

Sonia Gavirko - GPP Personal Statement

For a student who takes great pride in representing the Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School, being considered for the Graduate Privilege Partners would be very honourable and would motivate me further into achieving my future aspirations sooner and effectively. Growing up with a traveling family has meant that I consider multiple countries my home, and would love to continue this trend in an industry that has endless international opportunities. Living amongst multicultural communities has brought out a great passion for foreign culture and travel. The anticipation of traveling and staying in new and exciting hotels has made me realise my underlying passion for the industry, and a great desire to be a part of people's holiday experience, in providing service that exceeds expectations.

Having always been quite shy growing up, I feel this school allows lot of opportunity to immerse ourselves and build on confidence. I chose to run for a role in the Student Representative Council, where I was the Cultural Representative in my second term. For a school so diverse in nationalities, it was rewarding to be able to represent multiple cultures. This role pushed me to manage my time effectively, where I was responsible for organising Banquet Events Orders, gathering volunteers to assist both in service and in the kitchen, and implementing new forms of celebrations on these cultural nights. Despite the challenges and stress, the end result was always heartwarming. Taking on such new roles allowed me to develop a foundation on which I could further build my communication and organisational skills. In this term, I was also nominated for the Three Pillar Award in the category of 'Respect for others'.

Grasping any opportunities at this stage of my life is crucial to my personal development, and this was a big contributing factors for my decision to move to a new country and live independently over my first industry placement. I worked as a Food & Beverage attendant in the Hilton Queenstown Resort & Spa in New Zealand, where I grew mentally and improved my skills. During this time I became comfortable with the Hilton brand, for whom I would admire working for. The way staff are valued and respected is very desirable, and the sense of community makes it a warm environment to work in. This position allowed me to meet a large variety of characters and personalities, and provided me with some direction on my future goals. Working at a hotel taught me that all departments are dependent on each other and could not function without one another, so having the chance to contribute to all of these areas before deciding on my own career path would be very rewarding.

Upon returning from my first industry placement, I took on a role of a mentoring scholarship student in the kitchen. Having been through the nerves and experience of working back of house, I wanted to be able to provide comfort and guidance to new students by reassuring them that they are not alone in this position. Being in a position of authority is beneficial to the learning of effective management, as the chefs allows me to delegate roles to students as well as challenge them on things they might have never experienced before. I am also growing from this experience as I earn respect from both students and staff, and it works as an incentive to keep on thriving in this industry. Choosing a food and beverage pathway to progress in a hotel or resort is something I am strongly considering, however the experience of other departments that the school and the potential hotel partners provide is very valuable and empowering.

Outside of my involvement with the school, I took on a position as a waitress at the 'Nineteen23' restaurant in the Silvermere Guesthouse in Wentworth Falls last year. I developed my skills in fine-dining alongside hospitality professionals and improved my confidence, which contributed to my requirements for my first industry placement. To further support myself independently this year, I began working as a waitress at 'Palette Dining' in Katoomba. Learning how similar establishments differ in their way of managing is very interesting and captivating, and allows me to learn from the different leadership techniques that emerge through teamwork. These experiences all add up to the steps I hope to take within this industry, and I feel I can show a great amount of commitment to the Graduate Privilege Partners program. I thrive off challenging myself and would take this consideration with great pride.