



Understanding Professional Qualifications

History and Background:

The United Kingdom is world renowned for its Education & Training programmes - Institutes, Colleges & Universities. The first professional bodies covered the areas of Bookkeeping, Banking, Insurance, Management and Secretarial Studies. Some Institutes and Associations were established over 100 years ago supplying employers with appropriately trained and certified staff.

The Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management [OTHM] was established to train and certify individuals seeking careers in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality Management (an industry employing over two hundred million people worldwide).

Standards & Recognition:

1. Institutes and Associations such as OTHM provide a structure of recognised professional courses that are valued as equivalent to degree or postgraduate level courses provided by the universities.
2. Employers actively seek individuals who have professional qualifications for example: ACCA, CIMA & AAT (Accounting), IMIS, BCS, OCR (Information Technology) CIM (Chartered Institute of Marketing) CIPS (Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply) and OTHM (Tourism & Hospitality Management).
3. These courses are often perceived to have greater value than a degree in the UK, with British employers often *insisting* that new graduates also take their professional qualifications after graduation.

Some other Benefits:

1. **Flexibility** - Professional programmes offer examination and certification opportunities, every six months, allowing students to 'build up' their qualification over a study period (for example an OTHM student who commences with the OTHM Introductory Certificate can progress to the Professional Certificate followed by the Professional Diploma and Higher Diplomas).
2. **Accredited Prior Learning (APL)** - Students may join professional programmes at various entry levels – depending on past qualifications, work experience and standard of English.
3. **Membership**- OTHM is a membership as well as a qualifications body. Membership designations include AOTHM (Associate) MOTHM (Full member) FOTHM (Fellow). Various activities include: Networking, Training (Continuous Personal Development after certification) receipt of OTHM Today magazine.
4. **Top-up Qualifications**: OTHM qualified individual may apply for direct entry to Masters or BA (Hons) Final year with London South Bank University, Thames Valley, Salford and Huddersfield universities in the UK.