IHG® Rewards Club Loyalty Recognition

Loyalty Recognition 2 – IHG® Rewards Club Member Check-In Experience

– Manual
The IHG® Rewards Club Loyalty Recognition course, and the information contained in this manual, have been developed as instructional resources for owners of franchise hotels. The training, information and processes contained herein, are intended to serve as general advice and resources about selected topics, with the expectation that owners and operators will use and adapt elements that they believe are appropriate for the particular hotel that they are responsible for operating and for their particular business circumstances. The IHG Frontline training is not designed to provide complete, specific information and instructions on all topics. No licensee is required to abide by any other terms of the IHG Frontline training or accompanying resources. No company in IHG, nor any employee thereof, has any involvement in employee-related decisions at franchise hotels.
# CONTENTS

## 1. IHG® Rewards Club Member Check-In Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p4</td>
<td>1.1 Understanding Guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p5</td>
<td>1.2 The Pre-Arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p7</td>
<td>1.3 Introducing the Check-In Experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2. The Check-In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p9</td>
<td>2.1 Welcoming Club Level Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p10</td>
<td>2.2 Welcoming Gold Elite Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p11</td>
<td>2.3 Welcoming Platinum Elite Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p12</td>
<td>2.4 Welcoming Spire Elite Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p13</td>
<td>2.5 Reward Nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p14</td>
<td>2.6 What If Things Don’t Go As Planned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3. Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p15</td>
<td>3.1 Let’s Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. IHG® Rewards Club Member Check-In Experience

1.1 Understanding Guests

Our ambition at IHG, is to be the number one hotel company in the world for guests, owners and colleagues. In order to try and achieve this goal, IHG established the world’s first loyalty programme, rewarding guests for their unwavering support. With more than 85 million members and over 4,900 hotels and resorts in nearly 100 countries, IHG® Rewards Club is the largest hotel loyalty programme in the world.

This course will familiarise you with how to check-in members of every membership level appropriately. We will examine the procedures to follow, ensuring that members are properly recognised, and make sure that members receive all the benefits afforded to them. We will also consider what to do when things do not go according to plan. The knowledge you gain from this course will help you to be better prepared when welcoming and recognising our most valued guests.

1. The importance of understanding guests’ preferences.

In order to create an unforgettable member experience, we need to gain a better understanding of our guests and their preferences. The personal touches of using a member’s name, remembering what kind of room they prefer and their favourite type of snack, will go a long way to making members feel valued.

2. How to better serve guests.

We know that understanding our guests helps ensure their stay is exceptional. A helpful tool to support you in doing this is the Guest Arrivals Reports. These reports should be used when preparing for guests arrivals. You can find valuable information which includes a member’s up-to-date membership status and points balance. It also includes information on whether the guest has stayed at your hotel before, and even if the guest reported a HeartBeat issue during a previous stay.

The Guest Arrivals Report will also show you if a guest is an IHG® Business Rewards Member. If you have identified that a Business Rewards member is staying in your hotel let your sales team know, so they too can greet the member as they may know them as a key account booker.

Key Learning Outcomes:

1. The importance of understanding guests’ preferences.
2. How to better serve guests.

Ask additional questions to make the member’s stay even better. If the purpose of their visit is a family holiday, your recommendations will be very different to those you would suggest to someone staying on business. Use your discretion to decide what information could be potentially valuable and record it on the guest’s profile, making it easily accessible.

At IHG, we understand that there is more to hospitality than just providing a clean bed and a hot shower. We know that hotels have the potential to mean so much more to people. They are the places guests choose to relax or conduct business. Where life-changing commitments are made and important deals are signed. By returning to us time and time again, our members place their trust in our brands and it is our pleasure to recognise their loyalty and celebrate with them.
1.2 The Pre-Arrival

The IHG® Rewards Club Member Check-In Experience has two phases – pre-arrival and check-in.

1. Using the Arrivals Reports.

Reviewing the Arrivals Reports should be the first step of the pre-arrival procedure. These reports are available in IHG Reporting. They provide invaluable information about the guests arriving that day, including both IHG® Rewards Club members as well as potential new members.

**There are three versions of the Guest Arrivals Reports:**

1. The Arrivals Summary Report is the primary report used for arrivals planning. It allows you to quickly identify important information such as up-to-date member status, early arrivals, and their points balance.
2. The Arrivals Special Request and Customer Care Reports include all special request information and any customer care issues for all arrivals.
3. The IHG® Rewards Club Arrivals Detail Report is especially useful for personalising service for our IHG® Rewards Club members and includes important member information such as stay history, HeartBeat feedback, and additional recommended guest actions.

If you do not know how to use the arrivals reports, ask your IHG® Rewards Club Champion who can access the training reference materials on the Merlin Initiatives page for Guest Arrivals Reports.

**Key Learning Outcomes:**
1. Using the Guest Arrivals Reports.
2. Assigning rooms for Elite members.
3. Preparing the check-in folders.

2. Assigning rooms for Elite members.

Determine the available room types for Gold Elite, Platinum Elite and Spire Elite members who are checking in that day. Pre-assign the rooms that are already vacant and preferably already cleaned, to Gold Elite, Platinum Elite and Spire Elite members. Co-ordinate with the housekeeping team to check room type availability and to prioritise which rooms they will service first so that rooms are ready when members arrive.

Base the order in which you assign members to rooms on their IHG® Rewards Club status and their estimated time of arrival. You can easily see both of these items of information on the Arrivals Summary Report. If room upgrades are available, Spire Elite and Platinum Elite members have priority to receive the upgrade.

Make a note on the Platinum Elite and Spire Elite member’s reservation once they have been upgraded.
If your hotel offers Anywhere Check-In, remember to pre-assign rooms to Elite members who have chosen to use this service.

Anywhere Check-In enables Elite members to request a check-in time using their mobile device, as well as being able to check-out. They will then receive a text notification from the hotel when their room is ready or to confirm their check-out. Guests can also use Anywhere Check-in to view their folio during their stay, or request for their folio to be emailed to them.

Immediately following a member’s check in, the hotel needs to ensure that the guest’s folio displays the correct information. You must set up windows and route charges appropriately in the Property Management System (PMS). It’s important to note that there are three PMS systems that IHG hotels use – Opera, Brilliant or Oasis. PMS systems may vary according to region, therefore, there will be three different PMS Guides.

Anywhere Check-In can be used via the IHG App and is currently only available at certain participating hotels. Check with your Loyalty Champion to find out if your hotel offers this service.

It is important to note that, where the use of mobile devices are concerned, IHG has developed Anywhere Check-In according to the necessary laws. If you send any mobile text messages outside of the Anywhere Check-In process, be sure to ask for legal advice to ensure you are correctly following these laws.

Be sure to go to the IHG® Rewards Club Elite Member Welcome PMS Guide for more detailed steps on Anywhere Check-In and Check Out.

3. Prepare the check-in folders.

Print the registration cards for all pre-assigned members. Then prepare room keys and IHG® Rewards Club key jackets with each member’s room number on the jacket. Also include the instructions to access the internet.

File the prepared folders alphabetically and place them in a convenient location at the front desk. Remember to prepare the Welcome Amenities if they are used in your region.

Top Tip:
Our future plan aims for all IHG® Rewards Club members to be eligible for Anywhere Check-In.

Your Loyalty Champion can provide details on your region’s choice of Welcome Amenity and how it is to be presented to Elite Members upon check in.

Be sure that members of IHG® Rewards Club programme extensions such as IHG® Business Rewards and InterContinental Ambassador Programmes receive the benefits of their IHG® Rewards Club tier when staying at IHG® Rewards Club Brand hotels.

Remember!
The InterContinental Ambassador Programme is a paid membership for additional benefits when staying at the InterContinental brand hotels.
1.3 Introducing the Check-In Experience

How we check-in IHG® Rewards Club members depends on their membership status. The check-in procedure for a Gold Elite member is different to that of a Club, Platinum Elite, or Spire Elite member.

1. Welcome the guest.

Always welcome the guest warmly and sincerely. Ask the guest for their name. Listen carefully and make them feel recognised by using their name at least three times during the check-in process. Using the guest’s details, locate their reservation on the PMS.

2. Recognise their IHG® Rewards Club status.

When we pull up the guest’s reservation, we will be able to see if they are an IHG® Rewards Club member and recognise their IHG® Rewards Club status. Mention their membership level and thank them for their loyalty. In some cases, the membership status in the hotel PMS may be outdated. Refer to the Guest Arrivals Reports for up-to-date membership statuses.

3. Confirm the membership information.

Make polite conversation while locating their information and apologise if there is a delay in calling up the information. Once their information has been found, verbally verify the details with the member. Acknowledge any alerts, messages and comments that come up. Have the member sign the registration card and confirm their email address. If there is no email address on file, ask the member if they would like to update their profile to receive Bonus Point offers and convenient monthly eStatements.

4. The consistent delivery of benefits.

Advise the member of the benefits they will be receiving and, if applicable, offer them a choice of a welcome amenity. The benefits and welcome amenities we offer the member will depend on their membership status and your hotel brand and region.

Key Learning Outcomes:

1. Welcome the guest.
2. Recognise their IHG® Rewards Club status.
3. Confirm membership information.
5. Establish method of payment.
6. Present the member with their key.
It is also a good idea to remind members to book direct and not through an online travel agency. This will ensure that they earn points towards reward nights and ensure the best price possible.

5. Establish the method of payment.

Check the PMS to see whether the member has already paid. You should already be familiar with this procedure as it applies to all guests regardless of their membership, but ask your manager for help if you are not familiar with establishing the method of payment with a guest.

6. Present the member with their key.

Give the member their key jacket containing their room key and internet instructions. Provide them with directions to their room, offering additional assistance and thanking them again for their loyalty. This is the perfect opportunity to use the member’s name again.

Remember!

If no IHG® Rewards Club number appears on a guest’s reservation while you’re performing a check-in or on the Arrival Report, this could be a great opportunity to enrol a new member. Ask the guest if they are a member. If not, ask if they’re interested in joining IHG® Rewards Club and provide them with some basic information about the programme. If the guest is already a member but no membership number appears on the guest reservation, ask them for their membership number or look it up on LoyaltyConnect and remember to add the membership number to the reservation.

Top Tip:

This could also be a great opportunity to tell members about the IHG App and its benefits. If a guest downloads the free app and opens it, when they turn their smartphone on its side, their member card will appear, displaying all their details including their member number, their tier and their points balance.
2. The Check-In

2.1 Welcoming Club Level Members

Different membership levels have different benefits and the way we greet and recognise members varies too. Therefore we need to tailor our check-in for each membership level.

1. Greet the Club member.

When the member arrives, greet them warmly and sincerely. Use the member’s name and acknowledge their status even if they are a Club level member.

We might say something like,

‘Welcome Mr. Smith. We appreciate you being an IHG® Rewards Club Member.’

or,

‘Welcome Mrs Smith, I see you are a member of IHG® Business Rewards.’

2. Thank the Club member for their continued loyalty.

It is important to thank our guests because it makes them feel valued. A good example of recognising members is to recognise frequent members for reaching certain stay milestones, such as their tenth stay at the hotel this year. Hotels can refer to Arrivals Reports during arrival planning to identify these personalisation opportunities.

3. Inform the Club member of their benefits.

Club level members are entitled to a complimentary daily newspaper and free standard Internet access. Remember to inform the guest where they will be able to find their paper or how it will be delivered.

4. Address requests for late check-out.

We can do this by setting up a trace in our Property Management System so that the Housekeeping and Front Office departments are aware of the late check-out on the day of departure. It’s important to remember to do this so that the member is not disturbed or inconvenienced.

Designing the check-in experience for individual members is just another way of showing our IHG® Rewards Club members how much we value their loyalty. Remember, members are more likely to take the time to fill out HeartBeat surveys and provide higher scores when they feel that they’ve been recognised.

Key Learning Outcomes:
1. Greet the Club member.
2. Thank the Club member for their loyalty.
3. Inform the Club member of their benefits.
4. Address requests for late check-out.

Top Tip:

Some of these benefits vary by region or brand. Ask your Loyalty Champion which benefits are available at your hotel.
2.2 Welcoming Gold Elite Members

Customising the check-in experience for Gold Elite members is an effective way to recognise their continued loyalty. Our members have told us how important recognition is to them, so let’s show them how important they are to us.

1. Greet the Gold Elite member and recognise their status.

We’re always warm and sincere when we greet the Gold Elite member and recognise their status. Use their name when acknowledging their status. Remember, you may need to recognise them as a Business Rewards member or at the Gold Elite level they could also be an Ambassador member.

2. Thank the Gold Elite member for their continued loyalty.

Thank the Gold Elite member for their continued loyalty. Recognising their membership status and thanking them for their loyalty is important because it makes them feel valued.

Top Tip:
Use the Arrivals Detail Report to identify special information about the member that could be valuable to mention during check-in.

3. Let the Gold Elite member know that we’ve been expecting them.

Let the Gold Elite member know that we’ve been expecting them and have already prepared their room.

4. Inform the Gold Elite member of their benefits.

Gold Elite members receive the same benefits as Club members. In addition, Elite Members receive pre-assigned rooms and in some regions, a choice of welcome amenity.

Deliver the Welcome Amenity per your region and brand. If you are unsure, speak to your hotel Loyalty Champion.

5. Address requests for late check-out.

Ask the Gold Elite member if they would like a late check-out, if this benefit is available. Set up a trace in your Property Management System to alert the Housekeeping and Front Office departments of the late check-out so that the guest is not inconvenienced.

Remember!
We pre-assign rooms for Gold Elite, Platinum Elite and Spire Elite members. This is a special perk we deliver to the Elite levels of IHG® Rewards Club programme, so highlight this benefit when a Gold Elite member checks in.
2.3 Welcoming Platinum Elite Members

Platinum Elite members are important to us because they’ve invested in our brands. By following these steps, we ensure that Platinum Elite members receive the recognition they deserve and have a distinct member experience.

1. **Greet the Platinum Elite member and recognise their status.**

Always greet our Platinum Elite members warmly and sincerely. Use their name and acknowledge their status. Remember, they might also be a Business Rewards member or an InterContinental Ambassador.

2. **Thank the Platinum Elite member for their continued loyalty.**

Recognising a guest’s membership status makes the member feel important, and thanking them for their loyalty makes them feel valued.

3. **Let the Platinum Elite members know that we’ve been expecting them.**

We pre-assign rooms for Gold Elite, Platinum Elite and Spire Elite members during pre-arrival. To highlight this benefit, let the Platinum Elite members know that we’ve been expecting them and that their room has already been prepared.

4. **Inform the Platinum Elite member of their benefits.**

Platinum Elite members receive all the benefits afforded Gold Elite members. On top of this, they can look forward to room upgrades, when available. Be sure to remind members of all the benefits available to them.

5. **Address requests for late check-out.**

If available, ask the Platinum Elite member if they would like a late check-out. Set up a trace in your Property Management System to alert Housekeeping and Front Office of the late check-out. Remember to do this so the guest is not inconvenienced in any way.

Conclude by thanking the Platinum Elite member again for their loyalty, and letting them know that we are available to assist with any other needs. Use the member’s name again, to personalise the check-in experience and make the member feel important.

---

**Key Learning Outcomes:**

1. **Greet the Platinum Elite member and recognise their status.**
2. **Thank the Platinum Elite member for their loyalty.**
3. **Let the Platinum Elite member know that you’ve been expecting them.**
4. **Inform the Platinum Elite member of their benefits.**
5. **Address requests for late check-out.**

**Remember!**

When checking in a Platinum Elite IHG® Business Rewards Member or an InterContinental Platinum Ambassador member, you need to recognise them and check them in as you would an IHG® Rewards Club member.

---

**Deliver the Welcome Amenity per your region and brand. If you are unsure, speak to your hotel Loyalty Champion.**
2.4 Welcoming Spire Elite Members

Spire Elite members are our most valued guests and to show our appreciation for their exceptional loyalty, we have put together unique benefits to show them just how much they are valued.

1. Why these members receive unique attention.

Spire Elite members are rare, and only make up 1% of our members. They are more than just important, they are part of our family. These valued members often spend more time in IHG hotels than in their own homes. It is for this reason that we go above and beyond their expectations to make them feel at home and reward them for their loyalty.

2. The process of welcoming and checking in Spire Elite members.

Always greet these members warmly and sincerely. Remember to use their name when acknowledging their status. This will make them feel valued.

3. Inform the Spire Elite member of the unique benefits available to them.

They receive the same benefits as Platinum Elite members, and more! Remember that they earn 100% bonus points on qualifying nights.

Key Learning Outcomes:
1. Why do these members receive special attention.
2. Welcoming and checking in Spire Elite members.
3. Informing members of their unique benefits.

Remember!

We pre-assign rooms for Gold Elite, Platinum Elite and Spire Elite members. This is a special perk we deliver to the Elite levels of IHG® Rewards Club programme, so remember to highlight this benefit whenever a Spire Elite member checks in. Let the Spire Elite member know that we’ve been expecting them and have already prepared their room. The options of welcome amenity should also be ready.

Remember!

When checking in a Spire Elite IHG® Business Rewards Member or an InterContinental Spire Ambassador member, you need to recognise them and check them in as you would an IHG® Rewards Club member.

It is also important to note that all Royal Ambassadors, by definition of their room night requirement, are automatically Spire Elite members and should always be treated in accordance to their tier level.

You can address requests for late check-out. Ask the Spire Elite member if they would like the option of a late check-out. As with all late check-outs, set up a trace in your Property Management System.

Spire Elite members stay with us so frequently, so we should have a good knowledge of their preferences and requirements. Make sure this information is recorded on their profiles so that all colleagues are able to provide educated service to these members.
2.5 Reward Nights

We make it easy for IHG® Rewards Club members to redeem and enjoy their rewards, including Reward Nights, which makes our loyalty programme simple, transparent and reliable.

1. Understanding Rewards Nights.

Members earn points when they stay at any one of IHG’s hotel brands or by purchasing products and services from one of our partners. Instead of redeeming their points for brand name merchandise, gift cards or other rewards, members can redeem points for a Reward Night, which includes the room rates and any applicable taxes. There are no black-out dates for Reward Nights. Members can redeem these points for Reward Nights at any time.

Hotels are grouped into categories which determine the number of points needed to redeem a Reward Night, ranging from 10,000 points to 50,000 points. These categories are based on brand, occupancy, location, demand, and Reward Night volume.

2. The importance of Reward Nights.

For many members, Reward Nights are one of the main reasons they joined the programme.

They have spent many nights with us and generated significant revenue in our hotels, and the Reward Night is just that, a reward for their loyalty.

Key Learning Outcomes:

1. Understanding Rewards Nights.
2. The importance of Rewards Nights.
3. Your role in Delivering Rewards Nights.

This is why we never think of Reward Nights as ‘free stays’. They are a celebration of member loyalty and a way of thanking IHG® Rewards Club members for their continued support of IHG’s brands. Reward Nights count towards earning Elite Status. This gives members more incentive to return to IHG brand hotels. With over 4,900 hotels to choose from worldwide, we empower members to make the most of their benefits.

3. Your role in delivering Reward Nights.

When members redeem points for Reward Nights at IHG hotels, we celebrate and recognise this loyalty. Always remember to thank the member for spending a Reward Night at your hotel at the beginning of the check-in procedure.

It’s that easy – recognise loyalty and acknowledge that the member has chosen to redeem their Reward Night at your hotel.
2.6 What If Things Don’t Go As Planned?

We know how to welcome IHG® Rewards Club members, how to give them the recognition they deserve and how to deliver benefits consistently. But what happens if something doesn’t go according to plan during the check-in procedure?

1. Possible problems during check-in.

Imagine that a Platinum Elite member, Mr Jones has arrived at your hotel a little early and they want to check in, but their pre-assigned room is not ready. You realise that Housekeeping has not yet serviced their room. What should we do to keep them happy? The first step is to inform the member that their room is not yet ready. Then offer them a choice between a room that is ready, or give them the option to wait. Communicate with Housekeeping to determine an accurate waiting time so you can tell the member how long they will have to wait. If they choose to wait, ensure that Housekeeping is aware of this so that they can prioritise cleaning the room.

Another possible problem during check-in is when a guest’s membership number does not appear on the reservation record. You won’t know if they are a Club, Gold Elite, Platinum Elite or Spire Elite member and will be unsure which benefits you can offer them. This is easy to fix. Simply inform the member that their IHG® Rewards Club membership number has not been recorded on their reservation and that you’d like to add it so they can receive all their membership benefits. Ask them to check their membership number on their IHG® Rewards Club card.

What if the member doesn’t have their IHG® Rewards Club card and they can’t remember their membership number? Look up their membership number in LoyaltyConnect. Once you find the number, add it to the record. The member will feel valued because you’ve made an effort to ensure that they receive the benefits they’ve earned.

If you pull up the membership number from the Property Management System and notice that the member’s status is actually lower than indicted on their card, politely inform them of their current status. Then explain that, in appreciation of their loyalty, you’ll deliver the benefits of the higher level where possible.

These are specific examples of problems that may arise during the check-in procedure, but every situation is different. We understand that at times, things don’t always go according to plan. ILEAD is there to help you smooth out any problems that may occur during the check-in experience. The ILEAD problem handling strategy is a powerful IHG problem solving framework designed to ensure that guest complaints are resolved consistently and correctly across all brands. Be sure to refer to the IHG Problem Handling course if you need to refresh your knowledge on how to use this important tool. Having this tool in place will help you to handle any situation professionally and with confidence.

Key Learning Outcomes:
1. Possible problems during check-in.

Top Tip:
It’s important to use the Arrivals Reports, in order to locate the most accurate membership status. This could also be an opportunity to tell members about the IHG App and its benefits. If a guest downloads the free app and turns their smartphone on its side, their member card will appear, displaying all their details including their member number, their tier and their points balance.
3. Conclusion

3.1 Let’s Review

With more than 85 million members and over 4,900 hotels and resorts in nearly 100 countries, IHG® Rewards Club is the largest hotel loyalty programme in the world. We believe that by recognising and celebrating member loyalty, IHG® Rewards Club creates a distinct and memorable experience.

Consistently delivering member recognition is our top priority, which is why we prepare for our member arrivals and pay special attention to them during check-in. Remember to always greet the member by name, acknowledge their membership status and deliver the benefits they’ve earned. Thank the member for their loyalty and offer further assistance. Remember to thank members for choosing your hotel when they redeem Reward Nights. We consistently use inclusive language that is clear and straightforward, and we’re always open and honest about IHG® Rewards Club. Be warm and sincere – just relax and be yourself and members will appreciate your genuine hospitality.

If things don’t go according to plan, just remember to use the ILEAD service recovery matrix – Identify, Listen, Empathise, Apologise and Deliver. This framework helps us to resolve issues consistently and correctly. By remaining calm and finding a solution, IHG® Rewards Club members will know that we value them and will appreciate our effort to give them the recognition they deserve.

We now understand how to recognise and reward our members’ loyalty during the check-in experience. Congratulations on completing this course and remember that in all interactions with our valued members, your warm and sincere personality makes all the difference in creating a memorable experience that will leave our members feeling welcome and valued.