


The Graduate School
Office of the Associate Provost and Dean

POB 115500
101A Grinter Hall
Gainesville FL 32611-5500
352 392 6622 (Telephone)

February 26, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chris Janelle
Associate Dean
College of Health and Human Performance

FROM: Nicole LP Stedman 
Dean and Associate Provost
Graduate School

RE: #22087 seeks to create a major in AI-Driven Hospitality for the Master of Science (M.S.), College of Health and Human Performance

The proposal listed above from the College of Health and Human Performance was approved at the February 26, 2026 Graduate Council with an effective date of Spring 2027, pending further approvals.

The following individuals and offices will be notified by a copy of this memorandum so that they can complete their processes for the major:

cc: Rachel Fu, Professor, Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management
Chelsea Rojas, Megan Lewis, Stacy Wallace, Francesca Tai, Hannah Potter, Graduate School
Lee Morrison, University Curriculum Committee and Office of the University Registrar
Cathy Lebo, Office of Institutional Planning and Research

NS/ld



Request to Offer a New Degree Program
In accordance with Board of Governors Regulation 8.011,
Academic Degree Program Coordination and Approval

University of Florida
Institution Submitting Proposal

College of Health & Human Performance
Name of College(s) or School(s)

Hospitality Administration/Management, General
Academic Specialty or Field

52.0901
Proposed CIP Code (2020 CIP)

Spring, 2027
Proposed Implementation Term

Dept. of Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management
Name of Department(s)/Division(s)

Master of Science with a major in AI-Driven Hospitality
Complete Name of Degree

The submission of this proposal constitutes a commitment by the university that, if the proposal is approved, the necessary financial resources and the criteria for establishing new programs have been met before the program's initiation.

Date Approved by the University Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Chair's Signature **Date**

President's Signature **Date**

Provost's Signature **Date**

I. Overview

A. Briefly describe the proposed program in the following table.

Purpose	The Master of Science with a major in AI-Driven Hospitality prepares current and future leaders to apply artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation across the hospitality, tourism, and event industries. Students gain strategic, data-driven, and ethical competencies to implement AI-enabled business solutions, enhance customer experiences, and lead workforce transformation in Florida and the global service economy.
Degree Level(s):	Master of Science
Majors, Concentrations, Tracks, or Specializations	AI-Driven Hospitality
Total Number of Credit Hours	30
Program Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E&G Program <input type="checkbox"/> Market Tuition Rate Program* <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Supporting Program* <small>*Refer to Board Regulation 8.002, Self Supporting and Market Tuition Rate Program and Course Offerings, for additional details.</small>
Possible Career Outcomes	<p>ENTRY / EARLY-CAREER ROLES: Hospitality Data & Insights Analyst, Guest Experience Analytics Coordinator, Revenue & Demand Forecasting Analyst, Smart Systems Operations Coordinator, Event Technology & Analytics Specialist, Tourism Intelligence Analyst, Restaurant Operations Analytics Specialist, Transportation & Mobility Data Analyst</p> <p>MID-CAREER / MANAGEMENT ROLES: AI-Enabled Operations Manager, Guest Experience Intelligence Manager, Smart Hotel / Restaurant Operations Manager, Destination Analytics Manager, Event Operations & Crowd Analytics Manager, Transportation Experience Optimization Manager, Digital Transformation Manager, Service Design & Personalization Manager</p> <p>SENIOR / EXECUTIVE-LEVEL ROLES: Director of AI-Driven Hospitality Strategy, Chief Experience Officer (CXO), Chief Digital / Innovation Officer (CDO/CIO), Destination Intelligence Director, VP of Operations & Technology Integration, Enterprise Decision Intelligence</p>

	Executive, Smart City / Smart Destination Executive Lead, Space Tourism Operations & Experience Director EXECUTIVE CONSULTING / ENTREPRENEURIAL TRACK: AI Strategy Consultant in Hospitality & Tourism, Hospitality Technology Venture Founder, Digital Transformation Advisor, Service Innovation & AI Ethics Consultant
--	---

B. Does the proposed program qualify as a Program of Strategic Emphasis, as described in the Florida Board of Governors 2025 System Strategic Plan?
[Programs of Strategic Emphasis List](#)

- Yes, it does qualify as a Program of Strategic Emphasis.
- No, it does not qualify as a Program of Strategic Emphasis.

C. Does the program fall under one of the CIP codes listed below that qualifies for the Programs of Strategic Emphasis Waiver? *(for baccalaureate programs only)*

CIP CODE	CIP TITLE
11.0101	Computer and Information Sciences
11.0103	Information Technology
13.1001	Special Education and Teaching
13.1202	Elementary Education and Teaching
14.0801	Civil Engineering
14.0901	Computer Engineering
14.1001	Electrical and Electronics Engineering
14.1901	Mechanical Engineering
27.0101	Mathematics
52.0301	Accounting
52.0801	Finance
52.1201	Management Information Systems

Yes. If yes, students in the program will be eligible for the Programs of Strategic Emphasis waiver. Refer to [Board Regulation 7.008](#) and the [Programs of Strategic Emphasis Waiver Guidance](#).

No

Not Applicable

II. Institutional and State-Level Accountability

A. Describe how the proposed program directly or indirectly supports the following.

1. The [State University System's Strategic Plan](#) goals. The Master of Science with a major in in AI-Driven Hospitality program, housed within the Department of Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management (THEM) in the College of Health and Human Performance and offered at UF's Jacksonville campus, directly supports the State University System's 2025 Strategic Plan by advancing its three core pillars: Teaching and Learning; Scholarship, Research, and Innovation; and Community and Business Engagement. The program's focus on artificial intelligence, data analytics, and robotics integration aligns with the Board of Governors' Strategic Priorities for a Knowledge Economy, which emphasize increasing graduate degrees in STEM and health fields and developing programs of Strategic Emphasis that respond to evolving workforce demands. By equipping students with analytical, technological, and leadership skills that directly serve Florida's high-growth service industries, the degree enhances program productivity and efficiency while contributing to the system-wide goal of improving employment and wage outcomes for graduates. Indirectly, the program supports Florida's economic and societal advancement by fostering research, innovation, and commercialization in hospitality technologies by key components of the SUS plan's goal to transform Florida's economy through discovery and innovation. The program's partnerships with UF Health, Jacksonville's technology sector, and Florida and global hospitality corporations will expand collaborative research, entrepreneurship, and community engagement by advancing the SUS objectives to increase research commercialization, patents, and start-ups, and to strengthen the state's community and business workforce. In summary, the MS in AI-Driven Hospitality embodies the Board's vision for a high-quality, efficient, and strategically aligned university system that prepares graduates to lead Florida's transition into a globally competitive, innovation-driven economy.

2. The institution's strategic plan and goals the program will directly advance. The proposed MS in AI-Driven Hospitality degree responds to the convergence of two transformative forces: the accelerating adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and the dynamic growth of Florida's tourism and hospitality sector. This program supports UF's mission by advancing innovation, economic development, and workforce readiness. It aligns with the Florida Board of Governors' Programs of Strategic Emphasis, notably in AI, global competitiveness, and workforce-aligned education.

3. The university's mission. The mission of the degree program (Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality) aligns directly with the mission of the University of Florida as described in the Strategic Plan of the State Board of Governors: "*The University of Florida is committed to educating students so they are prepared to make significant contributions*



within an increasingly global community offering a broad-based, exclusive public education, leading-edge research and service to the citizens of Florida, the nation, and the world.” The mission of the University of Florida is to enable its students to lead and influence the next generation for economic, cultural, and societal benefit. Since our founding more than 160 years ago, we have continually pushed the boundaries of knowledge forward. The university is committed to serving the state of Florida, the nation, and the world by pursuing, creating, and disseminating new knowledge while building upon the experiences of the past. With our land, sea, and space grants, we have been entrusted with the responsibilities of education, research, scholarship, and service. UF has some of the top faculty in the country. In addition to attracting more than \$1 billion in research annually, they foster a uniquely collaborative environment that transforms potential into actual results. As a student at UF, you become part of the Gator Nation, a loyal, committed, and supportive network of more than 450,000 alumni throughout the United States and in more than 150 countries around the world.

4. The benefit to the university, the local community, and the state. The program's impact extends across multiple levels: Local (Jacksonville): Strengthens AI-driven leadership talent for hospitality, tourism, event, and corporates/industries, contributing to downtown revitalization. State: Addresses workforce demands in Florida's robust tourism sector, serving over 143 million visitors annually. National & International: Equips leaders for global hospitality and tourism roles, utilizing UF's Gator Nation network across 150+ countries.



- B. Provide the date the pre-proposal was presented to the Council of Academic Vice Presidents Academic Program Coordination (CAVP ACG). Specify any concerns raised and provide a narrative explaining how each has been addressed in this proposal or will be addressed before the proposed program is implemented.

September 3, 2025 was the date the CAVP ACG reviewed the pre-proposal. The State University System Academic Coordinating Group met this morning to discuss degree pre-proposals. The MS in AI-Driven Hospitality was reviewed with no formal concerns.

III. Student and Workforce Demand

If the proposed program is a baccalaureate or master's degree on the Programs of Strategic Emphasis list, skip III-A.

- A. Describe the Florida and national workforce demand for the proposed program. The response should, at a minimum, include the current state workforce data from Florida's Department of Commerce and national workforce data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Additional documentation for workforce needs may include letters of program support by employers and job postings for program graduates, as well as a description of any specific needs for research and service that the program would fulfill.**

Florida's workforce outlook demonstrates strong and sustained demand for advanced management roles across the hospitality, tourism, and service industries. According to data from the Florida Department of Commerce (2025), job growth is projected across multiple relevant occupations under CIP 52.0901. Lodging Managers are expected to increase by 5.4 percent, with 3,784 new openings statewide, while Food Service Managers show 5.7 percent growth and more than 27,000 new positions by 2032. Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners will experience 5.3 percent growth, adding more than 7,800 new jobs, while General and Operations Managers, an essential leadership category for the state's tourism economy, will grow by 6.4 percent, generating over 139,000 openings. The integration of artificial intelligence and analytics into hotel operations, event design, and service management is accelerating the need for professionals trained in both technology and leadership through the skill set the proposed Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality program is designed to provide. National data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reveal similarly strong growth patterns. Lodging Managers are projected to grow by 9.9 percent through 2034, Entertainment and Recreation Managers by 7.7 percent, and Medical and Health Services Managers by a remarkable 23.2 percent, adding more than 142,000 new jobs across the United States. These national trends confirm the expanding need for managers who can apply data-driven decision-making and automation to improve service quality and operational efficiency. Employer feedback collected at statewide and national conferences, including the Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism and the QSR and Hospitality Shows, reinforces this need. Chief executives, convention bureau leaders, and Chamber of Commerce representatives have expressed enthusiasm for the new program and indicated their intent to recommend or sponsor employees who could benefit from advanced study in AI-driven hospitality.

Complete the table below using data from the Search by CIP or SOC Employment Projections Data Tool in the Academic Review Tracking System.

Occupations	Percent Change in Job Openings		Annual Average Job Openings		Total # of New Jobs		Education Level Needed for Entry
	FL XXXX- XX	U.S. XXXX- XX	FL XXXX- XX	U.S. XXXX- XX	FL XXXX- XX	U.S. XXXX- XX	
Lodging Managers 11-9081	5.4	9.9	4,488 [in 2024] 4,741 [in 2032]	52,000 [in 2024] 53,800 [in 2034]	3,784	5,400	Bachelor's degree
Entertainment and Recreation Managers, Except Gambling 11-9072	5.2	7.7	3,216 [in 2024] 3,383 [in 2032]	43,200 [in 2024] 46,500 [in 2034]	2,945	5,500	Bachelor's degree
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners 13-1121	5.3	7.5	8,659 [in 2024] 9,114 [in 2032]	155,800 [in 2024] 163,300 [in 2033]	7,815	15,500	Bachelor's degree
Medical and Health Services Managers 11-9111	4.7	23.2	37,873 [in 2024] 39,636 [in 2032]	616,200 [in 2024] 759,100 [in 2034]	23,217	142,900	Bachelor's degree
Travel Agents 41-3041	6.8	2.2	12,441 [2024] 13,283 [in 2032]	65,700 [in 2024] 67,200 [in 2034]	13,632	7,100	Some College
Food Service Managers 11-9051	5.7	6.4	28,703 [in 2024] 30,325 [in 2032]	352,800 [in 2024] 375,300 [in 2034]	27,623	42,000	Some College
General and Operations Managers	6.4	4.4	196,028 [in 2024]	3,712,900 [in 2024]	139,730	308,700	Bachelor's degree

11-1021			208,545 [in 2032]	3,876,800 [in 2034]			
Chief Executives 11-1011	5.4	5.5	26,161 [in 2024] 27,580 [in 2032]	313,900 [in 2023] 331,100 [in 2033]	15,530	23,000	Bachelor's degree

The proposed Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality prepares graduates for the full career spectrum from entry-level analytics and operations roles to senior executive and enterprise leadership positions across hotels, restaurants, travel, tourism, transportation, events, destination marketing, entertainment, and emerging frontiers such as space tourism. As hospitality-related industries rapidly shift toward data-informed, technology-enabled service models, the most in-demand careers increasingly center on experience intelligence, AI-enabled operations, predictive analytics, smart systems management, and strategic digital transformation. Through this degree, students build critical skills in data literacy, AI-assisted decision-making, service design and personalization, human-centered automation, ethical and responsible AI governance, and cross-functional leadership. Grounded in traditional hospitality values while leveraging advanced analytics and intelligent systems, the program develops professionals who can translate technology into meaningful service, guide organizations through change, and lead the future of hospitality with both operational excellence and human authenticity.

Sources:

Date Retrieved: 10/26/2025

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics - <https://data.bls.gov/projections/occupationProj>

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity - <http://www.floridajobs.org/labor-market-information/data-center/statistical-programs/employment-projections>

B. If the occupations do not currently appear in the most recent version of the Search by CIP or SOC Employment Projections Data Tool provided by Board staff, provide occupational linkages or jobs graduates will be qualified to perform based on the training provided to students in the proposed program in the table below. Contact the institutional representative working with you on the degree proposal for more information about possible occupations.

Occupational Linkages for the Proposed Program

SOC Code (XX-XXXX)	Occupation Title	Source / Reason for Inclusion
11-1011	Chief Executives	Chief Executives in the hospitality industry are tasked with steering organizations through rapid technological advancements and evolving consumer expectations. The integration of artificial intelligence into strategic decision-making, service innovation, and organizational transformation is essential at the executive level. This program equips future C-level leaders with the analytical acumen and AI literacy needed to harness data-driven insights, manage AI-enabled teams, and drive sustainable growth in a competitive global hospitality environment.
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	General and Operations Managers in tourism, hospitality and event industries are responsible for overseeing daily operations across departments, ensuring efficiency, and aligning services with strategic goals. As AI technologies reshape operations—ranging from workforce scheduling to guest personalization—managers must understand and lead AI implementation. The MS program addresses this need by preparing graduates to optimize operations, manage change, and improve service quality through AI integration and leadership competencies.
11-9081	Lodging Managers	Lodging Managers face increasing demands to enhance guest experiences, streamline operational workflows, and manage costs. AI tools are revolutionizing

		front desk automation, revenue management, and customer relationship management in lodging establishments. This degree prepares professionals to evaluate, adopt, and lead AI-driven initiatives that improve occupancy, customer satisfaction, and profitability while maintaining a human-centered service ethos.
11-9072	Entertainment and Recreation Managers, Except Gambling	These managers are central to designing and delivering leisure experiences that engage diverse audiences. AI-driven insights into customer preferences, behavior prediction, and dynamic content curation are transforming entertainment and recreation. The MS program supports these professionals in integrating AI to develop compelling, personalized experiences, optimize program offerings, and make strategic marketing and programming decisions in real time.
13-1121	Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	The meetings and events sector increasingly relies on AI for attendee data analytics, smart scheduling, automated communications, and immersive event technologies. Event planners must now possess digital fluency to design, manage, and evaluate AI-enhanced experiences. This program prepares planners to leverage AI tools for seamless coordination, data-informed planning, and improved participant engagement across virtual, hybrid, and in-person formats.

C. Describe the student demand for the proposed program. The response should, at a minimum, include the following.

1. Projected headcount for Year 1 through Year 5. Year 1 = 20
2. Year 5 = 150

Data that supports student interest or demand for the proposed program. Include questions asked, results, and other communications with prospective students.

While engaging with THEM undergraduate majors in their classrooms (approximately 150 students contacted), many expressed strong interest in applying to the proposed **Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality** program at UF's Jacksonville campus. Students noted their awareness of emerging innovations in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robotics within the hospitality and tourism industries and conveyed enthusiasm for pursuing professional certifications and a master's degree to expand their career opportunities. At the **Florida Governor's Conference** and other major industry events (including the QSR and Hospitality Shows), hundreds of professionals stopped by UF's THEM booth and attended speaker sessions. Many expressed genuine excitement about the forthcoming graduate program. Several CEOs, Presidents of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, and Chamber of Commerce leaders voiced strong interest—both in applying themselves and in recommending the program to qualified colleagues and family members who could benefit from it.

IV. Duplication of Existing Programs

- A. If the program duplicates another degree program at a private or public state university in Florida with a substantially similar curriculum, provide evidence that the university has investigated the potential impact on the existing program, has discussed opportunities for collaboration with the affected university, and can justify the need for duplication. Additionally, summarize the outcome(s) of communication with appropriate personnel (e.g., department chairs, program coordinators, deans) at the affected institutions regarding the potential impact on enrollment and any opportunities for collaboration in the areas of instruction and research.** UF's proposed MS in AI-Driven Hospitality program distinguishes itself by integrating artificial intelligence, corporate strategy, and leadership development components currently lacking in existing hospitality curricula across Florida's public universities. While communicating with the Deans, Directors, and Chairs from seven other universities across Florida, the leadership teams provided the following information: three Florida public universities currently offer Master of Science degrees related to hospitality under CIP Code 52.0901: FSU enrolls 40 MS students in its Master of Science in Entrepreneurship with a hospitality major; UCF enrolls approximately 300 students in its Master of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management; and FIU enrolls 290 students in its Master of Science in Hospitality Management. FAU, USF, FGU, and UWF do not offer MS degrees in tourism or hospitality. This program (UF's MS in AI-Driven Hospitality) is not duplicative but complementary, addressing a curricular and skills gap in AI integration within Florida's State University System (SUS). Most existing hospitality programs lack this technological depth. The degree will serve professionals aiming for leadership in data-informed operational strategies an emerging need in a digitally enhanced hospitality economy. Professional advancement in hospitality often requires real-world experience supplemented by cutting-edge knowledge. With UF's reputation and AI integration, this MS will meet the aspirations of professionals seeking upward mobility. No credential is required for entry, broadening accessibility, though the program may position graduates for professional certifications and advancement into a Master's degree in AI-Driven Hospitality. Collaboration opportunities enable partnerships, joint research, faculty exchanges, and co-hosting statewide conferences on hospitality/tourism and AI with FSU, FIU, UCF, USF, FAU, UWF, and FGCU. This degree meets strategic objectives and advances UF's leadership in AI-driven hospitality education.



- B. If the proposed program curriculum substantially duplicates an existing program at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, provide evidence that the proposed program would not affect enrollment in Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University's program. **Not Applicable**

V. Curriculum

- A. If the program is a bachelor's degree, please identify if the university is seeking any of the following statuses for the program.

Not Applicable

Status	Yes	No	If yes, complete the following
Common Prerequisites			Appendix C
Exception to 120 Credits			Appendix D
Specialized Admissions			Appendix E

- B. **Describe the admissions criteria and graduation requirements for the program.**

This program is open to Qualified applicants holding a BA/BS degree from an accredited institution with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

- C. If the proposed program is an AS-to-BS capstone, provide evidence that it adheres to the guidelines for such programs, as outlined in [State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024](#). List any prerequisites and identify the specific AS degrees that may transfer into the proposed program.

Not applicable to this program because it is not an AS-to-BS Capstone.

- D. Describe the curricular framework for the proposed program in the table below.

Course Prefix & Number	Course Title	Required or Elective	Credit Hours	Course Description
HMG 6440	AI Revolution and Applications in Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management	Required	3	A foundational examination of the implications of the artificial intelligence revolution (AI) in the tourism, hospitality, and event industry. Content includes analyses of AI applications in booking, transportation,

				theme parks, destination and attraction marketing, economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts, as well as motivators to travel.
HMG 6XXX	Hospitality Big Data & Machine Learning	Required	3	explores the intersection of hospitality, big data, and machine learning. Students learn to analyze diverse data sources, design AI-driven decision systems, and apply predictive analytics for pricing, marketing, and personalization. Emphasis is placed on ethics, robotics, and sustainable innovation to shape the AI-powered hospitality enterprise of the future
HMG 6XXX	AI-Driven Revenue Optimization in Hospitality	Required	3	examines how artificial intelligence transforms hospitality revenue management. Students design AI-powered forecasting, pricing, and personalization models that optimize profit across channels. Through case studies and real-world applications, learners integrate data, ethics, and strategy to build sustainable, future-ready frameworks for AI adoption in revenue, marketing, and distribution decisions
HMG 6XXX	Customer Experience and Personalization in Hospitality	Required	3	explores how AI transforms customer experience and personalization across tourism, hospitality, and

				events. Students design intelligent systems integrating chatbots, recommender engines, NLP, and computer vision. Emphasis is placed on ethics, privacy, and governance while developing data-driven strategies that enhance engagement, loyalty, and ROI through scalable, real-time personalization
HMG 6XXX	Professional Paper: Strategic Marketing & Brand Positioning	Required	3	evaluates how artificial intelligence transforms marketing and brand strategy in global hospitality. Students design predictive, data-driven campaigns, dynamic pricing models, and AI-powered CRM systems. Emphasis is placed on ethical AI use, ROI measurement, and future-forward strategies that elevate brand positioning, personalization, and competitiveness in evolving markets
LEI 6944	Practicum in Hospitality	Required	3	The practicum provides students with an opportunity to engage in professional settings to enhance academic learning and employment readiness upon graduation. Experiential learning helps students to bridge the gap between course materials and real-world settings, furthering both academic and applied/business skills.
HMG 6XXX	Automation and Robotics	Elective	2	examines how

	in Hospitality Operations			<p>automation, robotics, and AI are transforming hospitality operations and design. Students analyze ROI, sustainability, and workforce impacts while developing data-driven strategies, digital dashboards, and IoT-enabled systems. Emphasis is placed on innovation, safety, and efficiency through preparing leaders to build resilient, technology-integrated, and future-ready hospitality enterprises</p>
HMG 6XXX	Crisis and Risk Communication in Hospitality	Elective	2	<p>explores AI's transformative role in hospitality crisis and risk communication. Students design AI-enabled warning, messaging, and decision-support systems while analyzing real-world crises. Emphasis is placed on ethical governance, social listening, and resilience strategies that integrate predictive analytics and generative AI to strengthen organizational preparedness and global reputation management</p>
HMG 6XXX	Hospitality Franchise Management	Elective	2	<p>explores advanced strategies in hospitality franchising, from market expansion and brand management to financial modeling and global operations. Students design data-driven growth plans,</p>

				negotiate franchisor–franchisee agreements, and integrate ESG and digital transformation initiatives, developing investor-ready frameworks that enhance profitability, brand equity, and sustainable global franchise success
HMG 6XXX	Market & Consumer Research Practices in Hospitality	Elective	2	explores Generative AI’s role in transforming hospitality market research. Students design LLM-based sentiment, persona, and forecasting models to unify B2C and B2B insights. Emphasis is placed on automation, ethical governance, and ROI-driven strategies that integrate NLP, recommendation systems, and competitive intelligence into adaptive, data-informed decision frameworks
HMG 6XXX	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution in Hospitality	Elective	2	examines negotiation and conflict resolution through the lens of AI innovation in hospitality. Students explore NLP, computer vision, and predictive analytics to design intelligent mediation and dispute-resolution systems. Emphasis is placed on ethics, cross-cultural dynamics, and AI–human collaboration to build emotionally intelligent, future-ready hospitality businesses

HMG 6XXX	Simulation and Digital Twins in Hospitality Design and Operations	Elective	2	explores simulation and digital twin technologies as strategic tools for optimizing hospitality operations. Students design dynamic models integrating IoT and enterprise data to enhance efficiency, safety, and guest experience. Emphasis is placed on predictive maintenance, ESG optimization, workforce planning, and developing scalable, evidence-based roadmaps for digital transformation
HMG 6XXX	Talent Management and Workforce Analytics in Hospitality	Elective	2	explores AI's transformative role in hospitality workforce management. Students design predictive and NLP-driven talent analytics, optimize scheduling and training, and build ethical, data-informed HR systems. Emphasis is placed on fairness, engagement, and ROI, preparing leaders to deploy scalable AI strategies that enhance productivity, retention, and employee experience.
HMG 6XXX	AI and Blockchain for Secure Hospitality Transactions	Elective	3	explores the convergence of AI and blockchain in securing hospitality systems and transactions. Students design smart contracts, decentralized payment networks, and predictive AI safeguards to enhance transparency,

				trust, and personalization. Emphasis is placed on compliance, cybersecurity, and strategic innovation for building resilient, next-generation hospitality enterprises.
HMG 6XXX	AI Applications in Healthcare Hospitality and Service Innovation	Elective	3	equips healthcare leaders and graduate professionals with strategic frameworks to integrate hospitality, AI, robotics, and service innovation across clinical and wellness environments. Emphasis is placed on personalized experience design, ethical AI governance, operational transformation, and sustainable growth through preparing managers and CEOs to lead the future of compassionate, tech-enabled care delivery
HMG 6XXX	Ethics and Governance of AI in Global Hospitality	Elective	3	examines the ethical, legal, and cultural dimensions of AI in global hospitality. Students evaluate privacy, bias, and accountability challenges while designing governance frameworks that ensure fairness and transparency. Emphasis is placed on human-centric service, sustainable innovation, and building responsible AI strategies aligned with global ethical and regulatory standards

HMG 6XXX	Foodservice AI and Kitchen Automation	Elective	3	explores how AI, robotics, and automation are revolutionizing foodservice operations. Students design predictive models, digital twins, and smart kitchen systems to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and guest experience. Emphasis is placed on financial justification, workforce transformation, and ethical governance in developing scalable, future-ready AI strategies for global foodservice enterprises
HMG 6XXX	Innovations in Restaurant Tech & Design	Elective	3	explores how AI, automation, and design innovation are reshaping modern restaurants. Students integrate data from POS, IoT, and CRM systems to engineer smart kitchens, immersive dining environments, and sustainable operations. Emphasis is placed on ROI modeling, workforce technology, and future-ready design strategies for intelligent, profitable restaurant ecosystems
HMG 6XXX	Menu Engineering & Data Analytics	Elective	3	explores AI-driven menu engineering as a strategic and analytical discipline. Students design data ecosystems, predictive models, and visualization dashboards to optimize pricing, demand forecasting, and sustainability. Emphasis is placed on

				personalization, nutrition, and profitability through equipping future leaders to craft intelligent, globally competitive, and ethically informed menu strategies
HMG 6XXX	Smart Culinary Lab	Elective	3	in the Smart Culinary Lab, where technology, design, and strategy converge. Learners develop AI-assisted menus, smart-kitchen architectures, and data-driven business models. Emphasis is placed on sustainability, financial modeling, and pilot execution, culminating in a board-ready venture pitch that showcases innovation, operational feasibility, and measurable ROI

E. Does an industry or employer advisory council exist to provide input regarding curriculum development, student assessment, and academic workforce alignment?

Yes

No. Describe any plans to develop one or other plans to ensure academic workforce alignment.

- F. **Explain how employer-driven or industry-driven competencies were identified and incorporated into the curriculum. Has a strategy been established for assessing student learning and reviewing academic workforce alignment to modify the curriculum as needed?** Employer-driven competencies were identified through structured consultation with the Industry Advisory Board of the UF Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute, which includes senior executives from global hospitality, tourism, foodservice, healthcare, and service enterprises. These leaders provided direct input on the evolving technological, operational, and leadership capabilities required in AI-enabled service organizations. Their guidance emphasized the growing demand for professionals who can translate artificial intelligence, machine learning, predictive analytics, and automation into measurable business performance, improved customer experience, ethical decision-making, and workforce transformation.

Industry feedback was gathered through formal advisory board meetings, targeted competency reviews, benchmarking against emerging AI adoption trends across service sectors, and analysis of executive hiring priorities. These insights informed the identification of core competency domains, including:

- Data literacy and applied analytics for strategic decision-making
- AI systems evaluation and implementation in operational environments
- Digital transformation leadership and organizational change management
- Ethical governance and responsible AI deployment
- Cross-sector innovation across hospitality, healthcare, tourism, and foodservice
- Technology-enabled customer personalization and experience optimization

These competencies were embedded directly into course learning outcomes, project-based assessments, case analyses drawn from real industry scenarios, and applied capstone experiences. Rather than focusing solely on technical AI theory, the curriculum emphasizes executive-level decision-making, ROI analysis, operational integration, and strategic deployment reflecting the competencies employers identified as most critical.

Strategy for Assessing Student Learning

A comprehensive assessment framework has been established to evaluate whether students achieve the intended competencies. This includes:

- **Embedded learning outcome assessments** aligned with each competency domain
- **Applied industry projects** evaluated using standardized rubrics measuring strategic, analytical, and implementation proficiency
- **Capstone performance reviews** conducted with faculty and, where appropriate, industry partners
- **Pre- and post-program competency self-assessments** to measure growth in AI readiness and leadership capability
- **Portfolio-based evaluation**, requiring students to demonstrate applied AI integration within service contexts

Assessment data are reviewed annually by program director and faculty teams to

identify trends in student performance, areas for curricular enhancement, and emerging competency gaps.

Strategy for Reviewing Workforce Alignment

To ensure continued alignment with workforce needs, the program has established a cyclical review process that includes:

1. **Annual Industry Advisory Board consultation** to evaluate relevance of competencies and identify emerging technologies or strategic shifts.
2. **Employer and alumni feedback surveys** to assess graduate preparedness and evolving market expectations.
3. **Labor market analysis** reviewing AI adoption trends, workforce transformation data, and sector-specific technology integration patterns.
4. **Curriculum review workshops** involving faculty and industry advisors to recommend updates, course redesign, or new competency integration.

Findings from these reviews inform continuous improvement actions, including modifying course content, updating case materials, integrating new AI tools, and refining learning outcomes.

Through a structured feedback loop including industry input, embedded competency alignment, systematic assessment, and ongoing workforce review, the proposed degree program maintains responsiveness to technological change while preserving the foundational leadership and service principles integral to hospitality education. Graduates are prepared not only for today's AI-enabled service economy but for its next evolution.

G. Does the proposed curriculum align with Section 1001.706 (5)(a), Florida Statutes?

Yes

No

H. For degree programs in medicine, nursing, and/or allied health sciences, identify the courses with the competencies necessary to meet the requirements in [Section 1004.08, Florida Statutes](#).

For teacher preparation programs, identify the courses with the competencies required in [Section 1004.04, Florida Statutes](#).

Not applicable to this program because the program is not a medicine, nursing, allied health sciences, or teacher preparation program.

I. Select the anticipated mode of delivery for the proposed program.

Face-to-Face

Hybrid

Distance Learning

If the method(s) of delivery will require specialized services or additional financial support, describe the projected costs below.

J. Describe any potential impact on related academic programs or departments, such as an increased need for general education or common prerequisite courses or an increased need for required or elective courses outside of the proposed academic program. If the proposed program is a collaborative effort with another academic department(s), college(s), or school(s) within the institution, provide a letter(s) of support or MOU(s) from each department, college, or school in Appendix B. **Not Applicable.**

K. Describe any currently available sites for internship and/or practicum experiences and any plans to seek additional sites in the next five years. Currently, the THEM Department and UF's Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute offer more than 306 internship opportunities for THEM majors. Our internship partners span local lodging establishments, event organizations, restaurants, and theme parks, as well as national and international corporations across the hospitality and tourism sectors. A complete list of partners is available upon request. With the anticipated approval of our newly proposed Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality, we expect the number of internship partnerships to triple, expanding opportunities for our graduate students.

Not applicable to this program because students are not expected to seek internship or practicum opportunities as a required curriculum component.

L. Identify any established or planned educational sites where the program will be offered or administered. Provide a rationale if the proposed program will only be offered or administered at a site(s) other than the main campus. The MS in AI-Driven Hospitality represents a strategic alignment with the University of Florida's AI initiative and responds directly to industry transformation in hospitality and tourism. The program bridges the gap between AI technology and managerial practice training leaders to use and potentially build, AI systems. Students will acquire the strategic, analytical, and ethical skills to apply AI tools, robotics, and data modeling in decision-making, workforce analytics, revenue optimization, and customer experience design. **Located at UF Jacksonville, the program leverages the region's 30,000+ hospitality professionals and 20,000+ military families, providing an ideal ecosystem for industry partnerships, applied learning, and workforce development.** It complements UF's existing graduate offerings without duplication, focusing specifically on AI integration within hospitality management, a domain not addressed by current programs. Graduates will emerge as innovators capable of evaluating, adopting, and leading AI-based solutions across diverse service organizations from



global hotel chains to healthcare and culinary enterprises.

M. If the institution has conducted recent program reviews, received feedback from accreditation bodies, or received input from other entities that affect the proposed program, describe the institution's progress in implementing the recommendations.

If the proposed program is a doctoral-level program, include the external consultant's report and the institution's responses to the report as Appendix A.

VI. Faculty

- A. Identify existing and anticipated full-time faculty who will participate in the proposed program through Year 5, excluding visiting or adjunct faculty in the table below. Additionally, provide the curriculum vitae for each identified faculty member.

Faculty Code*	Faculty Name or "New Hire" Highest Degree Held Academic Discipline	Rank	Contract Status	Initial Date for Participation in Program
A	Rachel J.C. Fu, Ph.D. Hospitality / Forecasting	Professor	Tenure	Spring 2027
H	Oscia Chi, Ph.D. Accounting	Assistant Professor	Non-Tenure	Summer 2027
H	Nasim Binesh, Ph.D. Hospitality	Assistant Professor	Non-Tenure	Summer 2028
C	New Hire, Ph.D. or JD	Open	Non-Tenure	Spring 2027
C	New Hire, Ph.D. or JD	Open	Non-Tenure	Spring 2027
C	New Hire, Ph.D. or JD	Open	Non-Tenure	Spring 2027

*Faculty Code	Code Description	Source of Funding
A	Existing faculty on a regular line	Current Education & General Revenue
B	New faculty to be hired on a vacant line	Current Education & General Revenue
C	New faculty to be hired on a new line	New Education & General Revenue
D	Existing faculty hired on contracts/grants	Contracts/Grants
E	New faculty to be hired on contracts/grants	Contracts/Grants
F	Existing faculty on endowed lines	Philanthropy & Endowments

G	New faculty on endowed lines	Philanthropy & Endowments
H	Existing or new faculty teaching overload in addition to assigned course load	Enterprise Auxiliary Funds

Provide specific evidence demonstrating that the academic unit(s) associated with the proposed program has been productive in teaching, research, and service. Such evidence may include trends over time for average course load, student headcount in major or service courses, degrees granted, external funding attracted, and other indicators of excellence (e.g., thesis, dissertation, or research supervision).

ACADEMIC ANALYTICS: PROGRAM BENCHMARK

Department of Tourism, Hospitality, & Event Management

- Rank: 1
- Discipline: Business, various
- Institutions: 101
- Programs: 157
- Faculty: 2,424
- Scholarly Research Index: 1.4
- Scholarly Research Index Percentile: 98.7

Other open-access ranks:

Shanghairanking: UF HHP's THEM ranked #25 in the world and #10 in USA in 2024.

<https://www.shanghairanking.com/rankings/gras/2024/RS0513>

QS World University Rankings for Hospitality and Leisure Management 2025

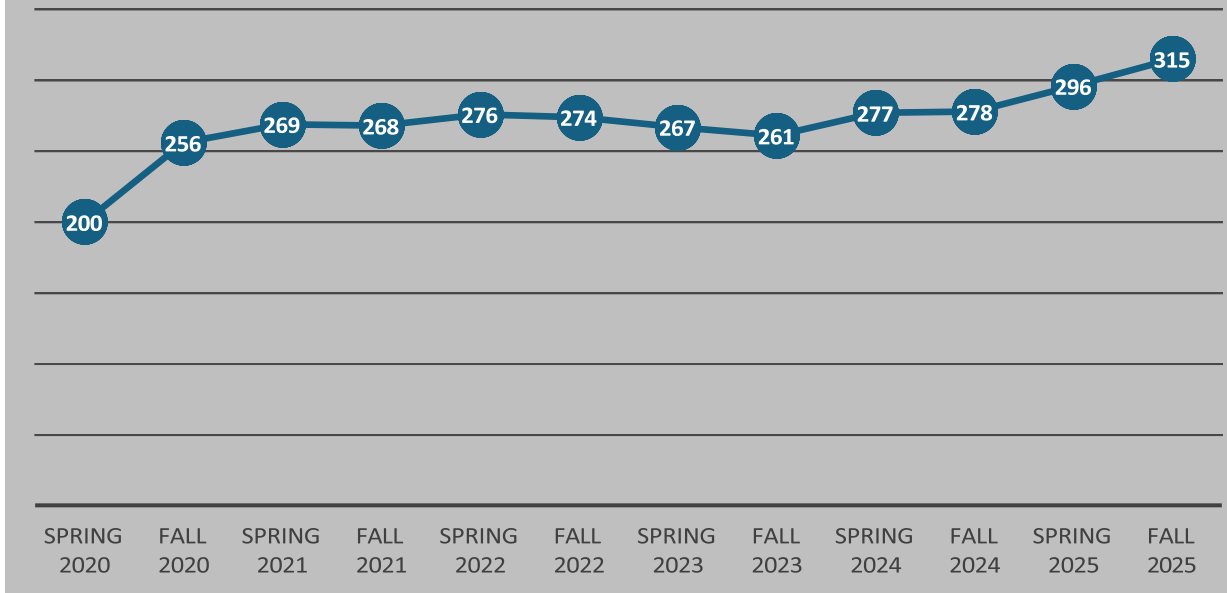
www.topuniversities.com | <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-subject-rankings/hospitality-leisure-management?page=1>

UF HHP's THEM ranked #37 in the world and #8 in the USA in 2025

According to **Academic Analytics' Program Benchmark**, the **Department of Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management (THEM)** at the University of Florida ranked **#1** among **157 comparable programs** across **101 institutions** within the discipline category of *Business, Various*. The analysis evaluated **2,424 faculty members** nationwide, with UF's THEM achieving an exceptional **Scholarly Research Index of 1.4**, placing it in the **98.7th percentile**—a reflection of the department's outstanding research productivity, academic impact, and faculty excellence compared to peer programs across the country.

In recent global evaluations, the University of Florida's Department of Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management (THEM) within the College of Health and Human Performance (HHP) has continued to earn international distinction for excellence in education and research. According to the 2024 ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects, UF's THEM program was ranked #25 in the world and #10 in the United States. Likewise, the 2025 QS World University Rankings for Hospitality and Leisure Management recognized UF's THEM as #37 globally and #8 in the U.S.. These open-access global rankings underscore the department's sustained reputation as a leader in hospitality, tourism, and event management education demonstrating both its international impact and its consistent standing among the top programs in the nation.

Figure 1. THEM Enrollment

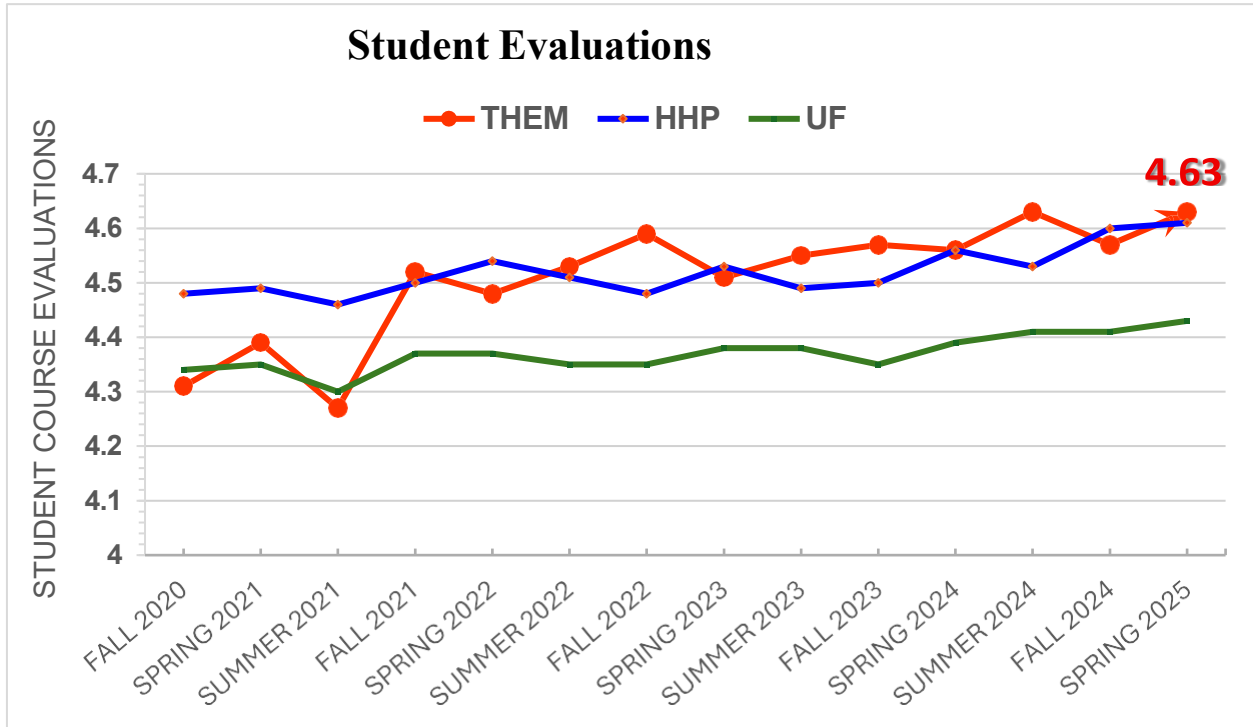


{Data Credit: Dr. Chris Janelle, Senior Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs, HHP | UF}

**Research Productivity: Publication Prowess: Metrics
HHP College and THEM, 2020-2025**

<i>College / Department</i>	<i>Refereed Publications</i>	<i>Mean 5-Year Impact Factor</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Articles with Double Digit Impact Factor Score</i>
HHP College					
2024-25	234	5.67	6.05	4.20	26
2023-24	169	5.79	4.24	4.80	16
2022-23	207	5.00	3.28	4.10	20
2021-22	233	4.77	3.60	3.97	21
2020-21	164	5.34	2.93	4.24	19
THEM					
2024-25	42	6.68	3.43	6.60	10
2023-24	39	7.24	3.23	7.60	7
2022-23	42	7.08	4.48	7.60	14
2021-22	36	6.11	4.25	7.38	8
2020-21	24	6.56	4.11	5.69	6

{Table Credit: Dr. Jim Cauraugh, Associate Dean for Research, HHP | UF}



THEM Teaching Evaluations: Fall 2020 to Spring 2025

5 = Outstanding

	THEM	HHP	UF
Fall 2020	4.31	4.48	4.34
Spring 2021	4.39	4.49	4.35
Summer 2021	4.27	4.46	4.30
Fall 2021	4.52	4.50	4.37
Spring 2022	4.48	4.54	4.37
Summer 2022	4.53	4.51	4.35
Fall 2022	4.59	4.48	4.35
Spring 2023	4.51	4.53	4.38
Summer 2023	4.55	4.49	4.38
Fall 2023	4.57	4.50	4.35
Spring 2024	4.56	4.56	4.39
Summer 2024	4.63	4.53	4.41
Fall 2024	4.57	4.60	4.41
Spring 2025	4.63	4.61	4.43

VII. Estimate of Investment

- A. Provide the tuition rate for the proposed program for resident and non-resident students.

Resident/Credit Hour	Non-Resident/Credit Hour
\$530.69	\$1,327.88

If the proposed program will operate as self-supporting, market tuition rate, or establish differentiated graduate-level tuition, per [Board of Governors Regulation 8.002](#), complete Appendix F, Self-Supporting & Market Rate Tuition.

- B. Complete the summary table below.

1. Provide funding sources for Years 1 and 5 of program operation.
2. Provide headcount (HC) estimates of student enrollment for Years 1 through 5.

Implementation Timeframe	HC	E&G Funds	Contract & Grants Funds	Auxiliary/ Philanthropy Funds	Total Cost
Year 1	20	\$318,414	0	\$1.89 Million	\$2.2 million
Year 2	60				
Year 3	90				
Year 4	120				
Year 5	150	\$2.39 million	0	\$211,895	\$2.6 million

- C. Is the infrastructure in place to meet the new degree program requirements, such as hiring faculty and staff, curriculum development, facilities, and funding, before enrollment of students to the program?

Yes

No. If not, is there a plan to establish the infrastructure to support the program?
Please describe.

VIII. Institutional Resources

A. Describe any additional library resources needed to implement and/or sustain the program through Year 5.

Not applicable to this program because no additional library resources are needed to implement or sustain the proposed program.

B. Describe any specialized equipment and space currently available to implement and/or sustain the proposed program through Year 5. The proposed Smart Building Plan for the AI-Driven Hospitality Innovation Hub at the University of Florida Jacksonville campus is intentionally designed to fully support the academic, applied research, and industry engagement needs of the Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality and all current and incoming UF Jax programs. The facility integrates AI-enabled welcome and service simulations, smart retail and robotics zones, executive hybrid classrooms, a command center with real-time data visualization, and digital-twin laboratories that mirror real hospitality, tourism, and service environments. These floor plans and technologies create a living laboratory that supports experiential learning, executive training, applied research, startup incubation, and global industry partnerships positioning the UF Jacksonville campus as a flagship hub for next-generation hospitality education and innovation.

C. Describe any additional specialized equipment or space needed to implement and/or sustain the program through Year 5. Include any projected Instruction and Research (I&R) costs of additional space. Costs for new construction should be provided in response to Section VIII.D. below.

Not applicable to this program because no new I&R costs are needed to implement or sustain the program through Year 5.

D. If a new capital expenditure for instructional or research space is required, indicate where this item appears on the university's fixed capital outlay priority list. If non-I&R costs, such as indirect costs affecting libraries and student services, are expected to increase due to the program, describe and estimate those expenses below. High

enrollment programs, in particular, are expected to necessitate increased costs in non-I&R activities.

Not applicable to this program because no new capital expenditures are needed to implement or sustain the program through Year 5.

E. Describe any additional special categories of resources needed to operate the proposed program through Year 5, such as access to proprietary research facilities, specialized services, or extended travel.

Not applicable to this program because no additional special categories of resources are needed to implement or sustain the program through Year 5.

F. Describe fellowships, scholarships, and graduate assistantships to be allocated to the proposed program through Year 5.

Not applicable to this program because no fellowships, scholarships, and/or graduate assistantships will be allocated to the proposed program through Year 5.

IX. Required Appendices

Table 1 outlines the required appendices by degree level. Institutions may provide additional appendices to supplement the information provided in the proposal and list them in Table 2 below.

Table 1. Appendices

	Appendix Title	Degree Level	Required for Specific Programs	Included Yes/No
A	Consultant's Report and Institutional Response	Doctoral or Professional		Not applicable
B	Letters of Support or MOUs from Other Academic Units	Any new program	Only for programs offered in collaboration with other academic unit(s) within the institution	Not applicable
C	Common Prerequisite Request Form	Bachelor's		Not applicable
D	Request for Exception to the 120 Credit Hour Requirement	Bachelor's	Requesting approval to exceed the 120 credit hour requirement	Not applicable
E	Request for Specialized Admissions Status	Bachelor's	Requesting approval for specialized admissions status	Not applicable
F	Self-Supporting & Market Rate Tuition Programs	Graduate programs	Only for self-supporting or market tuition rate programs	n/a
G	Faculty Curriculum Vitae	Any new program		Yes

Table 2. Additional Appendices

Appendix	Appendix Title	Description
Appendix H	Market Scan, AI-Driven Hospitality-Jacksonville	Hanover Research presents the results of a benchmarking scan of the competitive market, job posting trends, and industry trends for MS in AI-Driven Hospitality program

Appendix I	MS in AI-Driven Hospitality_JAX-Feb 15_2026_Overview	Degree Description, Rationale and Place in Curriculum, SLOs
------------	--	--

Re: **Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality**
From: **Dr. Rachel J.C. Fu**, Chair and Professor, Dept. of Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management | Director of UF's Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute (EFTI), HHP, UF

Updated Status:

- Pre-Pre-Proposal approved by Dean Mike B. Reid and the VP of UF's Jacksonville campus on **July 8, 2025**
- Pre-Proposal approved by UF's Office of the Provost on **August 15, 2025**
- The CAVP ACG reviewed the pre-proposal. The proposed degree was approved by the State University System Academic Coordinating Group on **September 3, 2025**

Next Steps

- THEM Graduate Curriculum Committee [approved on Sept. 17 and Sept. 24]
- THEM faculty [approved on Sept. 17 and Sept. 24, 2025]
- HHP Graduate Curriculum Committee [approved on December 13, 2025]
- UF Graduate Curriculum Committee [under review]

Note. Rachel Fu convened several meetings of the EFTI Industry Advisory Board's Executive Committee, Education and Research Committee, and full board to gather insights and feedback from industry leaders. [Completed]. We have successfully obtained external consultation, supported in writing (on October 15) by Dr. Warren Dixon, Interim Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering, and verbally by Dr. Saby Mitra, Dean of the Warrington College of Business (on September 27).

Timeline

- **June 2026:** Final approval granted by the University of Florida Board of Trustees
- **July 2026:** Official approval granted by the Florida Board of Governors
- **January 2027:** Soft launch of the program
- Fall 2027: Program officially begins

This program represents not only an opportunity to thrive, but also a chance to lead the future of hospitality education. Our MS in AI-Driven Hospitality will align strategically with UF's AI vision and directly serve the evolving needs of the hospitality and tourism industries.

Our program does not focus on computer coding or the design/manufacture of robots. Rather, it is designed to prepare managers and leaders in hospitality who will strategically apply AI, machine learning, and robotics as users within the industry. While selected technical terms and solutions will be introduced throughout the coursework, this program is not intended to train computer scientists. Instead, the degree and certifications are structured to provide upskilling and practical applications enabling students to effectively use existing software and languages (e.g., Python, Stata, Digital Twins). Graduates will be prepared to evaluate and adopt appropriate tools, apply them within their business units, and drive corporate ROI, positioning them to meet the demands of leading the future workforce.

Our target student population includes:

- 20,000+ military families in Jacksonville
- 30,000 hospitality and tourism professionals across the Jacksonville region + more in FL
- Hospitality and tourism managers worldwide

Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality

Degree Description (≤ 50 words)

The Master of Science in AI-Driven Hospitality prepares current and future leaders to apply artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation across hospitality, tourism, and event industries. Students gain strategic, data-driven, and ethical competencies to implement AI-enabled business solutions, enhance customer experiences, and lead workforce transformation in the global service economy.

Requirements for Admission

This program is open to:

- **Qualified applicants holding a BA/BS degree from an accredited institution with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.**

Requirements for Completion

Program Structure: 30 credits

Category	Courses	Credits
Core Curriculum	Required for all MS students; optional for certificate-only students	12
Capstone/Practicum Course	Choose one	3
Electives A	Select 3 two-credit courses (8 weeks each)	6
Electives B	Select 3 three-credit courses (14 weeks each)	9
Total		30 credits

All courses are **letter-graded**, and students must maintain a **minimum 3.0 overall GPA**.

Passing Grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and S.

Program Structure: 30 credits (4 core courses, 1 capstone/exec course, 3 two-credit electives, 3 three-credit electives)

CORE CURRICULUM (12 CREDITS)

Required for all MS degree students and optional for certificate-only students:

1. **HMG 6440 AI Revolution and Applications in Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management [existed] {Fall; Summer C}**
 2. **Hospitality Big Data and Machine Learning [new] {Fall, Summer C}**
 3. **AI-Driven Revenue Optimization in Hospitality [new] {Spring; Summer C}**
 4. **Customer Experience and Personalization in Hospitality [new] {Spring, Summer C}**
-

CAPSTONE OR EXECUTIVE COURSE (3 CREDITS, CHOOSE ONE)

1. **Professional Paper: Strategic Marketing and Brand Positioning [new] {Fall, Summer, Spring}**
 2. **LEI 6944 Practicum in Hospitality [existed] {Fall, Summer, Spring}**
-

ELECTIVES

[Electives A Group]

Two-Credit Electives (Choose 3 = 6 credits) [8 weeks/per course]

- a. Automation and Robotics in Hospitality Operations [new] {Fall Module A}
- b. Crisis and Risk Communication in Hospitality [new] {Spring Module B}
- c. Hospitality Franchise Management [new] {Spring Module B}
- d. Market and Consumer Research Practices in Hospitality [new] {Fall Module A}
- e. Negotiation and Conflict Resolution in Hospitality [new] {Spring Module A}
- f. Simulation and Digital Twins in Hospitality Design and Operations [new] {Fall Module B; Summer A}
- g. Talent Management and Workforce Analytics in Hospitality [new] {Spring Module A}

[Electives B Group]

Three-Credit Electives (Choose 3 = 9 credits) [14 weeks/per course]

- A. AI and Blockchain for Secure Hospitality Transactions [new] {Spring Only}
 - B. AI Applications in Healthcare Hospitality and Service Innovation [new] {Spring; Summer C}
 - C. Ethics and Governance of AI in Global Hospitality [new] {Fall, Summer C}
 - D. Foodservice AI and Kitchen Automation [new] {Spring; Summer C}
 - E. Innovations in Restaurant Tech and Design [new] {Spring Only}
 - F. Menu Engineering and Data Analytics [new] {Fall, Summer C}
 - G. Smart Culinary Lab (Capstone Project) [new] {Fall, Summer C}
-

Rationale and Place in Curriculum

The **MS in AI-Driven Hospitality** represents a strategic alignment with the **University of Florida's AI initiative** and responds directly to industry transformation in hospitality and tourism. The program bridges the gap between AI technology and managerial practice training leaders to **use** and potentially build, AI systems. Students will acquire the strategic, analytical, and ethical skills to apply AI tools, robotics, and data modeling in decision-making, workforce analytics, revenue optimization, and customer experience design. While selected technical skills (e.g., Python, Stata) are introduced, the emphasis is on managerial application rather than software engineering. Located at **UF Jacksonville**, the program leverages the region's 30,000+ hospitality professionals and 20,000+ military families, providing an ideal ecosystem for industry partnerships, applied learning, and workforce development. It complements UF's existing graduate offerings without duplication, focusing specifically on **AI integration within hospitality management**, a domain not addressed by current programs. Graduates will emerge as innovators capable of evaluating, adopting, and leading AI-based solutions across diverse service organizations from global hotel chains to healthcare and culinary enterprises.

Highlight

This degree cultivates leaders ready to thrive and lead the future of hospitality through ethical, data-driven, and strategic use of AI—without requiring deep computer-science specialization. Graduates will be fluent in the application and management of AI technologies, positioning UF Jacksonville as the academic hub for next-generation hospitality innovation.

SLO 1 – Conceptual Integration of AI in Hospitality Management

Students will evaluate, differentiate, and integrate key theories and frameworks explaining how artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation are transforming hospitality, tourism, and event ecosystems. They will critically appraise AI's implications for innovation, leadership, and workforce transformation within global service contexts. *Assessed through:* analytical essays, applied discussions, and integrative reflection papers in *AI Revolution and Applications in Tourism, Hospitality, and Event Management*.

SLO 2 – Application of Predictive Analytics and Data Modeling

Students will construct and implement predictive models and forecasting systems to analyze complex hospitality data. They will interpret, justify, and optimize analytic outputs for strategic decision-making in revenue management, market positioning, and operational efficiency. *Assessed through:* data-driven projects and quantitative analyses in *Hospitality Big Data and Machine Learning* and *AI-Driven Revenue Optimization in Hospitality*.

SLO 3 – AI-Enhanced Customer Experience Design

Students will design, simulate, and evaluate customer-centric service systems using AI-enabled personalization, natural-language sentiment analysis, and automated service tools. They will formulate adaptive strategies that enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and engagement through data-intelligent experience design. *Assessed through:* applied projects, journey-mapping exercises, and simulation labs in *Advanced AI in Customer Experience and Personalization in Hospitality*.

SLO 4 – Ethical, Governance, and Communication Competence

Students will analyze, critique, and formulate ethical and governance frameworks guiding AI deployment in global hospitality organizations. They will develop and defend crisis-communication strategies that demonstrate transparency, accountability, and stakeholder trust during AI-related disruptions. *Assessed through:* policy analyses, scenario-based simulations, and faculty-evaluated communication plans in *Ethics and Governance of AI in Global Hospitality* and *Crisis and Risk Communication in Hospitality*.

SLO 5 – Innovation, Leadership, and Strategic Implementation

Students will synthesize, implement, and assess AI-driven strategies that improve organizational performance, workforce analytics, and market competitiveness. They will lead collaborative innovation initiatives, applying AI tools to generate measurable return on investment (ROI) and sustained strategic growth. *Assessed through:* the *Executive Leadership Industry Practicum* or *Professional Paper: Strategic Marketing and Brand Positioning* (capstone project, executive presentation, committee rubric).

SLO 6 – Research and Future Application Development

Students will design and conduct applied research integrating theoretical perspectives, empirical data, and managerial insights to forecast, prototype, and test emerging AI applications in hospitality. They will defend evidence-based conclusions that contribute to the scholarly and professional advancement of AI-driven service management. *Assessed through:* faculty-supervised research paper or industry-based practicum project incorporating peer-reviewed assessment.

SLO 7 – Strategic Collaboration and Systems Thinking

Students will formulate, negotiate, and evaluate interdisciplinary strategies that connect AI technologies with human capital systems, sustainability goals, and global service networks. They will demonstrate mastery of systems thinking by integrating insights from technology, business analytics, and organizational leadership to create transformative hospitality ecosystems. *Assessed through:* cross-functional group projects, leadership reflections, and systems-integration analyses evaluated by faculty committees across core and capstone courses.

Program Delivery for the MS in AI-Driven Hospitality

All courses offered as part of the MS in AI-Driven Hospitality program will be delivered 38% in person and 62% online. This flexible, digitally enabled structure is designed to accommodate the needs of working professionals across the global (tourism, hospitality, and event management) industries, allowing them to advance their education and career credentials without geographic or scheduling constraints. Approximately 62% of course content will be delivered through online materials. The remaining 38%, including selected lectures and the midterm and final projects, will be conducted on the UF JAX campus. The reserved class time and classroom location apply to this on-campus component. Faculty office hours will be offered by appointment, either in person and/or online.

To complement the virtual learning experience and foster high-impact engagement, the program will incorporate select *hybrid opportunities*. Specifically, certain courses will include optional three- to five-day in-person sessions, where students will collaborate with industry professors and peers on intensive team assignments and professional networking. These immersive learning modules will be supported by on-campus events tailored to enhance applied learning, leadership development, and real-time problem solving within the industry.

In addition, two weekend-intensive courses will be hosted each academic year at the University of Florida's Jacksonville (Jax) Campus. These in-person events are designed to strengthen university-industry partnerships and build a vibrant learning community among current students, alumni, and regional professionals.

This blended approach, online instruction supplemented by purposeful, short-term in-person engagements, ensures accessibility, academic rigor, and real-world application for current and future leaders in the THEM sectors.

Technology Infrastructure Highlights

- High-speed private 5G network
- AI-enabled facial recognition + RFID for access
- Energy-saving smart glass and environmental sensors
- Real-time cloud integration with UF Gainesville and partner campuses
- All rooms voice-activated with multilingual AI assistants

Usage Scenarios

- **Short-Term Residency Weekends** for certificate cohorts
- **Executive Bootcamps** and **AI Franchise Leadership Workshops**
- **Startup Incubator** partnerships for AI-hospitality tech pilots
- **Live-Streamed Demos** to online learners and corporate clients globally