



# TUCO



The University Caterers Organisation

## **TUCO Academy Survey of Members 2016**

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# Introduction

The TUCO Academy commissioned Dr Gary Bell, of London South Bank University, to carry out detailed qualitative research on members' perceptions and expectations of the TUCO Academy, because the ambition is to meet the professional development and training needs of TUCO members and their staff.

The research has been validated by Professor John Warwick of London South Bank University. The research has been based on in depth conversations with five institutions, deemed to be representative of the broad range of TUCO members.

The researchers and the TUCO Academy team are immensely grateful for the support of not only the five test bed members but also all members, who spent time completing the questionnaire. The results will inform the curriculum of the TUCO Academy over the next three or four years and will give the TUCO Academy confidence that members' requirements are at the heart of all its activities.



**Mike Haslin**  
Chief Operating Officer  
The University Caterers Organisation

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# Executive Summary

The full survey results are available at [www.tuco.org/academyreport](http://www.tuco.org/academyreport). The survey reveals that TUCO members are operating in a highly competitive environment where client demands are changing significantly both in volume and preferences, notably in increased allergen awareness, increased demand for healthier food and increased demand for compliance with religious requirements in food. In the responding institutions, there is increasing demand from international students. These changes offer great opportunities for operational success as well as great demands for appropriate learning and development for staff at all levels.

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# Specific Outcomes

1. TUCO members cater for an estimated 3.5million students.
2. TUCO members produce 635,000 meals a day translating to an estimated 3.8m per week (assuming 50% trade at week-ends). Assuming an average transaction value of £4.00, this is a turnover of £15m per week. (Transaction value based on Qa benchmarking study 2016)
3. The busiest day of the week is Wednesday and the least busy day (excluding week-ends) is Friday.
4. TUCO members employ 32,730 staff members.
5. 58% of all staff are front line, 14% are chefs, 13% are front line leaders and 15% are senior managers or above.
6. The estimated total learning and development annual budget for members is £1.4m.
7. The priority order for learning and development for staff is Chefs, front line and management.
8. There is significant reliance on “catering champions” (i.e. that one employee who has significant experience, dependability and good attitude).
9. There is significant support for personal development plans, although this diminishes with front line staff.
10. There is significant support for “grow your own” staff i.e. generating competencies and efficacy amongst current employees or recruiting with the specific objective of developing staff.
11. There is an appetite for mentoring and coaching staff especially at higher levels.
12. There is demand for regular discussion and sharing of the top three challenges for members at any given moment.
13. There is demand for more and better technology training both by suppliers and by TUCO.
14. The biggest obstacles to course attendance are location and staff availability.
15. Procurement is seen as the biggest critical success factor for members.
16. Learning and development is seen as central to critical success factors.
17. There is some support for incentivising learning and development.
18. There is strong support for accreditation of courses and for co-creation of courses.

19. There is some support for e-learning and live streaming of courses but face to face deliver is preferred over both.
  20. There is striking longevity of service amongst senior staff of TUCO members and a significant number of senior staff started their career as a chef.
  21. There is demand for courses on operational improvement, strategy, finance management and skills to support innovation.
  22. There is strong support both for the TUCO Academy and for the appointment of the TUCO Academy Manager.
  23. There are number of suggestions about courses and initiatives e.g. creating a course on introduction to working in a University.
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# The TUCO Response



1. Recognising the need for regional delivery of courses, the TUCO Academy programme has been offering courses in each TUCO region. For the coming year, this will be reduced to five regions, eliminating those where there was little or no support for the courses. Access to online learning is an excellent way of delivering training in the institution at times when staff members can be available and so TUCO Academy has developed an online offering with Upskill People that not only meets compliance and service skills needs but also embodies the new apprenticeship standards. The TUCO Academy will continue to develop online content for staff at all levels in member institutions.
2. TUCO members have been at the leading edge of allergen awareness and healthier eating training. There is potential to extend this expertise by offering training in these areas to students and other University staff as well as to community stakeholders.
3. The scale of TUCO members' combined operations should underline its role and contribution to the hospitality industry and place it as a significant voice in developing modern apprenticeships.
4. The support not only for growing our own staff but also for personal development planning has informed the creation of the

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TUCO Career Map which demonstrates the pathways to advancement in TUCO member organisations. The TUCO Academy will be using the career map to frame and develop learning and development courses. The TUCO Academy will also work on templates for personal development plans that will support members.

5. The TUCO Academy Apprenticeship schemes have been developed specifically to meet the demand for growing our own staff.
6. The TUCO Academy study tours are not only responding to the demand for understanding the various market segments of our clients but also developing skills and experience. A spin off from the recent Vanilla Black study tour is that some participating chefs will work with the Vanilla Black team to build and extend their knowledge of vegetarian cookery and menus. The TUCO Academy will actively seek to augment study tours with additional experiences.
7. TUCO's expertise in procurement and effective use of the TUCO frameworks are critical to the success of members. TUCO will continue to offer support to members in order that they can use the frameworks to maximum efficacy. The TUCO Academy will work with suppliers to develop and improve technology training and to develop courses for social technology.
8. Innovation and product development is a critical success factor and the TUCO Academy will seek to offer opportunities for innovation workshops.
9. The survey has opened a channel of communication on demand for learning and development needs which the TUCO Academy will maintain and actively nurture.
10. The TUCO Academy will be taking active steps to co-create course content and delivery with its members.
11. The TUCO Academy courses for 2016-17 start to address the demand for courses in strategy, finance, operational management and innovation. These initial offerings will be reviewed and developed for coming years.
12. The TUCO Academy will develop courses for mentoring and coaching and create a matching facility, where members can offer and seek mentoring and or coaching.
13. TUCO will create regular opportunities regionally and nationally for members to discuss the top three current challenges and the TUCO Academy will respond with supportive training and development where appropriate.



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