

Social Responsibility News...

DURBAN ICC INVESTS IN THE FUTURE

The Durban International Convention Centre is investing in the lives of young people through its new internship programme, helping Hospitality Students gain skills, knowledge and first-hand experience of the tourism industry.

The purpose of the internship programme is to integrate the students' academic studies with relevant work experience in their chosen field. The programme is run in partnership with the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and although the centre has a proud history of empowering students, this is the first year that it has been run in its current format. The six-month programme trains students in either the Culinary or Operations departments of the center and rotate every few weeks between areas of responsibility in order to give them a firm grounding in each section. The Durban ICC currently has eight students enrolled in the internship programme which runs from January to June this year. Students benefit through gaining on-the-job training at a five-star level and get to evaluate career options by being exposed to various areas of the Durban ICC's operations.

The interns studying Catering Management receive intensive training in the centre's Cook Chill Method, HACCP regulations and ISO standards. Interns rotate through each of the kitchens namely, the Hot Kitchen, Cold Kitchen and Pastry Kitchen and spend an average of 6 weeks in each so as to ensure sufficient exposure to what is required in each kitchen. These interns also receive training in back-of-house areas like Store Keeping and Buffet Set-ups as well as front-of-house areas as they experience working at reception and in the ICC's Baobab Café. The six-month schedule allows the students to be exposed to a wide variety of training areas and still spend enough time specializing in their respective field of study.

"The Durban ICC believes strongly in investing in the future of the country's tourism industry and we have shown our support over the years via our partnership with DUT. Imparting these skills to promising young students is one of the ways we can give back to the industry" said Julie-May Ellingson, the Durban ICC's Chief Executive Officer. "Overall our interns are positive, motivated and proactive individuals who are always willing to go the extra mile. We have seen these interns really thrive in the work environment and the wide exposure they given during their time at the Durban ICC definitely enhances their career prospects upon graduating", added Ellingson.

Njabulo Gumede, a Hospitality Management intern, commented, "I have learnt a lot and have been pleasantly surprised by the helpfulness of the staff at the ICC. I was particularly fascinated to learn all the intricacies of an exhibition set-up, from the marking out of the stands and aisles in the venue right through to the health and safety requirements for a successful event." Besides his scheduled areas for training, Gumede made a request to work with the Technical team during the recent BRICS Summit and was given the opportunity to assist with the stage, lighting and IT arrangements. Subsequently he is now considering a career in this field, combining his love for technology and hospitality. By the time he completes his internship he will have also undergone full training in Food and Beverage Service and Section Leader Training.



Intern Theolan Govender



Thinabhakho Ntshangase & Fezeka Ndllovu assisting with the Tourism Indaba setup

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Nompulelo Khubeka, a Catering Management intern noted, "The training has been informative and I have gained a great deal of experience and a number of new skills. It's great to see our Catering Operations theory about HACCP regulations and ISO standards being put into practice on such a large scale. Before coming to the ICC I had never been involved in functions for over 2000 guests. It has also been an honour to cook for celebrities at functions like the Metro FM awards."

"During their time in the programme, the interns form part of the team and, although they are supervised, they are expected to perform at the same level as the rest of the staff. They are often paired-up with an experienced member of staff to complete the various tasks and ensure that our standards are always upheld," commented Johannes Basi, Operations Manager at the Durban ICC who oversees the students' development through the programme.

The DUT selects students for the programme based on their academic performance and in line with the criteria specified by each department of the Durban ICC. The shortlisted students are then interviewed by the centre's Management Team and the successful candidates are engaged in line with the company's recruitment process. Given the positive response from the students to the new programme, the ICC will look to increase the number of interns appointed and is also considering expanding this programme to include

students from the Production and Technical disciplines. The Durban ICC encourages prospective students to perform to the best of their academic abilities in order to be eligible for selection in future enrollments.

"The programme is an excellent opportunity to be part of a challenging and professional environment where real-world skills can be learnt and developed at a world-class standard. Programs like this contribute to the sustainability of South Africa's tourism industry by providing opportunities for young people to acquire these skills which are so badly needed at this time in our country" added Ellingson. "We are also looking forward to hosting the upcoming 18th WACE World Conference on Co-operative and Work-Integrated Education from the 24 - 27 June 2013 at the Durban ICC and will be listening closely for how we, as a company, can ensure our intern programme is of the highest standard and relevant to the needs of the industry," added Ellingson.

WACE is the international organisation is dedicated to developing, and advocating for cooperative and work-integrated education programs within industry and educational institutions. The international conference is being organized in collaboration with the DUT and South African Association for Cooperative Education (SASCE).

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Intern Nokwanda Ndlela