

# Need for a Specialized Module for Bakery and Confectionery in Hospitality Education

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to understand the gap between the student expectation and their career aspirations from the Industry. And the differences that the industry has while recruiting these students for jobs. The research further discusses on how the faculty teaching on the Culinary Arts program needs to balance these differences and fulfill expectations from the students and the industry. The research also suggests the probable change in the curriculum to make the student aspiration and expectation much clearer and the industry to look for students who shall fulfill exact requirement with skill and aspiration to lead. The research puts focus on the need for an elective module at the intermediate and honors level so that the student can decide and specialize in the selected area of department in culinary such as Pastry.

**Research Methodology:** The researcher has used questionnaires for getting the data related to the Pastry course taught across from three institutes which follow different curriculum. The data was gathered from the faculty and industry professionals using means of internet and also paper questionnaires. The students were given a separate questionnaire and the data was collected using internet and physical questionnaires.

**Keywords:** Student Expectations, Industry Needs, Elective Module

## INTRODUCTION

Pastry is an evolving area from the food production department of the hotel. Form many chefs uploading latest techniques on the social websites the area of Bakery and Pastry has become more interesting and rather complex. The use of chemicals to bring the effect of elements is the latest trend that the Chefs are practicing these days. Textures like foam, powder, air are very common these

days along with the use of silicone molds for preparation of the entremets, desserts and many more products. Mirror glaze is one of the current trend that is going viral on the social media. Use of latest machines, techniques and expertise in getting details in product of highest standards is vital today. The industry has lot of demand in the field of expert hands to work. The generation which walks in to any of the hospitality school is majorly comes from a background of families who have been around and seen it all. The kind of products they see on the counter or on the media is what they want to prepare with little or no knowledge and no expertise. There lies a gap between the student's anticipation and the education provided. The emerging trend of bakery and pastry needs highly skilled people along with the ability to manage and control the production. The management and control part is majorly taught in the theory sessions at the school but the skill is by and large sacrificed during the Hospitality study of three or four years. This is the period where the student is at the peak of gaining and polishing the skill along with the management aspects of the business. Many international pastry schools, which are now slowly opening their training schools in India are specifically focusing on the skill development and equipping the person who has already acquired some experience while at work. These courses are of short period of time, not lasting more than a week in most of the cases and also costs a fortune for many. This could be very well be done at the school level while the student is still studying the art at the undergraduate level. The industry on the other hand is looking for people who have skills and also possess the ability to manage the business. Management techniques are definitely taught and require a good amount of experience to learn. However developing skill can very well begin at the school level. Organizations like NSDC have begun training the trades to incorporate the skills at the early levels of study.

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Service industry is a highly professional industry and people working in the industry are required to be professional and accurate in providing satisfaction to the guest. The students have high expectations when they take admission in the Culinary School or a Hotel Management institute. The faculty has a major role to play in shaping the career aspirations of the students who are coming in to see the whole new world of professionalism and opportunity. The industry expects certain kind of attitude, knowledge and leadership traits from the student. On the other hand the students want to chase their goal and passion. The faculty is the link between the two different expectations to merge the expectation in to one. The faculties on the teaching program are majorly from the hotel experience background, who have spent a certain amount of years in the hotel either heading a department or from a responsible position in the hotel. The faculties also receive cross exposure training to keep them in tandem with the current trends in the industry. The teaching staff should have a good amount of experience in the industry to be able to pass it on to the students effectively and they should keep updating themselves by either having a cross exposure training or keeping in touch with the current trends (Ling and Chang 2010).

The research puts focus on one of the industry's core department known as the Pastry. Pastry is a department of skill and patience. The Pastry department in the hotel has high skilled and passionate set of people who work to please the guests with their creations. The department not only creates desserts but also creates high quality breads and pastries for the consumption. The creativity and experience is highly required in this department. The student who intends to join this department requires basic training, passion and strength to work for long hours. The training of the students begins with the institute where they get admitted for a course in culinary arts. The instructions that student receives while at study, the training in the area of choice and guidance play very important role in shaping the career of the student.

According to Green et al 2004, industry experienced teachers can inculcate great knowledge and skills to their students. Teachers who have worked in the industry can effectively pass the theory and practical aspects of the industry to the students (Epsztejn et al., 2001).

The students who join the culinary program aspiring to be chefs have a lot of expectations from the teachers as well as the industry. The students who want to pursue a career

in the pastry department have different expectations from the practice point of view.

The curriculum is designed considering all the basic requirements of the industry and not necessarily fulfills the student's expectations at large. The expectation from the industry is very basic understanding of the trade with management knowledge and ability to lead. The industry has different criteria for different set of students and majorly expects them to have a very basic knowledge of production but a very strong and detailed knowledge about the management aspect of the department. The students who are looking forward for a career in pastry, expect latest technology to be demonstrated and taught at very beginning of their educational journey. Access to the media and internet has developed the area of scope in the culinary field. At the same time the students fail to understand that the end product in the video is the result of years of practice, knowledge and dedication to the art. Not all the students can showcase the same amount of skill and hence the curriculum is very basically designed. The curriculum is the guideline which states how a particular module is to be taught. The first level of study covers basic knowledge of the production departments and bakery which includes bread making, science behind the bread making, cake making, sponges and basic desserts. At this level the curriculum makes sure all the students learn the basics of the production department along with the bakery and pastry. The second level or the intermediate level concentrates more on the specific region and gives the student a clear understanding of the food the particular region makes and consumes, also some curriculums teach the quantity cooking and calculation of the food prepared in bulk along with the purchasing and budgeting technics. The third or the superior level covers mostly international cuisine and desserts prepared in that particular cuisine. Plating techniques and styling of the food in taught along the production at this level of study.

Taking in to consideration the three years of study, the major constraints are as following:

- (a) Students with more inclination towards the department of pastry feel that the curriculum is basic and they cannot do much in the classroom.
- (b) Students do not get enough time to practice the skill as the product is mostly made just once.
- (c) Faculty cannot concentrate only on the selected few students to teach the pastry skills.

- (d) The curriculum requires a frequent update to keep it parallel to the industry requirement but are bound by the guidelines of the universities or the governing bodies.
- (e) The industry exposure gives a different dimension to the study as the trainers at the industry do not allow students to train in the area of choice.
- (f) The curriculum does not have an elective module for the students who want to pursue in a particular department, in this case especially Bakery and Pastry.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum in the hospitality industry is very generic and needs a special attention when it comes to skill based modules. There can be a great difference if a module is introduced at the second year or the intermediate level to achieve the learning outcomes more effectively. Many scholars feel that there has to be a defining change in the way the modules are taught. This would surely be helpful in training more focused students and also finding more specific and skill oriented jobs for them. The trend in the hospitality is evergreen and there are new developments to ensure the customer satisfaction. The pastry is the area where innovation and change are inevitable. How to please someone by new ideas and technic is something that keeps the pastry chefs going. There is always a wow factor that is created while designing special cakes, desserts, breads. The presentation ways have definitely changed since last 10 years.

The Subject could be divided in to smaller specialized modules to make it more effective for understanding. The delivery of the knowledge and the modulation of the curriculum becomes more understandable and focused. Modularization facilitates a flexible pattern of study where students are credited for courses successfully completed over a period of time. (Debalina Sengupta Yinlun Huang Cliff I. Davidson Thomas F. Edgar Mario R. Eden Mahmoud M. El-Halwagi, 2017) According to Johnstone (1994), there are large discrepancies between formal training and employer demands in the hospitality industry. The Johnstone research outlines the issues within the hospitality industry and underscores the direct link to education. Academic Hospitality programs should be addressing these skills which are deemed necessary for graduates to have, yet these programs are leaving some

or many of these skills to be taught by the employers. Employers feel their recruits are less adequately prepared for work after graduation.

They found out that some recruits lack the requisite skills needed for the world of work.

In a research by Goodman & Sprague (1991), education as we know is in danger of vanishing. According to Kluge (1996), information technology in the hospitality curriculum will be required to be sure that the skills students obtain during their studies will prepare them for a career in hospitality. According to Kluge (1996), information technology in the hospitality curriculum will be required to be sure that the skills students obtain during their studies will prepare them for a career in hospitality.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The student expectation from the industry is way different than the reality. The curriculum is designed to suit all the candidates equally. The basic training in the pastry remains the same for every individual at all levels of studies. Not all the students have a keen interest to pursue the career in Pastry as it calls for immense skills and patience at each step. So to understand the need for the specialized module in the pastry the researcher created two questionnaires out of which one was for the faculty and the industry perspective and the other was for the students to understand if there is any inclination or liking towards the field of pastry. Following was the outcome of the analysis of the data. Both questionnaires and the responses are attached in the annexure for better understanding. Only overall yet separate graphs of both the questionnaires are shown below.

There is a great demand for the Pastry professionals from the industry and data clearly showed that the curriculum lacks focus on the module. The faculty has a challenge to meet the expectations of all the students while delivering the module at all levels. Here the argument is not the number of students but the kind of expertise that could be imparted to the students who are more inclined towards pastry department. Introduction of an elective module at the intermediate level could be of a major help in the students career. The faculty shall be able to concentrate on the students who choose a particular department such as Pastry and shall be able to develop content to match the Industry expectations.

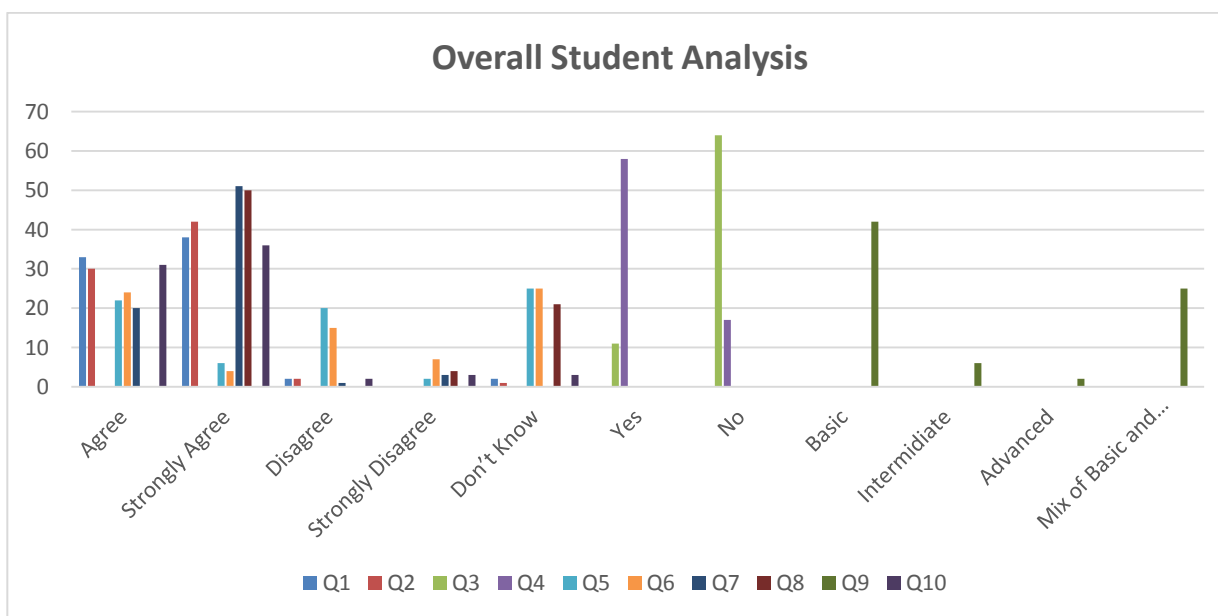
The researcher has gone through the learning outcomes and the syllabus of the leading Pastry Academies institute which offer Hospitality Educations, which have been in the country for more than a decade, and has found out that the same learning outcomes, can be achieved if there is an elective module and if changes are made to the infrastructure. The teaching in these cases could be more effective than teaching a group of mixed individuals with different choices.

Effective teachers not only express and clarify expectations for student achievement, but also stress student responsibility and accountability for striving to meet those expectation (Stronge, 2002, p. 37). The students can also learn the trade much before than joining

the industry and getting trained in all departments except for the department of choice. The industry exposure of the said student is never satisfying as neither the student nor the trainer knows or understands which area to concentrate on.

Here, the researcher shall be focusing on the Pastry as a profession and choice as a career. Based on the analysis of students across three years of the culinary arts, the faculty teaching on the program across various institutes and the industry perspective. The analysis was done to understand the current syllabus contents and to provide possible alternative to provide specific and focused learning to the students. The following was the outcome from the student’s feedback.

### Student Analysis



**Fig. 1.1**

The graph displays the preferences of the students for the Bakery and Pastry.

The sample size for the feedback was 75 students across Year I to Year III. This was done to understand the possible liking towards the art of bakery and pastry. Almost 50 percent of the students felt that there was a definite requirement for the skilled bakery and pastry manpower in the industry. These also includes people who want to open their own pastry outlets in future. The students also strongly felt that there is definite parity between the

Industry requirements and the curriculum which is being taught. There were also students who felt that the demand is not really too much and the curriculum is enough to teach whatever is required by the Industry. Overall when actual analysis was complete, it is quite clear that there definitely exists requirement for skilled manpower in Bakery and Pastry Industry with clear need to change the curriculum to fit to the industry requirements. There are institute which teach the Module of Bakery and Pastry as the part of the Food Production or have the module run for only a semester which covers very basic level of bakery

and pastry. While the module is covered as a semester module, the contents of the Module is very limited as not everything in fact very little can be covered. It usually includes breads, few desserts, cakes and cookies. When the time provided for the module is too little, the vast area of a specialized subject cannot be covered leaving a big gap between the students and the industry expectations. Many of the courses which are run in the country these days have almost ninety or hundred percent of skill whereas the hospitality schools rarely reach the skill level expected at around thirty to forty percent. This leaves the student unsatisfied in many cases. The student who is focused for the pastry should be given a choice to pursue the same as the career. The research also shows very clearly that if such module is given as a choice at the intermediate level of study, more than 50 percent of the students are willing to take the option and pursue it as their career. Many students feel that the curriculum is not updated according to the latest trends and the level of teaching is

basic. If a specialized module is given as an elective, the students who opt for the same would be more focused than having the entire batch learn where few are focused and others are interested in other sections of the kitchen. If focused students learn the art, the learning outcomes of the program would be more effectively achieved and there would be a great satisfaction on the students as well as the faculty part. More techniques, trends, could be easily inculcated in the program and the subject would remain updated with latest trends and techniques.

Almost 88 percent students feel that there is no pastry module at any level of the study and the module is not updated to meet the industry requirements. Students also feel that there is a definite gap between the industry requirements and the curriculum. This definitely gives a clear indication that there lies a need for the specialized bakery and pastry module at the intermediate level of study.

### Faculty Analysis

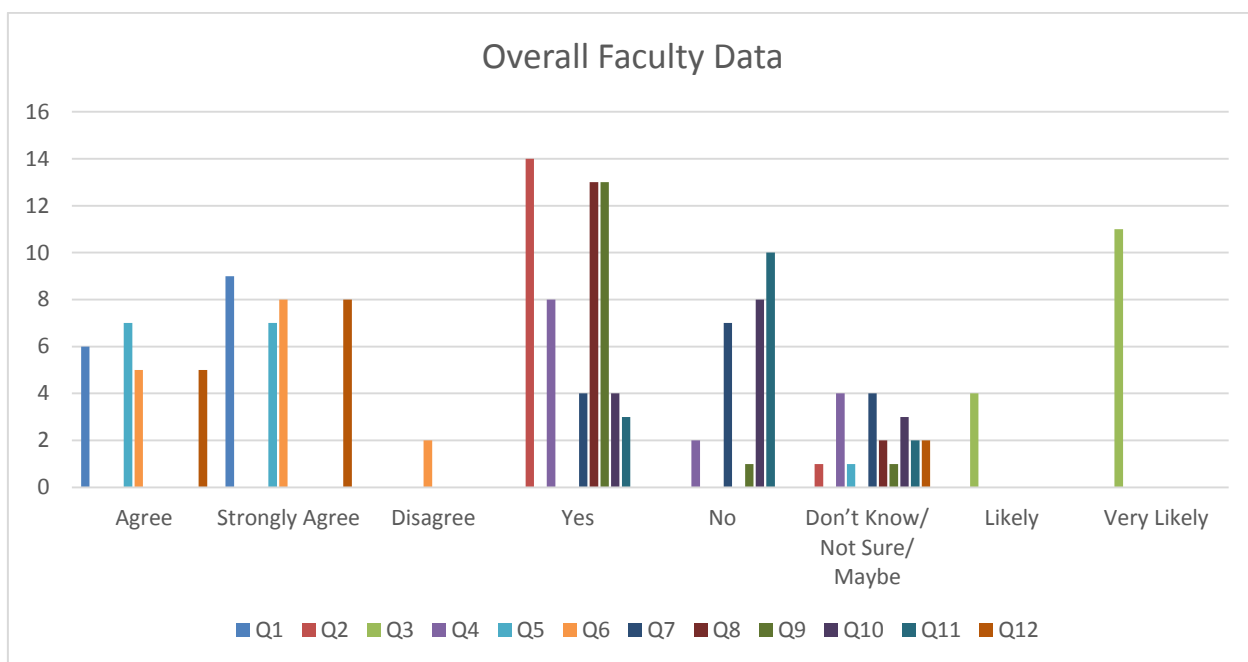


Fig. 1.2

The graph above was obtained from the data collected from the faculties and few industry professionals to understand the trend and the liking of the pastry module. The data clearly speaks about how bakery and pastry has evolved and come up as a popular and growing sector in food and beverage industry. There definitely lies a steep demand

for the skilled bakery and pastry persons. The faculty too feel that the department definitely lacks focus and needs to be concentrated. Bakery and pastry is a department which is specific skill and knowledge based one and the curriculum and the industry trend these days has a clear

gap which needs to be filled. The curriculum needs a regular update. As it is a skill oriented department, the students need focused and detailed learning to understand the department better. The faculty on the other hand would certainly get focused students to bring out the best in them. The trend of pastry is so growing these days that there is something new which is uploaded on the social media or is invented by chefs who practice this art. Another aspect of the module lies with the exposure of the social media to the students and the latest updates of growing trends in the industry. At times students want to prepare everything they see on the media irrespective of the kind of equipment, tools, ingredients and required expertise. Hence having a specialized module will ensure the latest tools and equipments updated in the training school to benefit the students. Having a specialized module at the intermediate level of the study would benefit the faculties as it does to the students. The faculties would make sure that all the latest trends techniques are well versed with by gaining either specialized training or taking up courses. It would also benefit the development of the faculty to keep them more updated and focused in the field. If the specialized module is developed the students would be encouraged to choose the area of specialization at the early stage and hence the learning would be more focused as it is in any other field. The curriculum generally covers all the departments of the kitchen under only one or two modules.

It is very important for the culinary student to understand the kitchen department very clearly and so learning all the fundamentals and basics of the international cuisine in the first year is mandatory. Once the first year is over the student should be given a choice to choose specialization to make him or her more focused in to the chosen area of interest. Once the module is chosen, the measurement of the performance would also become much clear and specific. The industry too would benefit from getting specific skilled personnel who would require less of the training.

The curriculum is designed to teach culinary arts and the management in the production department. The argument here is not the technology or the expectation of the student, but it is the skill required at the beginning of the career i.e. seeking a job in the pastry department.

The chef who performs the dessert in a video in four minutes must have done so much of practice and trials before

arriving at the final product. The professional people also have many things premade before actual screening. The syllabus in many places creates a huge challenge in living up to the expectations from the student's point of view. It is rigid at times and has very limited area to be covered under specific year. According to Crockett, (2002), more and more academic content would be encouraged with the technology and the curriculum would need regular updates to adopt to the changes in the trends and soon it would become the future of the delivery pattern. The need for an elective subject in the intermediate year is hence necessary as the students may decide which area to concentrate in much earlier in their academic career. The elective subject will create scope for more students to opt for the Pastry as a career option and in other departments too. The faculty on the other hand would have a greater area of curriculum development and can decide as to which are the latest trends to be included. If the students do not have an elective subject pertaining to their choice of department, it becomes very difficult for the faculty to teach details in to a particular topic as not every student has the interest to study or practice the skill, and the interested students feel the teacher is not doing justice to their liking. To continue to satisfy the basic purpose of hospitality education, a curriculum needs to be driven by current industry needs. Students need to depend on timely curriculum to form their preparation (Reigel, 1995). Since it is a not a skill based program students learn more of the management in the kitchen rather than emphasizing on the skills required in the kitchen. The curriculum development according to the choice of a subject could get the subject a different dimension and also give enough room for the faculty to add the latest technology and developments in to the curriculum for better understanding of the subject. The students can also spend more time in studying and practicing what they enjoy rather than studying the entire year and then deciding where to specialize.

The industrial exposure for such students can also be more focused and the trainers from the industry would also be clearer as in to what to expect from the students. The current industry exposure is very limited in India and the trainers have very limited and basic expectations from the students. These trainers are mostly raised in the industry sheer by experience and not by their academic knowledge about the trade. So the understanding and expectation of these trainers is way different than the requirement of the curriculum. The student usually ends up doing odd jobs in the training rather than actually concentrating on

the core field he / she is interested in. If the student and the faculty is clear about what career aspirations does the individual has then, the placement for the exposure would be very clear. The individual student hence will be able to opt for the specialized industrial exposure and gain more knowledge and skill at the on the job training. Since the trainee remains same for the stipulated period of training the trainer would also be able to concentrate on the key skills rather than offering odd jobs to the trainee just to get over with the training period. The faculty can define the learning outcomes for the trainee while on the training and may have a trial once the student returns to study. The student will have a clear understanding as to where he/she is heading and what shall be the future. There are specialized courses in each field of study, but moreover these courses are mostly certificate courses and have a very short duration of practice at school. Secondly these courses are mostly designed for professionals who want to further sharpen their skills. Having a four year full time Bachelor's degree in the Culinary Arts with major will be more effective than any other program or course in the field of Pastry.

The employment strategies could hence be defined too. The students opting for the pastry segment can be fully trained and may appear only for pastry openings. The employers may have a clearer point of view while recruitment and may decide on the best candidate based purely on skill. The benefit for the student on the other hand would be, he/she will have to only concentrate on the area of choice, here Pastry and employment possibility would increase.

'Placement is an important component of third level hospitality management programmes and is one of the most vital experiences on which graduates base their career aspirations' (McMahon and Quinn, 1995, p.13). There is another challenge at the academics, the infrastructure. While the hospitality industry is growing at a rapid speed, many of the institutions have a very basic training facility for the students. As the curriculum gets changed according to the industry needs, the infrastructure too needs changes to fit to the needs of the training. Infrastructure, here at the institute is very basic with simple equipment for basic learning of the Pastry. The pastry section should be ideally air conditioned and temperature controlled to maintain the product consistency and quality. Here, at the institute there is a very small area which is temperature controlled. The specialized tools and moulds etc. could be identified

and ordered accordingly to suit the module and teaching. The required freezers and their capacity can be identified and ordered.

## CONCLUSION

There are many challenges that are faced by the faculty and the students while studying the course of culinary studies especially in the Pastry section. The students have aspirations and the same are not always fulfilled while the recruitment interviews take place. The industry expectation differs from the initial aspirations of the students as they have to be trained further for the role they would be getting in to after few years or after completion of their training schedule. Not all the students have the skill or the passion to be in the field of pastry and the teachers have to face lot of challenges from teaching an amateur young student to learn the art of baking from scratch. The curriculum in many ways becomes a huge barrier in teaching an enthusiast of baking to become a full-fledged pastry person. The scope for practice in such cases is nearly negligible. The teacher has to complete the curriculum and the students who want to excel the art of pastry feel that there is not enough scope for learning. There has to be a scope for choosing a particular subject at least in the intermediate and honors level of the study to choose the career path in the culinary industry. At least, by having a selected no of students who aspire to become master of certain art could be focused and taught in detail about the craft. Such students can spend more time in the said department practicing the skill rather than being hurried in the regular practical classes.

The teaching staff on the other hand can be more specific in forming of the curriculum for such students so as to decide what to include in practical training and what to include in theoretical training of the students. The teachers in many cases have to face the criticism for not delivering at the student expectations as there is no scope for the same in the curriculum. Even while planning curriculum the teacher has to take in to consideration the skill level of the student and also the basics of the craft so that all the students can learn the art simultaneously. This, on the other hand is the loss for the students who want to master the art. There are courses which provide either certification or very limited skill training for a brief period of time. The students join the course in culinary aspiring to become hands on chef at the end of the course. The industry on the other hand is looking for the leaders

at the later stage of their initial training after recruitment. The recruiters look for a very basic skill from a student as he/she has studied or trained basic skills while at school. The student who tries to showcase a little advanced skill is looked at from a very different point of view.

Many times the student fails to deliver the advanced skills and blunders the test or it just happens by chance or accident which cannot be reproduced. The interviewers or recruiters then doubt the skills of the trainer or the faculty who has taken pain to teach a non-culinary background student to stand and deliver a four course menu at the time of recruitment. The teachers always remains at the receiving end both from the student's perspective and also from the industry requirement. The students feel that the teacher is incapable of delivering a module or subject and the industry blames for incompetent students. There should be an elective department of personal interest for culinary students to excel in the subject they want to proceed as a career. The curriculum should have flexibility in terms with at least one module of choice to give a greater understanding and training to a set of focused students at Year II and Year III level of studies. There is a huge gap between the training requirements laid down by the curriculum and the industry assumption of the training at the first year or second year level. The hotel staff mainly skilled with experience and not technically sound with management tactics or the culinary skill, treat students in very bad manner. The students do not get exposure in the area they want to excel in, but get odd jobs like picking stores cleaning ranges, or chopping vegetables in major. There could be a good argument that above skills are also required for a grooming chef, but the industry ends up training the students only in the said skills. This creates further excitement in the student's minds to try everything at the institute level.

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