

Dubai College of Tourism provides innovative virtual internships to its students

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Dubai College of Tourism (DCT), an institution established by Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism), is adapting to the changing global realities by providing a range of innovative virtual internships to students who have just finished their academic year.

- With health and safety of students being top priority, DCT leverages its online learning platform to ensure completion of certificate programmes
- DCT partners with Hilton to provide remote internships to Hospitality and Culinary Arts students
- Tourism, Events and Retail Business students secured internships from Dubai Tourism

With the health and safety of students being the key priority of DCT amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual internships were designed to help successful participants of the College's year-long Certificate programmes in five core specialisations - **Tourism, Events, Hospitality, Retail Business and Culinary Arts** – prepare for the next stage of their career without any disruption to their studies or affecting their mentorship and training opportunities. Each virtual internship offered across the five key disciplines was one month in duration and all interns received live training and mentoring by experts in their chosen fields.

DCT partnered with Hilton in providing the virtual internships to students that completed the Certificate courses in Hospitality and Culinary Arts. These internships, which commenced at the beginning of June, underscore DCT's ability to leverage its strong connections and continuous collaboration with stakeholders to help build a highly-skilled workforce for Dubai's tourism industry and other sectors featuring multiple tourism touch points. Dubai Tourism also supported DCT's students by providing remote internships this year to participants of DCT's Certificate programmes in Tourism, Events and Retail Business.

Commenting on the internships, **Essa Bin Hadher, General Manager of DCT**, said: "With the current situation upending our plans to provide conventional industry internships at the end of the academic year, Dubai College of Tourism has nevertheless secured several virtual internships to honour its commitment to students who have completed Certificate courses in the five core specialisations at DCT. We are fortunate to have taken the lead in establishing e-learning platforms long before the onset of COVID-19, paving the way for a smooth and seamless transition to a digital learning environment for these students that would also help safeguard their health while they follow instructions from the safety of their homes. All internships are structured in a way that students are able to take away maximum learning from each

session, with the expert team of instructors and mentors on the online programmes maintaining the same high level of dedication and enthusiasm in teaching the interns as they would in an on-the-job training process.

“The strong spirit of collaboration that exists between DCT and its stakeholders has led to the kind of partnerships that are of immense benefit to our students, such as the significant number of virtual internships provided this year by Hilton, a world leader in the hospitality sector. Working with our industry partners enable us to provide an invaluable experience for those on the course and ensure that successful completion of these internships will serve as a springboard to exciting career opportunities for all candidates, enabling them to enter the tourist-facing workforce with practical experience and valuable industry knowledge.”

Hospitality internships

DCT partnered with Hilton to offer students the opportunity to undergo the hospitality experience through a real world hotel simulation called ‘Cesim’ featuring an interactive hospitality game, which focuses on running a hotel and a hotel restaurant. The simulation done online from start to finish integrates concepts from various hospitality management related functions including revenue management, sales channels, menu engineering, housekeeping, maintenance, staffing, and procurement. The simulation featured four teams and the winning team was the one that most efficiently ran a hotel from all aspects of hospitality management. The simulation was supervised by a group of key executives from different departments of various Hilton Hotels including Hilton Dubai Jumeirah, Hilton Dubai The Walk, and Hilton Dubai Creek. The hotel executives interacted daily with the interns online, mentoring them on all aspects of the hotel business.

Culinary Arts internships

As part of its partnership with Hilton, the College provided the students with the opportunity to create their own specialty dishes under the guidance of a team of world-class Chefs from Hilton Hotels including Waldorf Astoria DIFC, Hilton Jumeirah and Conrad Dubai. The interns were asked to participate in weekly challenges to create different cuisines using the techniques they had learned during the one-year certificate programme. Each student had to submit a work plan detailing how they prepared the dish and also produce a short ‘How to Make’ video of their favourite dish to be presented to the Hilton Chefs each week.

Jochem-Jan Sleiffer, President, Hilton, Middle East, Africa and Turkey, said, “We are delighted to have partnered with the Dubai College of Tourism on their innovative virtual internship programme to support students in both operations and culinary. The future of the hospitality sector relies on bright talent and I am thrilled that we’ve been able to support with 24 internships over the last few weeks. In recent months, I’ve spent time getting to know the DCT team and have no-doubt that the students will build on the strong learning foundation from the College, as well as their industry experience with Hilton, to achieve successful career starts in hospitality.”

Events internships

Students undertaking the Events internship worked with Dubai Tourism’s Events team on a new concept for this year’s edition of the Dubai Fitness Challenge (DFC), the city’s flagship fitness initiative that is bound to be much different from previous years due to the global pandemic. In conceptualising a new plan for DFC 2020, a much-awaited fixture of Dubai’s annual Retail Calendar, students were also asked to develop innovative ideas that would address the current situation from a local and global perspective with the aim of creating a buzz about DFC around the world.

Tourism and Retail Business internships

With Dubai being home to people from over 200 different nationalities, the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) segment makes an important contribution towards the emirate’s tourism sector. Students undertaking these internships worked with the Project Management Office of Dubai Tourism, under the supervision of top Dubai Tourism professionals to gain an understanding of the strategy designed to promote the VFR segment later this year and into early 2021. Students worked in four different groups in four separate areas, namely, identifying existing platforms for the distribution of VFR offers; target audiences and demographics; communication and messaging; and incentives and rewards to get the Dubai-based expatriate community to encourage friends and family to visit them in Dubai later this year and into the next.

