



# Department of Education and Skills

## Statement of Strategy 2016 - 2018

### **Submission from the Irish Hotels Federation to the Department of Education and Skills.**

The Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) is the national organisation of the hotel and guesthouse sector in Ireland and is a key stakeholder in Irish tourism.

Tourism is one of Ireland's largest indigenous industries and is vital for Ireland's economic well-being. The sector employs over 205,000 people throughout the country, equivalent to 11% of total employment. It accounts for 4% of national GNP and provides €7.3 billion in annual revenues for the country, supporting the local economies of every town, village and county.

Irish tourism has the potential to attract 10 million overseas visitors by 2025 and create a further 40,000 additional new jobs within the next five years generating demand for a wide range of skills across the country.

This submission will focus on – **Meeting the Skills Needs of the Future**

The IHF has for many years been promoting tourism and hospitality as an attractive option for school leavers. Please see copy of our current careers magazine, 'Get a Life in Tourism' produced by the IHF with the support of Failte Ireland and distributed to all secondary schools in Ireland, online at [www.getalifeintourism.ie](http://www.getalifeintourism.ie).

We have also sought to address a gap in skills training for young adults. Recently we received approval from the Apprenticeship Council of Ireland to roll out a Commis Chef Apprenticeship Programme and with the support of SOLAS a National Hospitality Traineeship pilot programme.

These initiatives will go some way to alleviating the skills deficit in training for young adults but the challenge remains to inform young people of the opportunities and possibilities and encourage them to consider the industry as a career option.

### **Secondary School Syllabus**

The only dedicated subject for our industry is Hotel, Catering & Tourism at Leaving Certificate Applied Level.

The new online Transition Year programme being developed by the Irish Hospitality Institute in conjunction with Tralee Institute of Technology and supported by Failte Ireland and the Irish Hotels Federation will be an important addition to creating a greater awareness among second level students of opportunities in tourism and hospitality.

Given the importance of Tourism and Hospitality to the Irish economy and the many and varied opportunities it provides for career advancement we recommend that Tourism and Hospitality should be included as a mainstream subject at Leaving Certificate level. There are many elements of the industry that would be of great interest to students and prospective entrepreneurs. The creation of such a subject would require liaison with post Leaving Certificate education providers and industry in the areas of economics, business, entrepreneurship, finance, destination product development and marketing and the role of state agencies, authorities, communities and trade associations.

In addition, one of the recommendations in the report from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs in the Hospitality Sector in Ireland stated that *‘the Leaving Cert Home Economics course could be reviewed in terms of content covered and rebranded to attract more male students. The potential for new short Junior Certificate hospitality courses could be examined’*. Ref: Assessment of Future Skills Requirements in the Hospitality Sector in Ireland, 2015 – 2020, November 2015.

A Tourism and Hospitality subject as part of the mainstream curriculum would give students a comprehensive picture of the Irish tourism industry on how it operates today.

The IHF would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with the Department of Education and Skills as part of the Government’s new strategy for Education and Skills 2016 – 2018.