Information Management Training

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New, challenging Masters degree in Information and Knowledge Management offered in South Africa

The importance and impact of the effective access to and utilization of information content and technologies for the relative competitiveness of individuals, companies, nations and regions in the global information economy and society are generally accepted by political and business leaders across the world. The Department of Information Science at the University of Stellenbosch is offering a new M.Phil. degree in Information and Knowledge Management from this year. The aim of this programme is to prepare candidates for strategic professional leadership in ensuring the effective utilization of organizational information resources and knowledge assets in the public and private sectors of the economy. This is imperative to make South Africa more successful in meeting the challenges of the global information economy.

According to Prof Ben Fouche of the Department of Information Science, the South African government has already embarked on several initiatives to accelerate the processes of information society development and the improvement of information technology and communications networks in the country. Likewise, the provincial government of the Western Cape has recently commissioned the development of a knowledge-based strategy for the province in order to improve the economic growth of the province. There is also a widespread move by South African companies in all the economic sectors to develop and implement information and knowledge-based strategies.

To qualify for entry, candidates must be in possession of a bachelor's degree in any subject area. The minimum duration of the programme is two years' study. After one year full-time (or two years part-time) the student can exit the programme and will be awarded a B.Phil. degree if all the required modules have been completed successfully. The mode of instruction consists of two blocks of residential contact sessions per year and computer-based self-study and group work. The curriculum has a modular structure. Students take nine compulsory modules and five elective modules. The topics of the individual modules are the following.

Compulsory modules:

- Dynamics of the knowledge society
- Information management: concepts, methods and practice
- Knowledge management: concepts, methods and practice
- Information and knowledge management in the context of business strategy
- Information organization and retrieval
- Information technology
- Research methodology
- Application project (extensive report)
- Extensive research assignment on a specific topic

Elective modules:

- Information economy, infopreneurship and electronic commerce
- Internet-based knowledge work infrastructures
- Advanced information and knowledge organization
- Information analysis, decision support and strategic intelligence
- User needs and behaviour
- Human-computer interaction
- Electronic business information sources
- Electronic multimedia publishing
- Corporate communication
- Local, national and regional information and communication strategy, policy and law, and information ethics
- Advanced information skills

On completion of the programme students will have a broad knowledge of the theoretical, methodological and practical aspects of the dynamics of the global knowledge-based society and economy. They should be able to analyse the relationship and interaction between information and knowledge-based processes and systems and develop solutions for problems related to the optimization of information flows, knowledge sharing and innovation in institutional and community settings. This would include the design, implementation and evaluation of information and knowledge-based strategies, policies, products and services.

To learn more about the programme, visit the Web site at http://www.sun.ac.za/information_science/PROGgrad.html. If you have any questions about the programme, e-mail Prof. Ben Fouche at bf@maties.sun.ac.za.

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