used by Kerr (1968) which embraces a much wider experience capturing all the learning which is guided by an institution. There is also a literature which unearths a hidden side to the curriculum (Snyder 1971, Cornbleth 1984, Graves 1983). Here the spotlight falls not just on the explicit aims and objectives of the curriculum, but also on the implicit values that accompany it. Exponents of the hidden curriculum point to the significance of what is left out of the curriculum as well as what is put in. In fact the term curriculum is more widely used and accepted in compulsory education, than in higher education and in many older universities and traditional single honours degrees it is the canon of the discipline that determines what is to be taught.

I propose to define the curriculum as a whole programme of educational experiences that is packed as a degree programme. Its constituent parts are a number of modules or courses, which in turn may be specified as a series of syllabi or course contents. A core curriculum represents a compulsory element.

Alongside this, a wider concept of curriculum space is proposed to capture not just what is taught, but what might be taught. The term curriculum space will be used to denote the expanse or area that contains the range of possible contents of a curriculum. Curriculum space is filled with knowledge, skills and attitudes. Students take educational journeys through different parts of curriculum space. According to the routing of their journey (i.e. the curriculum they follow) they will be exposed to different packages of knowledge and end up in different places with different perspectives, attitudes and competences. Curriculum space can be interrogated in a variety of different ways. We may ask what are the purposes of a curriculum and precisely what it is preparing students for? We may ask what values are endorsed by this or that curriculum?

The idea of framing (Bernstein, 1971) is useful to understand the point of curriculum space. The construction of any particular curriculum will entail framing, where some areas of curriculum space will be included, and others excluded. Curriculum space represents a template against which any particular framing of the curriculum can be evaluated. When a framed curriculum is located within curriculum space, what is left outside the curriculum becomes evident. Evaluation may proceed by examination of not just what is inside the frame, but also what has been excluded. Curriculum space therefore offers a way of problematising curricula by highlighting a range of possible competing claims.

## **Curriculum development**

### **In the literature**

In the tourism literature, a key contribution has been the debate about the core curriculum initiated by the National Liaison Group for Higher Education in Tourism (NLG) (Holloway, 1995). The NLG core comprised:

- The meaning and nature of tourism
- The structure of the industry
- The dimensions of tourism and issues of measurement
- The significance and impacts of tourism
- The marketing of tourism
- Tourism planning and development
- Policy and management in tourism

The NLG core articulated key aspects of a vocational tourism curriculum but it was uncritical in that it avoided philosophical issues of alternative ends of tourism education. A key omission of the NLG core was its lack of articulation of ethical

elements of tourism or accommodation of disciplinary, non-business approaches to the field. A significant area of the possible curriculum for tourism was therefore omitted.

The same criticism may be levelled at Koh's (1995) paper entitled 'Designing the four year tourism management curriculum', King's (1994) case study of tourism higher education in the South Pacific, and Parsons' (1991) international review of tourism management education programmes. Similarly, The Council for National Academic Awards' (UK) (CNAA) review of tourism studies (1993), Cooper, Shepherd and Westlake's (1994) book on tourism education and Wells' (1996) examination of the tourism curriculum in Australia, all exist as uncritical accounts.

Most recently,

*"ATLAS (European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education) members (have been summoned) to develop a body of knowledge for European tourism education...using the basis laid by the National Liaison Group (NLG) in the UK." (Richards, 1997:49)*

...and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), in conjunction with Bournemouth University started developing a Graduate Tourism Aptitude Test (GTAT). This "would specify curricular content ... which is understood and recognised globally" (Shepherd, 1997:70). It is not yet clear where these latter projects set the boundaries for the tourism curriculum and whether they take a purely vocational approach or can accommodate the wider areas of potential curriculum space in tourism.

## On the ground

The tourism curriculum in the UK has developed largely but not exclusively in the new universities (ex-polytechnics). There was therefore an initial centralising influence in the shape of the CNAA on curriculum design. For the CNAA, rigour and balance were important. But the granting of autonomous degree awarding powers to the ex-polytechnics and the demise of the CNAA, coupled with a huge expansion of HE and a proliferation of new courses meant a move from a centrally guided curriculum to curriculum development at the local level. How does curriculum development proceed at a local, institutional level?

We may first ask how a tourism degree is constructed. The basic model in the university sector is for a course committee to fashion a course which is subject to a series of scrutinies and subsequent modifications culminating in validation. Validation is the official stamp of approval that the designated constitutional procedures of the institution have been adhered to, and that a new degree meets the institution's generic design criteria and is therefore acceptable.

During this process a number of influences can be detected at work. It is likely that the course leader will have a considerable influence, as it is he or she who will steer the course through its various stages. The course leader will also have the responsibility for recruiting the course team. But the course leader's perception of tourism education will be shaped by his or her intellectual history and social location. In terms of intellectual history, the discipline which he or she works in will cause different tourism puzzles, to use Kuhn's (1970) terminology, to emerge as being worthy of investigation, and differing methodologies to be appropriate to analyse these puzzles.

Now tourism as a field is in its infancy. It is an area of study which utilises a variety of disciplines. There is no settled discipline or field of tourism but rather there are a whole range of competing approaches to the subject which might be brought into play. Thus a course leader whose home discipline is Accounting is likely to construct a very different tourism degree to one whose home discipline is Sociology.

A course leader will also be socially located as part of an institution, part of a faculty, and as a member of an academic tribe (Becher 1989) of a particular discipline. Each of these roles will exert a particular influence. The CNAA drew attention to tourism's susceptibility to a range of influences, noting:

*“Without agreed core concepts, there is danger that tourism would mean whatever course tutors wish it to mean in the context of their own institution’s particular background”.* (1993:30)

The course team nominated by the course leader will also reflect a particular set of perceptions and preoccupations about tourism. The course leader’s actual choice of personnel is likely to reflect his or her particular preoccupations. Thus a “business of tourism” type course leader will recruit a team of accountants, lawyers and economists. A “sociology of tourism” course leader will recruit a team of a very different complexion. So even in the short space of time in which the course leader and the subsequent course team have been assembled, a particular tourism degree will already have travelled quite far along a particular developmental route and be pointing in a definite direction.

Other influences will also be at work. Once a course team is in place there may begin rearguard action about the place of particular disciplines in the general scheme of things. Boys et al. recorded considerable lobbying by academic staff to promote their own discipline and noted for example that “at technical university...staff had defended their own areas quite strongly” (1988:119). This was a reference to members of traditional disciplines lobbying strongly to maintain the position of their subjects on new courses.

The initial choice of course leader, the membership of the course team, and the subsequent discussion of the degree programme is of particular significance for degree programmes in areas such as tourism which are pre-paradigmatic (Kuhn 1970). In disciplines such as physics where there is more consensus around an agreed paradigm, such matters are of less consequence since the course leader and the course team will work within that paradigm. There will therefore be less debate about what the core of a physics degree should look like. Similarly, for faculties such as dentistry, I suspect we would find the process of framing in curriculum space is largely straightforward and uncontested – drilling 1 & 2, anaesthetics, chairside manner and amalgams. But tourism is much more problematic for curriculum designers. This is first because there is no clear agreement about what constitutes tourism knowledge (Tribe 1997). To use Kuhn’s (1970) terminology, there is no single paradigm which describes the field and there is little agreement on what should be included in normal tourism studies. Second, unlike dentistry, it is less clear exactly what tourism graduates will do upon qualifying. So for tourism the absence of an agreed paradigm and the diversity of employment possibilities mean that there is room for a whole variety of curriculum configurations.

As tourism as a field has expanded so has its supporting superstructure which plays a part in curriculum development. Becher (1989) sketches in some of these. For example, journal titles have proliferated. The editors and referees of such journals are important gatekeepers who determine the direction of the curriculum debate in the literature. Networks with inner and outer circles develop. For example the National Liaison Group for Higher Education in Tourism (NLG) was formed in 1993 and exists to “provide a focus for the development of tourism higher education”. The Tourism Society has an Association of Tourism Teachers and Trainers. External examiners exert influence on course development, and a range of textbooks emerge. Publishers appoint editors and readers who screen book proposals.

There are a variety of other factors that can influence an emerging degree course. Prominent amongst these are marketing activities to understand the needs of consumers of degrees. Equally the mission of a particular HE institution, efficiency requirements and organisational imperatives such as modularization and semesterization can be significant. Academics have to forge degrees within the resource constraints of an institution. For example, efficiency requirements may dictate that some subjects are offered as a compulsory common core to a certain family of degrees so that economies of scale can be achieved by way of large lecture groups. Similarly, semesterization and modularization may dictate the size of the components of a degree and this may favour the delivery of some modules as against

others, for some are more readily delivered in small discrete chunks. There also exist specific projects which are designed to influence the curriculum (e.g. Enterprise in Higher Education).

## Framing

Part of Bernstein's notion of curriculum framing is now used to illustrate the idea that a potential contest exists over the contents of the tourism curriculum. This contest arises because there are a range of possible curricula that might be formed by placing our curriculum frame over different parts of curriculum space, and different interests outlined previously will favour framings.

Bernstein explained the term framing thus:

*“(Referring to) the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation and pacing of knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship. (1971:50)”*

For the purposes of the current argument I want to concentrate on that aspect of framing which relates to selection for the curriculum by a course team. That is what is to be included and what excluded from the curriculum frame.

Figure 1 is used to explore this further. The concept of the curriculum force field is introduced to illustrate the range of influences on the curriculum. The analogy of a television cathode ray tube is a helpful one. Curriculum planning can be likened to the firing of rays from the back of the tube towards the screen. Set around the screen are a number of forces which according to their relative power attract the rays in one or other direction. Different pictures appear on the screen (curriculum configurations) according to the actions of different parts of the force field.

Some of the possible influences on the training of tourism degrees that have already been discussed are illustrated in figure 1. On the left of the diagram are influences which promote the tourism curriculum as a vocational one for commercial ends. They include the needs of employers, professional bodies, academics rooted in business departments and some recent projects specifically to enhance vocational aspects of the curriculum such as Enterprise in Higher Education and Education for Capability. On the right of the diagram are influences which promote the tourism curriculum as one for non-commercial ends. For example host and environmental interests would promote a curriculum for sustainable and responsible tourism and academics for critical subjects will promote a more open agenda for tourism studies. The diagram is not designed to be comprehensive or to scale. Nor should its two dimensions be interpreted as demonstrating a necessary trade-off between different influences. Rather the diagram is designed to show how the tourism curriculum is contested. For given that the curriculum has a limited capacity, some choice needs to be exercised as to what is included in it.

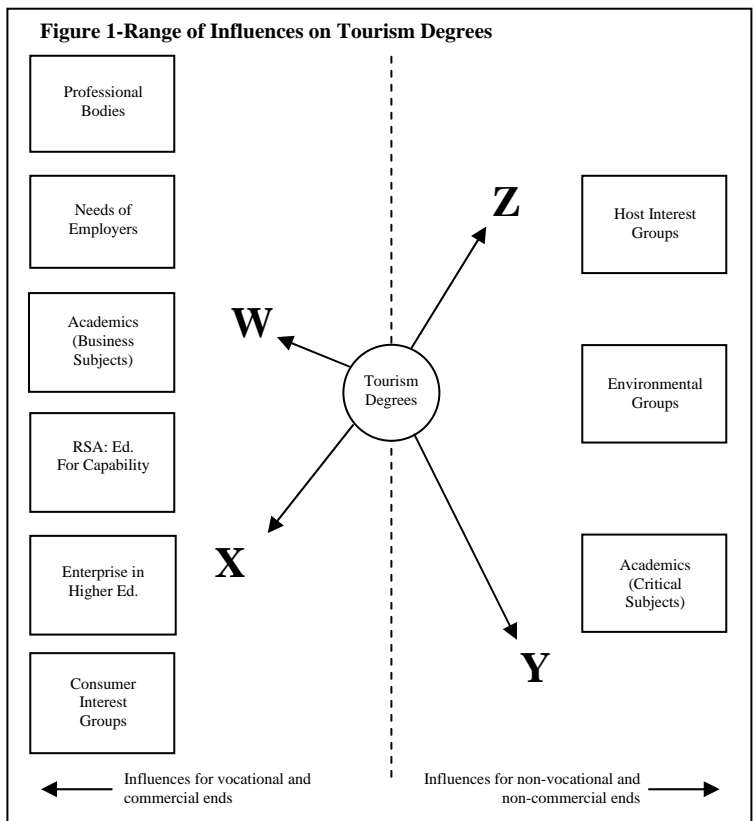
Assume the whole area between the squares designates possible curriculum space, that is a complete map of possible curriculum contents. It is proposed that any particular framing of a curriculum in curriculum space is affected by the power and influence of the surrounding squares. So, for example academics in business subjects will lobby to include components such as demand and consumer choice for tourism services, consumer satisfaction, and marketing. The square designating the needs of employers, might promote personal transferable skills such as problem solving, communications and team working in the framed curriculum.

Assume that the circle towards the middle of the diagram labelled “tourism degree” represents the frame of the curriculum. It delineates what is to be included and what is to be left out of the curriculum. What lies within the circle is the chosen curriculum, but note that there will necessarily remain a large part of possible curriculum space which is not framed by a particular curriculum. The point is that this frame may be dragged across different parts of possible curriculum space to rest for example at points X, Y, W or Z.

The eventual resting position of the framed curriculum will depend upon the influence exerted by any of the surrounding squares. Thus we might envisage a curriculum being framed around a point W, where the influence of business subjects has been strong. Alternatively, assuming critical subjects to include sociology, we might expect the curriculum at point Y to include an analysis of the effects of tourism on host communities. Similarly, if the framed curriculum is drawn to point X, it will lay considerable emphasis on developing enterprise skills. Indeed one can imagine less neat scenarios. The circle that is used to represent the curriculum might be shattered, with blobs of the curriculum scattered across curriculum space without any overall coherence.

The main purpose of the diagram is to underpin the idea that there is not one tourism curriculum that is given, or indeed obvious, or which can claim to be the curriculum, but that the curriculum can be framed in a variety of ways. The fact that tourism is a “soft” field (Biglan 1973) permits this variety of framings. Indeed perusal of the tourism courses currently on offer demonstrates the diversity of different framings and considerable product differentiation. A less charitable interpretation would be one of curriculum chaos.

As the curriculum is framed, by accident or design, two distinct types of curriculum emerge. A vocational curriculum for inducting students into the commercial activities of tourism is framed towards the left of fig 1. Courses which are located on the very left might be termed vocationalist or operationalist where their aim



is purely focused on the needs of the industry. A non-commercial curriculum which brings awareness of a wider set of activities which constitutes tourism's wider society and world is framed towards the right of the diagram. Courses which are located on the very right of this diagram might be termed academicist or idealist where they operate in a theoretical domain without regard to the practical needs of the business of tourism.

Airey and Johnson's (1998) study of the profile of tourism studies degree courses offers empirical evidence which demonstrates the particular process and progress of the evolution of tourism degrees. In terms of process, their study investigated the departmental location of tourism courses. Here, "management" predominates, and fifty four per cent of courses were located in business, tourism or service sector management departments. Departments with a more open agenda, such as social sciences only accounted for seven per cent of courses.

The importance of this for the process of curriculum development is that the curriculum is born into, nurtured, and developed largely in departments which have an established culture and community of business orientation. Becher (1989) draws our attention to the significance of academic communities and the socialisation rites they perform. Business and management departments socialise entrants to a distinctive disciplinary community and ensure that they get to know the rules of that particular discipline and community. Becher quotes Rorty's explanation that new entrants learn:

*"what counts as a relevant contribution, what counts as answering a question, what counts as having a good argument for that answer or a good criticism of it."*  
Rorty, 1979, quoted in Becher, 1989:26)

The results of this development and socialisation process can be seen from the same study. The titles of degrees offered were surveyed, and of those in use in 1997/98, a clear majority of fifty eight per cent contain the words business or management. In contrast, only two courses set out a more distinctively critical agenda for tourism. These were courses entitled "Sociology and Anthropology of Travel and Tourism" and "Tourism and Social Responsibility" (Airey and Johnson, 1998:7). Of course, this leaves a large number of degrees with less explicit titles such as "Tourism" and "Tourism Studies". But the final strand to Airey and Johnson's study teases out the content beneath even these elusive titles and gives a clear picture of the agenda running through tourism education.

The stated aims and objectives of tourism degrees surveyed are summarised and ranked. This ranking gives an account of tourism degrees operating within narrow dimensions. Aims and objectives are dominated by operational and vocational concerns. Indeed only three of these aims seem to offer any analysis of the wider tourism world beyond vocationalism. These are "sound education/academic tourism". These all appear in the lower part of the ranked list of aims and account for only eleven per cent of the total mentions. Airey and Johnson's study demonstrates the predominance of vocationalism in tourism degrees.

The year 2000 sees the latest stage in a circular journey for the tourism curriculum. The granting of autonomous degree awarding powers for new universities released the curriculum from the centralising tendencies of the CNAA and enabled curriculum diversity through local control. Benchmarking represents a return to centralisation and national standards. It is part of a national curriculum for HE. How this will affect the emerging tourism curriculum largely depends on the full extent of the benchmarking project.

## **Locating curricula in curriculum space**

## **The Future: Benchmarking and tourism**

The second order subject specific learning outcomes for tourism concentrate on four key areas:

1. Tourism as an area of academic and practical study
2. The tourism industry
3. Tourism communities and environments
4. Tourists

These are curriculum areas which will need to be included for students of all degree courses with tourism in the title. Benchmarking therefore represents the staking out of a compulsory zone within curriculum space. There are strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

The main strengths are as follows:

1. The draft statements have avoided the pitfalls of the earlier NLG core and the Koh curriculum which over-focused on the vocational.
2. They offer a recipe for a balanced curriculum which avoids the narrow confines of vocationalism and operationalism or academicism and idealism.
3. Disciplinary knowledge, communities, environments and the ethical are all given due weight.
4. They offer coverage of a key middle ground of curriculum space and represent something of a Blairite "Big Tent" within which most tourism academics can probably operate.
5. Benchmarking is stimulating a critical review of the tourism curriculum.
6. It offers protection against accidental and chaotic curricula.

The main weaknesses can also be examined:

1. The exercise is a-theoretical. The theory and methodology of curriculum design are not foregrounded.
2. Benchmarking may be interpreted as a definitive and comprehensive curriculum statement. Some departments may attempt to teach it as it is.
3. The full richness of curriculum space may become obscured. Benchmarking may impose closure where the freedom to construct a curriculum in any part of curriculum space is lost.
4. It may cause a homogenisation of the tourism degree product and a curbing of the curriculum dynamism of this sector. It may herald a move towards a safe middle ground and institutional aims and objectives for QAA subject review may show this.
5. It may represent the start of a more comprehensive project, where incrementally the detail is filled in and the curriculum becomes tightly specified.
6. They may constrain curriculum development: Would tourism higher education have developed if benchmarking had existed 20 years ago?

Finally it is important to recognise the distinctions between the tourism curriculum and tourism knowledge. Benchmarking is clearly a curriculum affair. But there are researchers in tourism who do not attempt to conflate the terms curriculum and knowledge using the terms core curriculum and body of knowledge as if they were interchangeable. For example Greg Richards describes a European tourism education project where "The body of knowledge will be developed during 1997 through a three stage consultation process", and resulting from this "a final version of the body of knowledge will be agreed." (1998:3).

This is seriously misguided project. Tourism knowledge cannot be created by consultation and committee. A final version of tourism knowledge can never appear. There is considerable debate as to what constitutes tourism knowledge and what its tests for its validity are. Tourism studies has not yet settled into "normal tourism". The pattern of research activity and puzzle solving is not settled nor is the direction for future activities agreed by those operating in the field. Because tourism studies is in a pre-paradigmatic state, there exists a variety of different knowledge systems in operation.

This perhaps is the biggest obstacle in benchmarking. Benchmarking is an essentially reactive, static process of categorising and inventory making. Knowledge creation is dynamic and unpredictable. The possibility therefore arises for the curriculum to become left behind by knowledge creation and for the tourism curriculum and tourism knowledge to become decoupled. It is because knowledge creation is such a key activity of higher education, that the limits of a national curriculum for higher education in general, and unit 25 specifically, must be recognised.

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## **PART 2**

### **EXTRACTS FROM SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENT FOR HOSPITALITY, LEISURE, TOURISM AND SPORT.**

*The statement for Unit 25 contains a foreword and six sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Mapping the territory, (3) Knowledge and skills, (4) Learning, teaching and assessment, (5) Performance indicators, and (6) Subject specific guidelines. Extracts taken from the statement and reproduced in this Guideline have been selected from sections 2, 3 and 6 because they relate specifically to the tourism curriculum. A proper appreciation of the intention and scope of the benchmark statement can only be obtained from a consideration of both the generic and subject specific components as outlined in the full statement. The extracts begin with an overview of the benchmarking process taken from the foreword. Each subsequent extract incorporates the introduction paragraph and the paragraphs relevant to the tourism curriculum from sections 2, 3 and 6. David Airey, David Botterill and Brian Wheeller, members of both Unit 25 Benchmark group and the NLG Executive 1999 authored the tourism specific sections of the statement which were substantially revised following a national consultation exercise during the second half of 1999.*

Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject. They also represent general expectations about the standards for the award of qualifications at a given level and articulate the attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should be able to demonstrate.

This subject benchmark statement, together with the others published concurrently, refers to the bachelors degree with honours.

Subject benchmark statements are used for a variety of purposes. Primarily, they are an important external source of reference for higher education institutions when new programmes are being designed in a subject area. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not a specification of a detailed curriculum in the subject. Benchmark statements provide a variety and flexibility in the design of programmes and encourage innovation within an agreed overall framework.

Subject benchmark statements also provide support to institutions in pursuit of internal quality assurance. They enable the learning outcomes specified for a particular programme to be reviewed and evaluated against agreed general expectations about standards.

Finally, subject benchmark statements are one of a number of external sources of information that are drawn upon for the purposes of academic review and for making judgements about threshold standards being met. Reviewers do not use subject benchmark statements as a crude checklist for these purposes however. Rather, they are used in conjunction with the relevant programme specifications, the institution's own internal evaluation documentation, together with primary data in order to enable reviewers to come to a rounded judgement based on a broad range of evidence.

The benchmarking of academic standards for this subject area has been undertaken by a group of subject specialists drawn from and acting on behalf of the subject community. The group's work was facilitated by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, which publishes and distributes this statement and other benchmarking statements developed by similar subject-specific groups.

The statement represents the first attempt to make explicit the general academic characteristics and standards of an honours degree in this subject area, in the UK.

### **Extract-1 Subject benchmark statements**

In due course, but not before July 2003, the statement will be revised to reflect developments in the subject and the experiences of institutions and academic reviewers who are working with it. The Agency will initiate revision and, in collaboration with the subject community, will establish a group to consider and make any necessary modifications to the statement.

## **Extract-2**

### **Mapping the territory**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this section we identify, in general terms, what programmes in each of the four subjects will typically involve (Sections 2.2 to 2.5). It is expected that these benchmark statements will be used for programmes which have as a substantive core, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism as set out in section 2.2 to 2.5.

Common to all programmes is the opportunity to learn through the integration of theory with practice. Although students are expected to engage with a challenging and suitable range of theories, concepts and principles, the applied context within which a student learns is a driver for many programmes of study in this Unit. It is this focus on the specific context of study that makes programmes in Unit 25 distinctive. Degree titles may include the terms 'management', 'science', 'studies' (Section 3.6). However they all share application to a particular context or industry. Programmes within Unit 25 may include more than one of the four areas described in Sections 2.2 to 2.5 and will reflect one of the three approaches in 3.6.

#### **2.5 Programmes broadly concerned with tourism**

The term Tourism refers to the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of people away from their normal home environments for a variety of purposes. Programmes with tourism in the title typically have their origins in providing a vocational understanding relevant for potential employment in some or all of the components of what is loosely referred to as the tourism industry. This includes activities in the private sector such as tour operators, airlines and hotel companies, as well as public and not-for-profit bodies such as tourist boards.

Most programmes have broadened from their vocational origins to embrace wider issues relating to the nature, impacts and meanings of tourism, thereby furnishing an understanding of what is now a major world phenomenon. However, most programmes still lay emphasis on career and vocational objectives.

Over the past fifteen years the number of programmes in tourism has proliferated. They have a wide range of titles. The most common are 'Tourism Management', 'Tourism', 'Leisure and Tourism Management' and 'Tourism Studies' but also included are other titles reflecting the focus of particular programmes such as 'Travel Agency Management', 'Sports Tourism', 'Rural Tourism', 'Sustainable Tourism'. Of the programmes with management in the title many focus particularly on business management. Others are more concerned with the management of scarce resources in the community through concepts of planning and public policy.

The study of tourism overlaps with subject domains from both within, and outside, Unit 25. To some extent, this is reflected in the trend for more recently validated tourism programmes to incorporate ideas and concepts drawn from, for example, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies.

Degrees in tourism typically involve the following:

- A consideration of the concepts and characteristics of tourism as an area of academic and applied study
- An examination of the nature and characteristics of tourists
- A study of the products, structure, operations within the tourism industry
- An analysis of tourism in the communities and environments that it affects

While most include the consideration of all the above areas of study different programmes have different emphases.

Typical subject areas might include: accommodation for tourists, destination planning and development, geography of tourism, impacts of tourism, international tourism, operation of the tourism industry, passenger transportation, research methods, technology in travel and tourism and the environment, tourism economics, tourism marketing, tourism policy, tourism management, sustainable tourism.

### 3.1 Introduction

In this section we identify the knowledge and skills of a typical graduate (Section 5) that we would expect to be developed as part of an undergraduate programme. The depth of knowledge, the proficiency of skills and the balance of specific knowledge and skills may differ with the particular programme. This will reflect the approach taken, the context of study and the aims and objectives of the programme. Each institution is free to decide on the content, nature and organisation of the degree programme and its constituent courses/modules, but it is expected that curriculum designers will ensure that the following 'generic' knowledge base underpins all programmes, together with the knowledge base given in the subject specific guidelines identified in Section 6. It is also expected that generic knowledge will be set in the subject specific context at all levels of the programme.

### 3.6 Approaches to programmes of study in Unit 25

Where the programme title contains the word 'Management' then it should inter alia enable students to:

- Demonstrate vocationally relevant managerial skills and knowledge by exposure to professional practice.
- Evaluate and apply vocationally relevant concepts associated with the operational and strategic management of financial, human and physical resources and/or understand and apply concepts associated with the allocation of resources in the community.

Where the programme title contains the word 'Science' then it should inter alia enable students to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the philosophical basis of scientific paradigms.
- Demonstrate evidence of competence in the scientific methods of enquiry, interpretation and analysis of relevant data and appropriate technologies.

Where the programme title contains the word 'Studies' then it should inter alia enable students to:

- Critique the contributions of a range of academic disciplines that have informed the development of the subject as a field of study.
- Demonstrate an appropriate degree of progression within specialist fields.
- Display an integrated knowledge of the scope and breadth of the subject domain.

### 6.1 Introduction

Each institution providing honours degrees will have its own characteristics with a detailed rationale for the content, nature and organisation of its programmes and modules detailed in the relevant programme specifications. Likewise the distinctive nature of each of the subject domains within Unit 25 is recognised in the manner in which the subject specific guidelines are presented. While it is recognised that programmes in Unit 25 will vary in the depth to which they treat individual subjects it is expected that typical graduates in the subject domain are able to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes identified below.

### **Extract-3 Knowledge and skills**

### **Extract-6 Subject-specific guidelines**

## 6.5 Tourism

A typical honours graduate in tourism will be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

### **The concepts and characteristics of tourism as an area of academic and applied study including being able to:**

- Understand and appreciate the potential contributions of disciplines that help to explain the nature and development of tourism
- Explain and challenge theories and concepts which are used to understand tourism
- Explain and challenge the definitions, nature and operations of tourism
- Demonstrate an understanding of the domestic and international nature and dimensions of tourism
- Utilise a range of source material in investigating tourism
- Demonstrate an awareness of the dynamic nature of tourism in modern societies
- Understand the inter-cultural dimensions of tourism

### **The products, structure of and interactions in the tourism industry including being able to:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the structure, operation and organisation of the public, private and not-for-profit sectors and their activities
- Evaluate the factors that influence the development of organisations operating in tourism
- Analyse relations between consumers and tourism and the providers of tourism services

### **The role of tourism in the communities and environments that it affects and in particular:**

- Have an understanding of the relationship between tourism and the communities and environments in which it takes place
- Be able to evaluate the contribution and impacts of tourism in social, economic, environmental, political, cultural and other terms
- Have an understanding of and be able to evaluate the approaches to managing the development of tourism through concepts of policy and planning
- Appreciate the ethical issues associated with the operation and development of tourism

### **The nature and characteristics of tourists and in particular:**

- Be able to explain the patterns and characteristics of tourism demand and the influences on such demand
- Have an understanding of the ways in which tourists behave at destinations
- Understand the cultural significance of tourism for the tourist and their societies

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