



FRONT OFFICE COMPETITION

Competition details

OBJECTIVE

Demonstrate (verbally and non-verbally) skills for daily front office operations, reflecting encounters with in-house guests and future guests.

TEAM & LANGUAGE

Teams:

Teams will consist of two students from different schools and countries. The head judge assigns teams, prior to the competition, based on a blind drawing, following the AEHT competition rules.

It may occur that one or more teams will consists of 2+ members, in the following cases:

- the final number of candidates is unpaired;
- disqualification of one of the competitors;
- competitors last minute cancellations (no show).

The head judge announces final teams' composition at the briefing.

Competing students should wear their professional/school uniforms and use professional verbal and non-verbal communication at all times.

Language

English language (oral and written) is the official language of the competition and B2 (according to the EQF) is the minimum level of English expected.

BEFORE THE COMPETITION

By end of June 2026 documents about the case study destination and case study hotel will be made available via AEHT competition platform.

DAY OF THE BRIEFING

Briefing is held on Tuesday and involves following activities:

1. Presentation of the competition protocol.
2. Presentation of the competition schedule.
3. Introduction of the Judging panel.
4. General knowledge test
5. Questions and Answers about the competition.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE TEST

The aim of the General knowledge test is:

1. demonstrate the students' ability to work in teams,
2. demonstrate team members English proficiency and
3. demonstrate general knowledge of the Case study hotel (Hotel Astra Ferrara), destination Ferrara and rules & practices specific to the Hotel front office operations.



General knowledge test comprises of 20 questions using different question/answer format (e.g. true/false, pick the right answer, essay type answer). The test score has an impact on the final competition scores only if the team scores $\leq 90\%$ scores at the test. In this case, team is assigned additional 5 points to their scores at the competition.

DAY OF THE COMPETITION

Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY	ATTENDEES
November 3th		
13.00 – 14.30	Masterclasses	All students
15.00 – 16.00	Hotel Astra, Ferrara	FO Admitted competitors
17.00 – 18.00	Briefing	
18.15 – 19.00	General knowledge test	
November 4th		
9.30 – 10.30	Masterclass <i>Front office: creating hospitable atmosphere (Paolo Ciafardini, FO Head Judge, IIS Vergani-Navarra Ferrara)</i>	Admitted competitors Mentors
	Masterclass <i>Front office: Italian hospitality and the power of soft skills (TBA)</i>	
November 5th		
8.30 – 12.35	Competition	Groups 1-2
13.25 – 17.30	Competition	Groups 3-4

All registered students must attend Masterclasses organized during the conference. See the general conference programme for other activities organized outside the Front office competition

On Wednesday, November 5th (after masterclass), competing students pick up their name badge in the competition room.

COMPETITION TASKS

Each team will participate in one integrated simulation exercise.

The total duration per team will not exceed 24 minutes, structured as follows:

1. Organisation Phase – maximum 2 minutes
2. Operational phase - maximum 21
 - 2.1. Live Simulation – 17 minutes
 - 2.2. Written Shift Handover – 3 minutes
 - 2.3. Verbal Shift Handover – 1 minute

The structure and timing are identical for all teams.

SECTION 1 – ORGANISATION PHASE - 2 mins

At the beginning of the competition, each team receives a sealed envelope containing written operational information simulating the handover from the previous shift.

The envelope may include:

- Hotel occupancy level
- Special events affecting the hotel
- Guest remarks or alerts
- Operational risks (e.g., overbooking, VIP arrival, maintenance issue)
- Notes concerning specific rooms or reservations



The team has a maximum of 2 minutes to:

- Read the information
- Discuss strategy
- Organise responsibilities
- Prepare for the shift

No guest interaction occurs during this phase.

Judges will observe the team's organisation, cooperation and professional preparation.

Team may use less than 2 minutes for the preparation, but this does not mean that a team receives additional time for any of the competing tasks. Therefore, maximum available time for all four tasks is 21 minutes. The team announces when they wish to start the competition, but no later than 2 minutes after they have received the envelope in the competition room.

All tasks pertain to destination Ferrara(case study destination) and the case study hotel (Astra Hotel, Ferrara). Study materials with essential information about the case study hotel and destination will be available by end of June 2024, on AEHT website. Competitors should prepare for the assignments using study materials provided as well as other information sources recommended in the Study materials.

SECTION 2 – LIVE PEAK HOUR SIMULATION - 17 mins

Following the Organisation Phase, the live simulation begins.

The team will manage a realistic front office environment during peak operational hours.

During this phase, the team may encounter:

- 2 In-person guest interactions (check-in, requests, complaints)
- A real incoming telephone call
- An incoming email to be answered on a computer
- Additional guest interruptions or operational challenges

Situations may occur in overlapping sequences in order to simulate realistic operational pressure.

Certain situations may be directly connected to the information provided in the Organisation Phase.

Teams are expected to:

- Demonstrate effective teamwork
- Prioritise tasks appropriately
- Communicate clearly and professionally
- Handle challenging situations calmly
- Make responsible and realistic decisions

Not all situations must necessarily be fully resolved; however, professional handling and appropriate follow-up are required.

SECTION 3 – WRITTEN SHIFT HANDOVER - 3 mins

At the conclusion of the live simulation, all interactions will stop.

The team must complete a written shift handover form within 3 minutes.

The written handover must include:

- Outstanding guest issues
- Promises made during the shift
- Operational alerts
- Priority actions for the next shift

The handover must be concise, clear and professionally structured.

This section evaluates operational awareness, responsibility and the ability to identify priorities.



SECTION 4 – VERBAL SHIFT HANDOVER - 1 min

Immediately after submitting the written handover, the team must deliver a 1-minute verbal briefing to a judge acting as the incoming front office colleague.

The verbal handover must:

- Summarise the most important information
- Identify urgent matters
- Highlight operational risks
- Demonstrate clarity and structured communication

If the time limit is exceeded, the team will be stopped

JUDGING PANNEL

To be announced at the Briefing.

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. During and immediately after the general knowledge test (on the day of the briefing), team members have the opportunity to express further doubts regarding their team member knowledge of English language. If there is serious doubt in English proficiency of the assigned team member/s, the team should report this to the Head Judge immediately. Complaints about language problems will not be accepted after the general knowledge test.
2. Judging panel will assess teams according to professionalism, work skills, social skills, interpersonal skills (teamwork) and first impression (student's tidiness, professional appearance, etc.).
3. All rules and regulations must be adhered, including the General AEHT Competition Rules, as well as the AEHT House rules. All potential rule breaks should be reported to the head judge latest by the end of the Briefing.
4. Teams must remain in the designated waiting area until called.
5. Teams will compete in groups of 5 teams and, after their competition, every team must remain inside the room until the end of the last team of the shift
6. Photographing, filming or recording the competition is strictly forbidden. Photos and video can be taken at the end of the full session - 5 teams shift. In line with general consent form, only conference organizers may record and collect video/photo materials promotional and educational purposes within the AEHT network.
7. Competitors and mentors may leave the competition room only during breaks.
8. Rules allow fair play and equal opportunities for all competitors; therefore, we feel strongly about adhering to the rules.