



CURRICULUM OF SUSTAINABLE COSTAL AND MARITIME TOURISM 20 ECTS

Merellisen matkailun opetussuunnitelma 20op

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13.12.2017

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The extraordinary beauty and diversity of Europe's coasts, the wide range of facilities and activities on offer, makes Europe the preferred holiday destination. Indeed, coastal and maritime tourism is the biggest maritime sector in terms of gross value added and employment in the European Union (EU) (European Commission, 2017a). It employs over 3.2 million people, and as much as 51% of bed capacity in hotels across Europe is concentrated in regions with a sea border (European Commission, 2017b). As stated in the European Strategy for More Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism (European Commission 2014), the sector is a major source of growth and jobs, especially for the young.

In Finland, different waters are major tourism attractions. Finland is a land rich in water. Finland has 336,000 kilometres of coastline if all the different waters: lakes, rivers and the Baltic Sea are all added. The stated number of islands is 179,584 and lakes 188,000. In fact, Finland's coast boasts the world's largest archipelago. Furthermore, the Finnish Lake District is the most extensive area of unbroken lake in Europe. In addition, Finland holds seven Unesco World Heritage sites of which three can be experienced in the coastal area.

The Finnish coast differs significantly from other coasts of the Baltic Sea. The rocky and shallow coasts are characterised by a strong land uplift and rapidly advancing shoreline, brackish water and a humid climate with moderate winds and long, severe winters. In winter, coastal waters and sea areas are covered by ice over 3 months but there has been a significant decreasing trend in the annual maximum ice extent and also a large change in the length of the ice season during the past century.

As a result, coastal and maritime tourism is considered as one of the key tourism sectors in Finland. Especially, the Finnish archipelago has potential for developing an internationally competitive tourism destination. For this reason, the Finnish government has launched the strategic project: Making the Finnish archipelago internationally known. According to Visit Finland (2017), the aim of the Finnish Archipelago growth program is to increase the attractiveness, awareness and accessibility of the Finnish Archipelago, especially as a summer destination, in the target markets and increase the revenue of Finnish micro organizations and SMEs operating in the archipelago area. In addition, the existing archipelago travel products will be adapted to meet the needs of international markets (Visit Finland, 2017).

Simultaneously, the European and Finnish coastal and maritime tourism sector is lacking skilled personnel and dynamic entrepreneurs, which can hamper competitiveness. More than 90% of enterprises employ less than 10 people (European Commission, 2012), and these micro and small businesses don't have sufficient resources for improving their skills. In order for the coastal and maritime tourism to reach its potential, it needs people with the right skills and qualifications. Therefore, investing in people is a condition for sustainable and competitive growth in coastal and maritime tourism. Development of coastal and maritime tourism programmes and courses should be stimulated in higher education institutions.



Therefore, SAMK is launching the new curriculum of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism. The new curriculum aims at increasing skills and knowledge needed in order to support the growth and competitiveness of the sector. The curriculum offers a themed route focusing on the nature and development of coastal and maritime tourism, its niche products and markets, which require specialist skills and knowledge for their effective delivery. It responds to the need to modernise higher tourism education and to redefine the skills.

The curriculum is defined as a series of courses packaged in a specialisation module of coastal and maritime tourism. The relevant skills and knowledge are identified from the stakeholder perspective because coastal and maritime tourism has significant environmental, social and economic impacts for host destinations. In case of coastal and maritime tourism, not only the tourism industry but various groups of stakeholders, are affected by curricula decisions. Therefore, interests of different stakeholders including communities with respect to tourism development are taken into account when developing curricula. The identified skills and knowledge are translated into a module of 20 ECTS, which is integrated in the degree programme of international tourism development.

In the curriculum, the core body of knowledge is developed around the business elements of tourism. Coastal and maritime tourism is defined as an economic activity. The curriculum increases the professional, business skills of students and equips them with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to operate in the chosen career in the coastal and maritime sector. In addition to the commercial activities of tourism, the curriculum brings awareness of a variety of perspectives. It promotes a balance between satisfying the demands of business and those required to operate within the wider tourism world. The knowledge gained enables sustainable tourism development, planning and management.

A diverse range of businesses and many non-profit groups forms the coastal and maritime tourism industry, and government agencies have an important role in the monitoring and management. For this reason, the curriculum was designed by interviewing 25 different stakeholders identified as relevant to coastal and maritime tourism in the west coast of Finland. In addition to the interviews, the content of the most significant reports and strategies related to coastal and maritime tourism in Finland, in the Baltic Sea Region and in Europe was reviewed.



Curriculum of Coastal and Maritime Tourism 20 ECTS

Tourism in coastal and marine destinations, 5 ects

The purpose of the course is to develop understanding of the coastal and maritime tourism sector, its regulation, planning, management and sustainability.

Competence:

Student defines the concept of coastal and maritime tourism and analyses its state of play as a sector of Blue Growth. Student compares demand and supply of coastal and marine locations and water-based activities. Student explains the importance of regulating, planning, and managing the sector and the impacts of climate change on tourism industry. Student explores responsibility and sustainability in coastal and maritime tourism.

Content:

Definition of coastal and maritime tourism; coastal and maritime tourism sector; demand and supply; regulation, planning and management; integrated coastal zone management; sustainability and responsibility; impacts of climate change on tourism industry.

Classification of competence:

Basic level

Natural and cultural heritage as business resources in coastal and maritime tourism, 5 ects

The purpose of the course is to identify different business resources in marine and coastal context.

Competence:

Student examines natural and cultural heritage as business resources in coastal and marine environment. Student describes the theory of resource-based view of the tourism enterprise and applies it in the context of coastal and maritime tourism. Student combines different resources creatively and innovates coastal and marine tourism business concepts.

Content:

Natural and cultural heritage as business resources in coastal and maritime tourism; Protected areas; Marine wildlife; Geology; Underwater heritage; Scenery; Built heritage; Local identity and history; Infrastructure; The resource-based view of the tourism enterprise; Development of business concepts; Approaches to exploiting coastal and maritime business opportunities.

Classification of competence:

Intermediate level



Designing blue experiences in coastal and marine tourism destinations, 5 ect

The purpose of the course is to adapt the principles and tools of experience design and apply them in the context of coastal and maritime tourism and its destinations.

Competence:

Student classifies different blue experiences and their target markets. Student diversifies the experiential tourism products according different motivation criteria. Student adapts the concepts of tourist experience and tools for designing experiential, multisectoral and multisensory tourism products based on coastal and marine resources. Student applies the holistic development approach in coastal and marine tourism destinations and improves their profile.

Content:

Experience-based consumption, multisectoral and multisensory blue experiences in coastal and marine locations; Target markets, motivation-based segmentation and product diversification; Process of tourist experience formation; Design of experiential tourism products based on coastal and marine resources; Holistic development approach and profiling in coastal and marine tourism destinations.

Classification of competence:

Intermediate level

Well-being from blue spaces, 5 ect

The purpose of the course is to increase understanding of different aspects related to blue spaces as sources of human well-being.

Competence:

Student understands the concept of Blue Gym and history of using water as a source of wellbeing. Student explains wellbeing effects of coasts and seas and development of coastal and marine destinations to promote wellbeing. Student understands the contemporary issues of wellness tourism and creates water-based wellbeing services based on local resources. Student explores the importance of local healthy seafood and providing tourists with sensory experiences.

Content:

Concept of Blue Gym; Coasts and seas as a source of well-being; History of using water and coastal areas to promote well-being; Wellness tourism as a growing market in coastal and marine destination; Creation of well-being services in coastal and marine destinations; Local healthy seafood and its sensory experiences; Storytelling as part of the seafood experience.

Classification of competence:

Intermediate level



References

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