

# SMART Choices

A tourism and hospitality degree from the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) opens doors to the tourism industry.

“I would rate MDIS 9 out of 10 for the teaching environment and staff.”

Vincent Gay (25)  
Executive Intern  
(Housekeeping, Orchard Hotel Singapore)



**What was the academic path that led you to studying for an honours degree at MDIS?**

After getting my Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management at MDIS, I progressed to the Bachelor of Science (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management Degree, which was designed to equip students with the specialised business and operations knowledge of the hospitality industry.

**What was the curriculum like?**

Compared to the time spent at local polytechnics, seven months was rather quick to graduate with a diploma. Yet the diploma course at MDIS gave me a clear picture of what the tourism and hospitality industry was like and how it was managed.

The degree course covered modules similar to those in a business degree course, such as finance, marketing and law, but from the

tourism and hospitality industry's perspective. Urban Tourism was one of my favourite modules as I got to travel to neighbouring countries to research on a topic of my choice.

The course syllabus provided a very good balance of practical learning and theory. Work placement was one of the mandatory modules I had to complete before moving on to Year 3. It allowed students to gain relevant industry experience, thereby increasing our employability.

**Tell us about your experience in the Work Placement Programme.**

I was attached to the Front Office Department at a five-star hotel from January to July 2012. In just six months, I learnt much about customer service and service recovery, such as handling demanding guests.

**Did you find what you studied at MDIS useful in the real world?**

The campus has a Hospitality Training Centre in a hotel setting, making learning more realistic, and the lecturers are veterans in the hospitality industry. Working in groups for assignments helped me develop good teamwork and communication skills, which are useful in my current training at Orchard Hotel Singapore under its Executive Internship Programme. I would rate MDIS 9 out of 10 for the teaching environment and staff.

**Any advice for potential students?**

If you have the passion to serve and you enjoy meeting new people, this course is for you!

**After getting your diploma at a polytechnic, why did you decide to pursue a degree at MDIS?**

I chose to study for a degree in International Tourism and Hospitality Management because I love travelling and wanted to do something that I would enjoy. I decided on MDIS after reading a newspaper article which compared students from private schools and local universities. They reported that private school students were also able to find good jobs.

**What was the curriculum like?**

It had a mix of theory and practical learning. The degree course covered the history of tourism and its trends, as well as Strategic Planning for Tourism & Leisure, International Tourism Development and Travel, Tourism & Hospitality Human Resources. As I like history and travelling, my favourite subjects were E-Tourism, Urban Tourism

and International Hospitality Management.

**Tell us about your experience in Travel and Tourism Work Placement.**

MDIS sends us for industry training to get real work experience. We would do on-site surveys to learn and understand the industry better. I did my internship at Chan Brothers Travel from January to July 2012. After my stint, I learnt that it was not just about booking tours! The job of a travel consultant also includes planning tours and flights that best suit the customers and following up on insurance claims. Now I'm able to plan my holidays better!

**What did you enjoy most about your stint at in the travel agency?**

A sense of fulfilment. My customers sent me photos of their trips and also words of appreciation.

**How did you apply your classroom skills to your workplace?**

Though a lot of what we learnt in school was theory, we did on-site surveys and projects to study tourism trends. I am now better able to anticipate guests' needs and wants.

**Any advice for potential students?**

Study something you like. I found that liking the subject made me enjoy my Tourism course more.

**AT A GLANCE**

The MDIS School of Tourism and Hospitality offers diploma and honours degree programmes for full-time and part-time students, including:



Scan to find out more!

- **Bachelor of Science (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management awarded by the University of Sunderland, UK**  
The programme gives students a working knowledge of the tourism and hospitality industries and can be completed in 32 months (full-time), including a six-month work placement.
- **Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management awarded by MDIS**  
Spanning seven months (full-time) and 12 months (part-time), the programme equips students with an integrated knowledge of general business and the operations of the industry and includes field trips and hands-on practicum.

**MDIS Merit Scholarship (Local) Available\***

\*Terms and conditions apply

“MDIS sends us for internship to get real work experience.”

Michelle Sze (24)  
Executive Intern  
(Front Desk, Orchard Hotel Singapore)



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TEXT: JUAN TAN; PHOTOS: FABERT HO; SHOT ON LOCATION AT ORCHARD HOTEL