**Greek hospitality: vocational training, management and service quality.**

During five days in June 2013 two members affiliated with the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre visited the island of Zakinthos (Zante) in Greece and stayed at the Eleon Grand Resort and Spa. The aim was to compare Icelandic standards of hospitality with Greek. One of the members represented the Icelandic Travel Industry Association responsible for vocational training. The other was from one of two colleges in Iceland offering tourism studies.

In sum their findings are detailed as five points that can form the pillars of successful learning outcomes for any vocational tourism curricula.

* **Service oriented mentality and service quality**. Those who seek a career in tourism need to dedicate themselves to the honing of their personal service skills and service orientation. It is imperative to understand the needs of the customer and be able to address these. This requires a detailed understanding of the concept; service quality and which aspects of service are keys to successful customer relations.
* **Positive disposition, hard work, co-operability and communication skills**. Those seeking a career in tourism need to understand that the “product” is people and their experiences. Thus pitfalls in personal communication need to be recognised and avoided, service gaps need to be identified and the right reactions to surprises or unforeseen series of events need to be trained. A skilled tourism service provider needs to be able to recognise the different needs arising from people’s different cultural backgrounds, disabilities, age, family status and family life cycle position. This applies not only to the customer but also co-workers.
* **Honesty and punctuality**. All skilled tourism service providers need to cultivate these traits.
* **Flexibility**. Those seeking a career in tourism need to understand the necessity of flexibility in their work and working schedule. They need to able to react and respond to “peak” times and thus be able to accommodate abrupt changes in working hours.
* **Continuous education**.Any tourism member of staff, be they in executive positions or workers need to attend to their continuous education to ensure professional pride, self-esteem and happiness. Through getting to know your work better you become better skilled at it and moreover more employable generally.