

Competency curriculum for the bachelor's degree of hospitality management, ESDAI

María de los Ángeles Padilla Lavín

ABSTRACT

The paper describes the 3-year process to update the curriculum of Hospitality Management Bachelor's Degree at ESDAI, a school founded 40 years ago and that has more than 1700 graduates. The used methodology followed many of the recommendations of the Alfa-Tuning Project for Latin American and Europe.

The process enabled us to reinforce the following aspects: this Bachelor's Degree is very attractive for many women that desire to work with great professionalism in all the activities related to the hospitality industry; the student must have a special sensibility to recognize the dignity of any person and understand the value of service in a society imbued with utilitarian and individualistic

criteria. The Hospitality Industry is changing continually but the essence always remains **“make people feel like in home”**.

KNOWING ESDAI

ESDAI is a school of hospitality, founded 40 years ago and with more than 1700 graduates. Nowadays it offers the Hospitality Management's Bachelor's Degree, three specialization degrees¹ and four masters². In addition ESDAI offers short courses for women in more than 10 cities around the country.

The mission of ESDAI is to form women with managerial mentality, skills and vision manager, capable of achieving the hospitality as a style of life, having as a key reference point the household and what characterizes a true home, the place where you always want to return. We look for having an academic program with a solid scientific and human formation in order that our graduates

¹ Event Management, Gastronomy and Food & Beverage Business Entrepreneurship.

² Master in Management and Operation of Food & Beverage Establishments, Master in Event Management, Master in Advertising and Event Management and Master in Event and Business Administration of Food & Beverage.

achieves an excellent professional performance in institutions and companies and have the possibility to apply all these competences to their own homes.

ESDAI's curriculum has five academic areas: Services, Administration, Science, Humanities and Research.

UPDATING THE CURRICULUM OF THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

ESDAI emerged as initiative of the founder of the Opus Dei, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, to train women as managers of the services with all the skills necessary for this task. ESDAI's curriculum was created with enough subjects to secure this goal.

Over time, other courses were added without a thorough study of its relevance. On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that the profile of our youth has changed. Thus, the reasons to review our curriculum -common in many educational institutions- are basically three:

1. The essential need is to adapt it to a new global environment joined to the irrelevance, unattractive and repetition of contents in some subjects introduced over time.
2. Harnessing the feedback received from companies and employers on some weaknesses in the training

of graduates: a diagnosis of actual competencies of our graduates in relation to those required in the workplace as a guide for making decisions on changes to the curriculum.

3. Make a thorough market survey on the provision of curriculum maps in other educational institutions and a market study on the possible disadvantages of has only female students.

Our grid reference during updating was keeping in mind our responsibility to maintain the formation of management professionals, highly trained in the analysis and solution of problems of hospitality and services institutions with a comprehensive view of customer needs.

METHODOLOGY

PURSUED OBJECTIVES

The Curriculum Design pursued 4 objectives:

- Review ESDAI's Mission and the relevance of maintaining a degree designed exclusively for women
- An efficient integration of the competences required by the laboral environment of Hospitality Industry in a coherent, articulated and complete curriculum design centered in the student and not in the professor.

- Include in the process the different actors.
- Updating of the programs of the different areas: Administration, Services, Gastronomy, Humanities, Science and Research.

GUIDELINES

The whole team agreed to work with the following assumptions which were transformed in the rules for the project development:

- Maintain an open mind to review the mission and the degree profile. We will propose a new mission if necessary to the board.
- The exit or degree profile is the basis for designing the curriculum map. There should be an alignment with it, in content and skills to develop in our students, through the courses, internships, laboratories, workshops, visits, conferences, cultural appropriations, and events.
- It is necessary to make every effort necessary to ensure the participation of all stakeholders.

ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

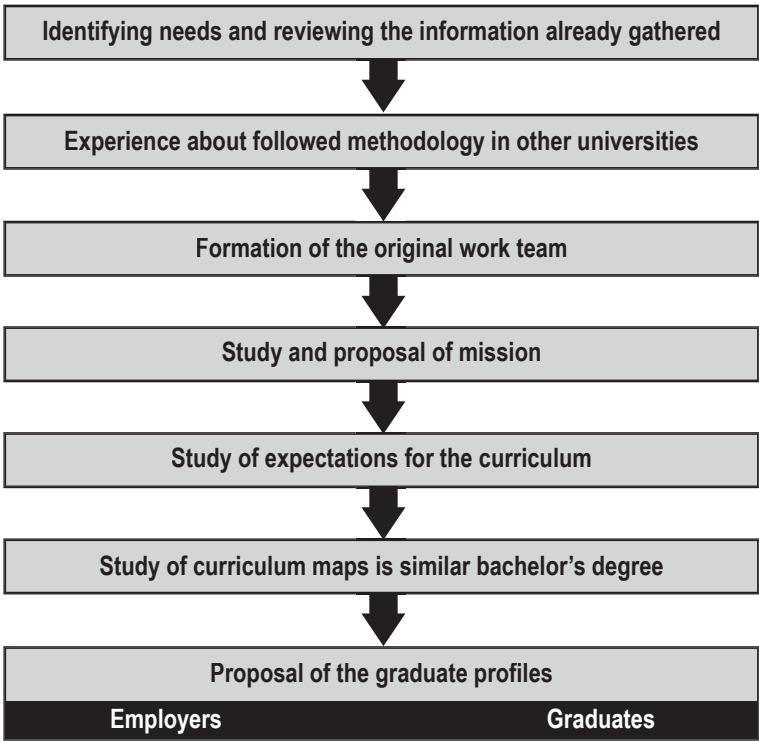
Academic Areas Directors, heads of laboratory, faculty, students, employers, graduates, Promotion Department,

Public Relations Department, Training and Consultancy Department, School Department and Board. The Academic Director was the project leader.

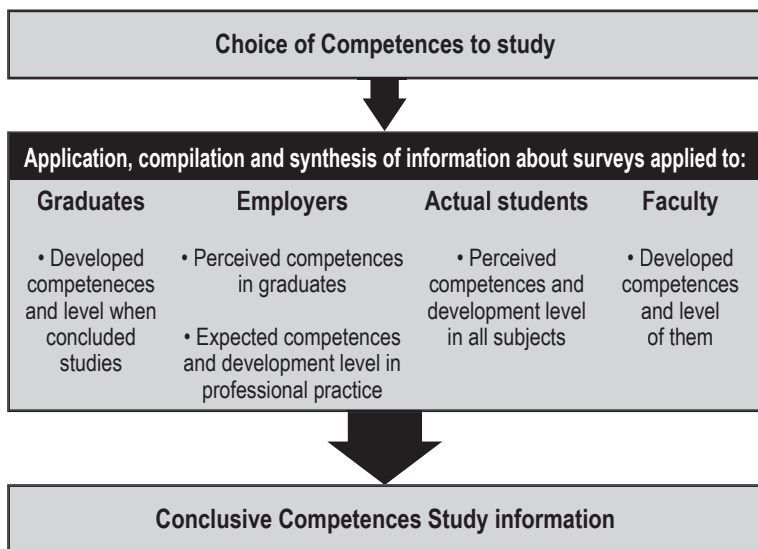
STAGES

The main stages of the project are in the following diagram:

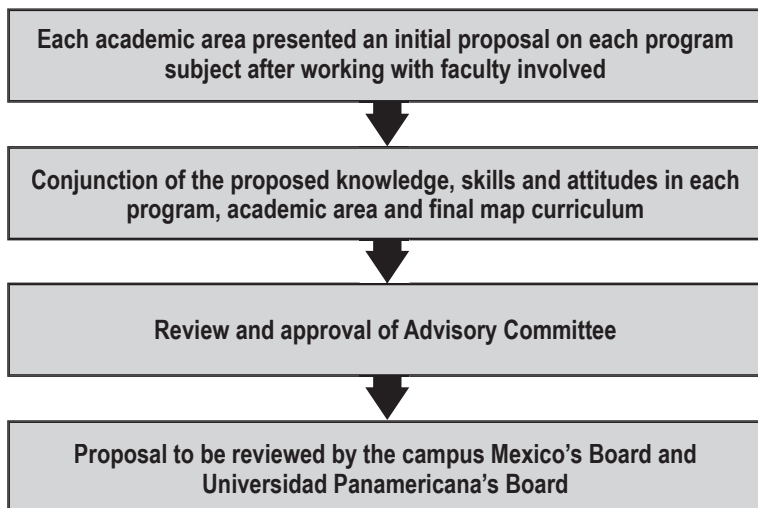
1) First stage



2) Second stage



3) Third stage



FINDINGS IN EACH STAGE

FIRST STAGE: GRADUATE PROFILE & MISSION REVIEW

The objectives of the program and learning outcomes³ must be aligned with the degree profile. It was concluded that ESDAI's graduate profile is distinguished by her overall vision, spirit of service, her ability to organize herself and others -maintaining in mind the infinite value of each person and responsibility about reaching all their potential-, as well as a great capacity to solve problems with entrepreneurial and Christian attitude.

More specifically, ESDAI's graduate profile is the result of simultaneous interaction of different academic areas in curriculum and acquired competences during all the terms⁴. To achieve this output profile it was determined that the applicant should have the following input profile: have some numerical skills, self-esteem, attitude of service, leadership, planning ability, social adjustment,

³ These outcomes are defined, according Tuning methodology, in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities

⁴ These competences represent a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Their study was an essential part of the project. There has been a great emphasis throughout the process to achieve the education community (professors and students) to be aware that a competent graduate is the result of having developed specific competences that require time, commitment and ongoing measurement.

tenacity, creativity, ability to work as a member of a team, facility for learning languages and human relationships.

Respect to the mission and for the surprise of all members of the workteam, it was written a new mission that was equivalent to the original ESDAI's one, so it was adopted and again ratified.

SECOND STAGE

A large scale consultation was organized among graduates, employers and academics to identify the most important generic competences⁵ for each of the academic fields involved. A list of 35 different generic competences among 50 was identified as relevant for the degree profile and incorporated in a definitive questionnaire. In the next list, instrumental competences are highlighted on *italic text*, interpersonal competences on **bold text**, and systemic on a underline text:

⁵ Tuning distinguishes three types of generic competences: 1) Instrumental competences: they are cognitive, methodological, technological and linguistic abilities; 2) Interpersonal competences: they are individual abilities like social skills (social interaction and co-operation); 3) Systemic competences (prior acquisition of instrumental and interpersonal competences required): abilities and skills concerning whole systems (combination of understanding, sensibility and knowledge).

These competences are:

1. *Planning and time management*
2. *Decision making*
3. Leadership
4. *Capacity for analysis and synthesis*
5. *Oral and written communication in Spanish*
6. *Oral and written communication in English*
7. **Congruity (I act like I think)**
8. Ability to apply knowledge in practice
9. Creativity (ability to generate new ideas)
10. **Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team**
11. Ability to work autonomously
12. *Attention to detail*
13. **Teamwork**
14. **Empathy (putting yourself in the other)**
15. **Critical and self-critical abilities**
16. *Problem solving*
17. Flexibility and capacity to adapt to new situations
18. *Basic computer skills*
19. Achievement motivation (satisfaction of a job well done)
20. **Ability to delegate**
21. Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit
22. Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries (knowledge and appreciation)
23. Project design and management
24. **Ethical commitment**

25. Research skills and information management
26. **Ability to work in an international context**
27. Ability to learn
28. *Work under pressure*
29. **Human tone**
30. **Service attitude**
31. **Ability to negotiate**
32. Ability to work with quality
33. *Basic general knowledge of the profession*
34. **Social responsibility**
35. **Respect for diversity**

Once we had the competences to evaluate, we sent questionnaires to graduates, employers, faculty and students.

1) Information obtained from graduates

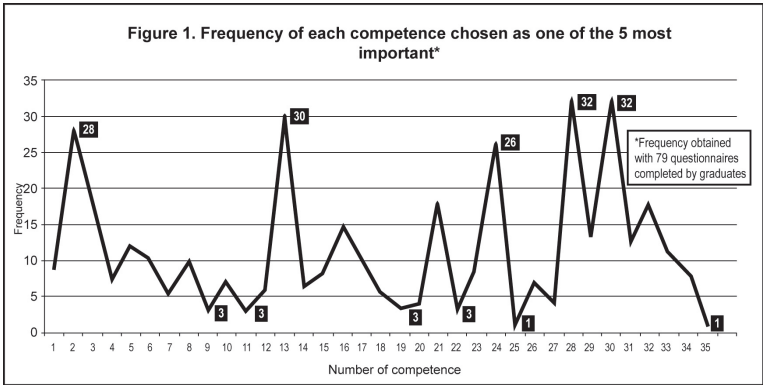
We selected 150 graduates, professionally active women, between 22 and 58 years and two weeks later, we received 93 questionnaires⁶ (62%) but, for various reasons⁷, only 79 were processed.

⁶ An example of this questionnaire sent to graduates and employers is in Annex 1.

⁷ Among them: instructions not understood, incomplete or multiple responses in each competence.

As is shown in Figure 1, they believe that the skills that are most relevant to the professional performance of a graduate of ESDAI are⁸:

- 1. Service attitude (30)
- 2. Work under pressure (28)
- 3. Teamwork (13)
- 4. Decision making (2)
- 5. Ethical commitment (24)

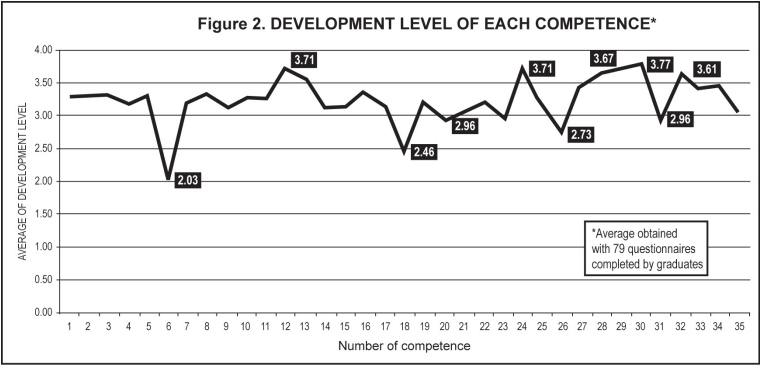


And the best level of developed competences during the degree, as is shown in figure 2, are:

- 1. Service attitude (30)
- 2. Human tone (29)
- 3. Attention to detail (12)

⁸ Brackets show the number of competition according to the questionnaire.

- 4. Work under pressure (28)
- 5. Ethical commitment (24)



2) Information obtained from employers

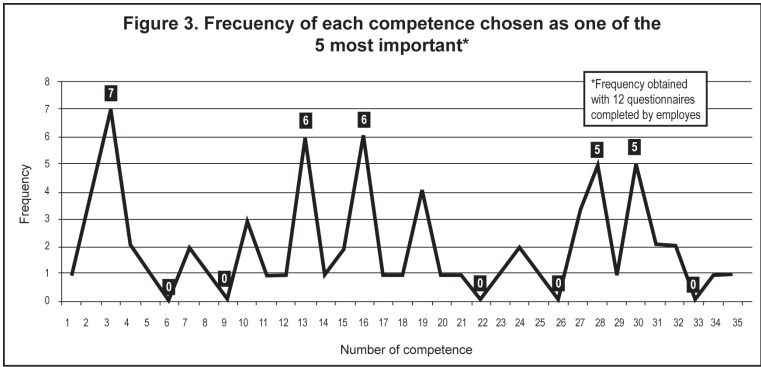
We sent 15 questionnaires⁹ to employers and received back,12 which were processed. None had studied with us and all of them have hired our graduates in a period of 6 months to 10 years. The number of employees varied between 6 to 25,000 people.

As is shown in Figure 3, they believe that the skills most relevant to the professional performance of a graduate of the ESDAI are¹⁰:

⁹ As it has been mentioned above, an example of this questionnaire sent to graduates and employers is in Annex 1.

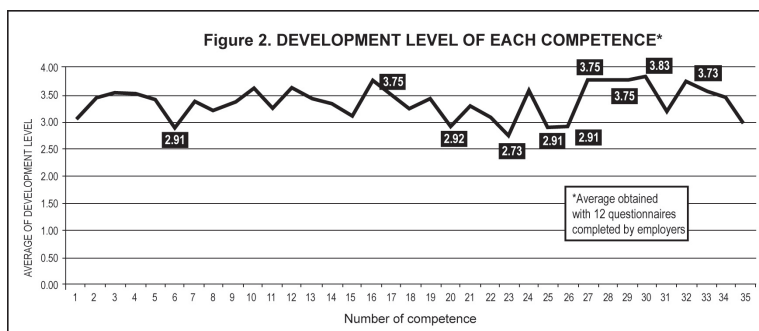
¹⁰ Brackets shows the number of competition according to the questionnaire.

- 1. Leadership (3)
- 2. Teamwork (13)
- 3. Problem solving (15)
- 4. Work under pressure(28)
- 5. Service attitude (30)



Also employers consider that the best levels of developed competences during the degree, as is shown in figure 4, are:

- 1. Service attitude (30)
- 2. Problem solving (16)
- 3. Ability to learn (27)
- 4. Work under pressure (28)
- 5. Human Tone (29)



3) Information obtained from students

The information was obtained for each subject in two applications, one for odd semesters and one for pairs, with a total of 4834 assessments¹¹. They were asked only to evaluate the level developed in 35 competences in each subject. It was the most difficult to process because the large amount of data being handled. First, it was obtained by each academic area and afterwards, for all the bachelor's degree.

No graphs are presented for reasons of space but in summary our students consider the competences better developed are:

1. Ability to learn (27)
2. Ability to work with quality (32)

¹¹ This number of questionnaires is obtained of 82 subjects evaluated by an average of 59 students per term.

3. Problem solving (16)
4. Ability to apply knowledge in practice (8)
5. Capacity for analysis and synthesis (4)
6. Ability to work autonomously(11)
7. Basic general knowledge of the profession (33)
8. Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries (knowledge and appreciation) (22)
9. Flexibility and capacity to adapt to new situations (17)
10. Decision making (2) and attention to detail (12), at the same level

4) Information obtained from faculty

The information was obtained for each subject in two applications, one for odd semesters and one for pairs with a total of 158 evaluations. As with the students' data collected, first it was obtained a concentrate by academia area and afterwards for all the bachelor's degree.

The faculty considers that the 10 core competences developed in the degree are:

1. Ability to apply knowledge in practice (8)
2. Problem solving (16)
3. Capacity for analysis and synthesis (4)

4. Ability to learn (27)
5. Ability to work with quality (32)
6. Achievement motivation (satisfaction of a job well done) (19)
7. Critical and self-critical abilities (15)
8. Basic general knowledge of the profession (33)
9. Attention to detail (12)
10. Work under pressure (28)

5) Conclusive Competences Study Information

Without doubt, the core competences of the Bachelor's Degree are:

- Attitude of service (30)
- Work under pressure (28)
- Teamwork (13)
- Time management (1)
- Decision-making (2)
- Ethical commitment (24)
- Ability to work with quality (32)

Otherwise, there is a correspondence in the perception of strengths and weaknesses in the training of graduates by both employers and themselves. In contrast, we observed that the vision of teachers and students differ in

some degree on the perception of graduates and employers. But, looking more closely at the information obtained from these four groups, it is necessary to reinforce certain tasks that result in a better professional performance of graduates, essentially the following:

- Design and project development (23)
- Leadership (3)
- Troubleshooting (16)
- Decision making (2)
- Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit (21)

It is important to note that the employers are demanding a greater degree in leadership and in resolution of problems.

The reinforcement of other competences that is good, without priority are:

- Ability to work in an international context (26)
- Negotiation (31)
- Oral and written English (6)
- Creativity (9)

THIRD STAGE

Once this information was studied, the lines of action we decided to follow are:

- A more active approach in the classroom with a student-centered model. Encourage the use of technology and the use of Moodle as an accessible LMS (Learning Management System). To promote the study of specific technical notes and readings prior to the session in the classroom.

- The teacher must do a major effort to direct the student work in hours out of the classroom, with activities that are a real challenge for the pupil.

- It is necessary to enhance in a 50% the hours of internship¹² in hospitals, restaurants and hotels (which means going from 640 to 960 hours) and improve the monitoring of these practices. Our students will continue to develop an improvement project for those institutions; this proposal must reflect a clear design and project development, a better decision-making, initiative and entrepreneurial spirit, problem-solving abilities, and leadership of our students.

¹² The internship is an important moment because the students are facing real situations with unforeseen problems to be resolved in a professional field. The specific improvement project they must present to the institution is reviewed and approved by a supervisor teacher. That project means a grade in each period. Leer fonéticamente.

- It is important to create a terminal block of study in which our students specialize their competences into a specific institution.

- The curriculum should provide the conditions for the 9th semester in order that students have the opportunity of a paid job before graduating from the Hospitality Management Bachelor's Degree.

- Faculty training is essential: they must know to teach, understand competences methodology and assimilate the ESDAI's mission

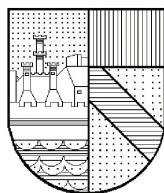
- Each syllabus should be updated to the relevant contents of the XXI century. The Learning outcomes were fixed in each syllabus taking into account the Degree profile and the Tuning List of Key Questions for Program Design.

CONCLUSIONS

We implemented the new curriculum in August 2009 for the 50th generation with very good results and important modifications: increased hours of independent and collaborative study outside the classroom and a reduction of scheduled classes; a new Department of Professional Practices; a search for a dual degree abroad with the Cesar Ritz Colleges Switzerland, an agreement with the Institute Paul Bocuse in France and training of professors in the methodology of competences.

But perhaps the most important thing to mention is that our demand has been increased and we have seen that our Bachelor of Hospitality Management is extremely attractive to young women who wish to work in Hospitality Industry and train themselves as potential future housewives, in both of them, *the essence always remains “make people feel like in home”*.

Annex I. Questionnaire for employers



Date _____

Subject _____

ESDAI EVALUATION OF COMPETENCES QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYERS

Below are a number of issues which describe competences (skills, attitude, knowledge). They may be important for the proper performance and success of our graduate profile. Please answer all the questions, they will be very valuable for us and for the planning of courses for future students of this Bachelor.

1. Name of the organization: _____

2. Position of the person answering: _____

3. Number of employees: _____

4. Number of years that you have had contact with our students or graduates: _____

Thanks for your cooperation,

Public Relations Department
ESDAI

UNIVERSIDAD PANAMERICANA

For each of the skills listed below, please estimate, in your opinion, the importance of each skill or competence for working in your organization.

1 = None	2 = weak	3 = considerable	4 = strong
1. Planning and time management	1	2	3 4
2. Decision making	1	2	3 4
3. Leadership	1	2	3 4
4. Capacity for analysis and synthesis	1	2	3 4
5. Oral and written communication in Spanish	1	2	3 4
6. Oral and written communication in English	1	2	3 4
7. Congruity (I act like I think)	1	2	3 4
8. Ability to apply knowledge in practice	1	2	3 4
9. Creativity (ability to generate new ideas)	1	2	3 4
10. Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team	1	2	3 4
11. Ability to work autonomously	1	2	3 4
12. Attention to detail	1	2	3 4
13. Teamwork	1	2	3 4
14. Empathy (putting yourself in the other)	1	2	3 4
15. Critical and self-critical abilities	1	2	3 4
16. Problem solving	1	2	3 4
17. Flexibility and capacity to adapt to new situations	1	2	3 4
18. Basic skills computer skills	1	2	3 4
19. Achievement motivation (satisfaction of a job well done)	1	2	3 4
20. Ability to delegate	1	2	3 4
21. Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit	1	2	3 4
22. Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries (knowledge and appreciation)	1	2	3 4
23. Project design and management	1	2	3 4
24. Ethical commitment	1	2	3 4
25. Research skills and information management	1	2	3 4
26. Ability to work in an international context	1	2	3 4
27. Ability to learn	1	2	3 4
28. Work under pressure	1	2	3 4
29. Human tone	1	2	3 4
30. Service attitude	1	2	3 4
31. Ability to negotiate	1	2	3 4
32. Ability to work with quality	1	2	3 4
33. Basic general knowledge of the profession	1	2	3 4
34. Social responsibility	1	2	3 4
35. Respect for diversity	1	2	3 4

Now, we ask you to choose and order, in your opinion, the five most relevant competences. Please write the number of the respective competence in the boxes below. Mark in the first one, the first competence in importance; then, in the second box, the second most important, and so on.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

FUENTES DE CONSULTA

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