

Draft Press Release

Mahindra University and Italy's CAST Alimenti Sign First-Of-Its-Kind MoU to Bring Global Culinary and Hospitality Education to India

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Italian Institute of Culinary Arts & Hospitality and Mahindra University's School of Hospitality Management Announce Strategic Partnership

Hyderabad/New Delhi / Brescia, Italy/ June 10, 2025

In a landmark collaboration that sets a new precedent for India's hospitality education landscape, Mahindra University's School of Hotel Management (SoHM) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CAST Alimenti—Italy's premier institute of culinary arts and hospitality.

This collaboration is poised to elevate the standards of culinary education in India by providing students with direct exposure to authentic Italian gastronomy and immersive international learning experiences.

The MoU was formally signed by Dr Yajulu Medury, Vice Chancellor of Mahindra University, and Mr Cristian Cantaluppi, CEO of CAST Alimenti, in the presence of Chef K. Thirugnanasambantham, Dean of SoHM, Mahindra University; Ms Anna Maria Scatena, Academic Didactical Manager, CAST Alimenti; and Mr Sunny Menon, Academic Business-Growth Consultant, CAST Alimenti.

As part of this strategic alliance, SoHM and CAST will jointly offer an exclusive three-month Short-Term Course in Italian Gastronomy and Italian Pastry Arts, designed for culinary enthusiasts and aspiring professionals. What distinguishes this programme is its delivery by leading Italian chefs and culinary educators, who will conduct the course on campus at Mahindra University in Hyderabad. Participants will be immersed in authentic Italian culinary traditions, contemporary techniques, and regional specialties—right from the heart of India.

According to Dr Yajulu Medury, Vice Chancellor of Mahindra University, *"Through this partnership, we aim to provide our students with a distinctive blend of experiential learning, global exposure, and cultural exchange, empowering them to evolve into visionary leaders and entrepreneurs within the culinary and hospitality sectors. We believe that true learning extends beyond the classroom; it must be immersive, interdisciplinary, and firmly rooted in real-world experience."*

The long-term alliance will also focus on joint academic initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching standards and developing a structured, sustainable framework for academic collaboration and innovation.

"This partnership reflects our commitment to delivering globally benchmarked culinary education," said Chef K. Thirugnanasambantham, Founding Dean of the School of Hotel

Management, Mahindra University. *“CAST’s legacy of excellence in culinary and hospitality training aligns seamlessly with SoHM’s vision to shape the next generation of hospitality leaders.”*

Mr Cristian Cantaluppi, CEO of CAST Alimenti, added, *“We are thrilled to join hands with Mahindra University to bring the essence of Italian culinary artistry to India. Together, we aim to cultivate a new generation of professionals who combine in-depth technical skills with a global cultural perspective. This partnership is more than an academic alliance; it is a shared commitment to innovation, passion, and excellence in culinary education.”*

This MoU will also enable SoHM’s undergraduate students to pursue an international pathway programme at the CAST campus in Italy, equipping them with valuable cross-cultural competencies and global industry exposure.

About Mahindra University:

Mahindra University, Hyderabad (India), is a multidisciplinary, private university with a vision of "Educating future citizens for and of a better world". It aims to play a significant role in driving globally acclaimed innovation in higher education in the coming years. Mahindra University’s special focus is on generating new knowledge through engagement in cutting-edge research, creating a spirit of research and discovery, experiential learning and entrepreneurship, whilst forging collaborations with industry and global academic institutions. The university is backed by Mahindra Educational Institutions (MEI), a subsidiary of Tech Mahindra Ltd., the flagship IT company of the Mahindra Group, a US \$20.3 billion industrial entity that employs more than 2,56,000 employees across 100 countries.

About CAST:

CAST – La Scuola dei Mestieri del Gusto – is one of Italy’s leading institutes for culinary and hospitality education, known for its intensive, hands-on programmes and strong industry linkages.

About SOHM:

SOHM is Mahindra University’s flagship School of Hospitality Management, offering an innovative B.Sc. (Hons.) Culinary and Hospitality Management programme that integrates interdisciplinary learning, industry immersion, and a global perspective.