



PORTUGAL - HEALTH & EDUCATION

Carlos Santiago Neto Brandão

President, Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE)

BIO

Carlos Brandão has a PhD in Veterinary Sciences from the University of Lisbon and a post-graduate degree from the Pasteur Institute of Lille in Food Microbiology and Hygiene of collectivities. In 1994 he began his professional activity as a teacher at graduate and postgraduate level at the Estoril School of Tourism and Hospitality and at other institutions. Since then he has held various leadership positions and management functions. Researcher at CITIS and currently integrated member of CITUR – Centre for Research, Development and Innovation in Tourism, he has participated in funded scientific projects, is the author of several scientific papers, has participated in events and scientific committees as a speaker and moderator at national and international level.

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TBY talks to Prof. Carlos Santiago Neto Brandão, President of the Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), about academic focus, international reach, and the future of the sector.

Can you give us an overview of ESHTE's academic focus and its role within the tourism industry?

ESHTE (Estoril Higher School of Hotel Management and Tourism) is an institution that belongs to the Portuguese Polytechnic higher education system, being one of the five Portuguese higher education schools not integrated in Polytechnic Institutes. ESHTE offers Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees (in partnership) in hospitality, tourism and gastronomy. The main goal lies in the importance given to preparing students for careers in the hotel and tourism industry, which in addition to a solid theoretical education, provides practical classes as well as hands-on experience through training placements. It is therefore clear that ESHTE is unavoidably playing an important role in the tourism industry, training qualified professionals to meet the demands. It is therefore natural that our graduates have a high rate of employability. Additionally, ESHTE also has partnerships with industry organizations, which helps to ensure that its curriculum and programs are constantly updated and relevant to the needs of tourism.

How does the university nurture itself of the Portuguese tourism ecosystem? What types of partnership offer win-win opportunities?

ESHTE cooperates, mainly through its internship department, with hotels, restaurants and tourism businesses to offer students practical training and internships, providing valuable industry experience. This allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-life situations. We develop research partnerships with organizations to conduct applied research on tourism needs and trends, which also helps to update and strengthen its curricula. We work with professional associations such as APVT, APECATE, AHRESP, to provide its students with opportunities to network with industry professionals and to keep up-to-date with the needs of tourism professionals. Such partnerships allow the students to gain valuable experience and exposure to the labor market. In addition, help to ensure that ESHTE's plans and curriculum consider industry needs, making its graduates highly sought after by employers.

To what do you attribute Portugal's reputation for excellence in matters of hospitality and tourism?

Portuguese gastronomy is known for having a very varied offer, highly recognized and with an excellent price / quality ratio. In Portugal there is a rich and vast cultural heritage, which attracts millions of tourists every year, it is a pity that it is not always accessible, as is the case of some churches. Portuguese hospitality is recognized for its warmth and attention, which creates a positive experience for tourists and helps build a strong reputation for excellence. Portugal is blessed with a very significant natural beauty, but above all very varied, considering its size. Beaches, mountains, plains and parks, offering unique and attractive destinations for tourists. Portugal is considered to offer a good value for money compared to other destinations, especially in Europe, which makes it a very competitive destination. The Portuguese State has invested heavily in infrastructure

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over the last few decades, which ends up greatly benefiting the sector, insofar as it has helped to improve the quality and accessibility of tourist destinations. Portugal has a good educational system, particularly in the areas of hospitality and tourism, with an offer extended to practically the entire territory. This contributes to a good source of recruitment of well-trained professionals who can provide high-quality services. These factors, along with contributions from the private sector, have helped to establish Portugal's reputation as a destination for high quality hospitality and tourist experiences.

What mechanisms are in place to strengthen the institution's international reach?

ESHTE has partnerships with other higher education institutions and industry organizations around the world, which provides opportunities for student's exchange, research collaboration, and international networking. ESHTE intends to offers English-language programs and courses, which makes it accessible to international students and helps building its reputation as a global leader in hospitality and tourism education. With study abroad opportunities, we provide to our student's opportunities to study abroad and to gain international experience, which helps to broaden their perspectives and to develop their global network. Regarding Marketing and international dissemination, we participate in various activities to promote its programs and to attract international students, teachers and tourism partners. These mechanisms help ESHTE expand its international reach, build its reputation as a global leader in hospitality and tourism education, and provide its students with opportunities to gain a global perspective.

What are the main objectives of the institution going forward?

ESHTE's primary objective is to provide its students with a high-quality education that prepares them for the hospitality and tourism industry's careers, and is committed to fostering innovation in the hospitality and tourism education fields and staying at the forefront of industry developments. ESHTE aims to expand its international reach and to build partnerships with other higher education institutions, industry organizations, and government agencies around the world, and is focused on improving student outcomes by providing students with a well-rounded education, practical experience, and opportunities for professional development. ESHTE is committed to enhance its research efforts and to contribute to the body of knowledge in the hospitality and tourism fields, with CIDI – Research, Development and Innovation Centre, and CITUR- Centre for Research, Development and Innovation in Tourism. We are also dedicated to promote sustainability in the hospitality and tourism industry, both through its curriculum and through its outreach and engagement activities. These objectives reflect ESHTE's commitment to provide its students with a top-notch education, to contribute to the development of the hospitality and tourism industry, and to advance the hospitality and tourism education fields.

How does ESTHE tap into innovation and help prepare students for the future dynamics of the tourism industry?

ESHTE regularly updates its curricular content to keep up with industry developments and to ensure that its students learn about the latest trends, technologies, and best practices in the field. We integrate new technologies and techniques into curricula and teaching methods, which helps its students become familiar with the latest tools and resources they will use in their future careers. ESHTE works closely with partners to understand their needs and to identify areas where innovation is needed, which helps it prepare its students for the future dynamics of the industry. We have several initiatives, such as the participation in fairs, forums and shows dedicated to education, to the tourism sector. ESHTE provides its students with a variety of experiential or work-based learning opportunities, including internships, exchange programs, and hands-on projects, for example with companies and associations, which helps them gain practical experience and develop their skills in a real-world environment. We encourage the students to be entrepreneurs and develop innovative solutions to industry challenges, which helps prepare them for the dynamic and fast-changing nature of the tourism industry. ESHTE has several initiatives, such as the Poliemprende project and a close collaboration with DNA Cascais. ESHTE engages in research and development activities to identify new opportunities and contribute to the advancement of the field, which helps it stay at the forefront of industry development and prepare its students for the future. These initiatives help ESHTE to explore innovation and prepare its students and trainers for the future dynamics of the tourism industry by providing them with cutting-edge education, practical experience and opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. Teaching at ESHTE has a hallmark, we teach to innovate and we innovate while we teach.



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