

## Progressing Policy for Tourism, Hospitality and Events Education

The Government has much to say about the value of tourism, hospitality, and events to the UK economy.

A study produced in 2021 showed that in 2018 (Office for National Statistics (ONS)<sup>1</sup>, the tourism industries contributed £127.5 billion to the UK's economy. This equated to 6.7% of all GVA in the UK in 2018. In the same year 3.9 million people were employed in the tourism industries. The ONS calculated that the tourism direct gross value added (TDGVA) for 2018 was £71.7 billion.<sup>2</sup>

In 2019 economic output of the hospitality sector was £59.3 billion, which was around 3% of total UK economic output. Hospitality businesses represented 3-5% of businesses in each country and region. In the three months to March 2020, there were 2.53 million jobs in the hospitality sector in the UK, representing 7.1% of total UK employment. The hospitality industry has higher proportions of younger workers, foreign-born workers, part-time workers and workers from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to other sectors.<sup>3</sup>

Reports by Cities Restart<sup>4</sup> and UKEVENTS<sup>5</sup> placed direct spend on business events between £19.4bn and £31bn in 2019, with leisure events adding a further £30bn. Post COVID 19 business events is expected to increase by 43% by 2026. In support, UK Sport's analysis of 12 major sport events in 2022<sup>6</sup> (excluding the Commonwealth Games) revealed a 6:1 return on investment distributed across host towns and cities.

While there may be some cross-over in the data based on different definitions of THE, collectively this data highlights the significant contribution that these industries make to the UK economy, outperforming other sectors.

To achieve and sustain this level of economic contribution it is critical that the sector is able to access highly qualified, skilled graduates. Current Government policy does not, however, reflect this. Policies on both Further and Higher Education will reduce the viability of studying management qualifications in these sectors at a time when all three industries are facing a significant staff crisis<sup>7 7</sup><sup>8</sup>. A reduction in THE education will simply result in a smaller and less skilled workforce and limit the sectors' ability to achieve distributed growth.

Effective training and education are critical to sustain and grow these sectors, and to create new jobs and further economic impact. Despite this, current education policy does not reflect this. Tourism,

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<sup>1</sup> [Promoting tourism in the UK - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Promoting tourism in the UK - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Hospitality industry and Covid-19 - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Business events industry worth £27.6bn by 2026, finds report | Conference News \(conference-news.co.uk\)#](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://ukevents.org.uk/news/bvep-press-releases/801-bvep-launches-report-focused-on-70bn-events-industry>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uk-sport.gov.uk/-/media/files/events/the-value-of-events-2022.ashx?la=en&hash=D6047838C3251444B4B71A0AD70EE201>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/FutureShock-IssueTwelve>

<sup>7</sup> <https://wtcc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2022/WTTC-Staff%20Shortages-August22.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.noea.org.uk/national-outdoor-events-association-report-highlights-2022-staff-shortages/>

hospitality and events qualifications are under threat – both within Further Education and Higher Education – as a result of both direct policy decisions and the consequences of others.

In response, the Association for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE), The Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME), and The Association for Events Management Education (AEME) have commissioned a study to evaluate the importance, impact and trajectory of qualifications across the three subject areas. The Associations have also launched an Open Letter which has already secured 1,600 signatures in support of a review of policy approaches.

<https://www.change.org/p/government-policy-for-travel-tourism-and-hospitality-education>

The three subject associations are also hosting a major national one-day event at the University of West London. The outcomes of the research will be shared at this event, alongside presentations and panel discussions with industry, academia and professional bodies that represent the three sectors.

The conference is organised in response to current Government policy and will include the findings of a major study funded by the three Subject Associations and delivered by Buckinghamshire New University.

Several key national stakeholders – including industry representatives and trade organisations - have already confirmed their attendance, as well as representatives from a breadth of further and higher education institutions. and will provide opportunities to explore creative responses to the challenges of Government policy, as well as an opportunity to add weight to the work being undertaken to demonstrate the importance of our sectors to policymakers.

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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 making organisation representing UK, European and International universities and colleges offering higher education programmes in the fields of hospitality studies, hospitality management, and related fields. It is CHME's stated purpose to contribute to the professional development and status of UK, European and International hospitality management education, through the sharing of best practice in scholarship and pedagogy.*

*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).*