

Microsoft certifications free of charge for SUPINFO students

For the first time throughout the world, an institution of higher education includes in its curriculum free certification training and evaluation for Microsoft technologies for all students.

Paris, 27 March 2008 – Microsoft and SUPINFO have signed a new partnership agreement. Beginning in 2008, most Microsoft product and technology certifications will be directly included in the curriculum provided by The International Institute of Information Technology, SUPINFO. All students will be able to take the certification exams free of charge within the framework of their studies, for their 5 years of studies at SUPINFO. The agreement is a worldwide first on such a scale. It extends to all SUPINFO institutes throughout the world, that is to say 40 schools in 2008.

A unique partnership

Starting in 2008, the Microsoft product and technology certifications will be an integral part of the SUPINFO curriculum. Free of charge and provided for all students, the certifications will contribute to their education and facilitate their entry into the business world.

Before this agreement, the SUPINFO institutes provided highly extensive training on Microsoft technologies, with certification as an option. From now on, with the direct and compulsory integration of Microsoft certifications in its curriculum, starting next term, over 6,500 students will benefit from the certifications free of charge. The certifications will be added to the current courses provided by the school.

Over 10,000 certifications planned for the 2008-2009 school year

Within the framework of the partnership, over 10,000 certifications have already been planned for 2008-2009. Every SUPINFO student will take at least two certifications per year from his or her first year onwards, representing a minimum of ten certifications over a five-year course.

For the occasion, in April 2008, 20 SUPINFO sites will become *Microsoft IT Academies*¹ and *PROMETRIC*² centers, the only authorized testing centers for Microsoft certifications in the world.

“The new agreement with Microsoft is directly in line with the existing partnership we have had for over 7 years. It helps us in our mission dedicated to the successful transmission of knowledge with a thoroughly vocational content, and enables us to improve the assessment of students by adopting the professional ‘standard’ of certification exams, which will continue to serve as a reference once they have graduated. Moreover, with these certifications, students are secure in the knowledge that they are perfectly prepared for the needs of the labor market. Microsoft being, just as we are, a leader, it was important for us to enter into agreements with an international scope. In this way, we will be able to offer students the same service throughout the SUPINFO schools opened in France, China, the United Kingdom, Canada, and in the near future, the USA, Belgium, Morocco, Spain, Italy and the United Arab Emirates” says Alick Mouriesse, President of SUPINFO.

A dual stake: professionalize skills & increase operational performance

Adding a new dimension to the instruction of SUPINFO students, Microsoft certifications reinforce the professionalization of their skills. After graduation, students will fit even more easily into the business world, in a labor market where certified individuals are in great demand.

¹ The *Microsoft IT Academy* program offers IT educational content and resources, facilitating certification within higher education.

For more information: <http://www.microsoft.com/education/msitacademy/default.aspx>

² For additional information on PROMETRIC: <http://www.prometric.com/Microsoft/default.htm>

“Like many other organizations, Microsoft’s customers and partners are actively looking for young certified professionals. The partnership with SUPINFO meets this kind of demand. At the same time, it increases the chances for students to set themselves apart on the labor market” adds Eric Boustouller, President of Microsoft France.

Microsoft certifications are crucial for employers because they enhance performance and productivity of a team when it includes at least one certified individual, according to an IDC³ study. For associates, certification guarantees that an individual can be instantly operational within the organization, and both more autonomous and efficient. In fact, certified professionals typically lead a more lasting career within their company.

Born in France, a partnership offered on the international level

The partnership between Microsoft and SUPINFO is a worldwide first. In France, but also in all SUPINFO schools throughout the world, certifications are integrated in the curricula and taken by all students, at no charge.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT”) is the worldwide leader of software. The company develops and markets a wide range of software, accessories and services for the home and the enterprise. Its mission is to provide its expertise, innovative ideas and passion to serve the projects, ambitions and creativity of clients and partners, in order for technology to become their best ally in realizing their potential. Created in 1983, Microsoft France employs over 1,200 people. Since 1st February 2005, its presidency is headed by Eric Boustouller.

About SUPINFO

Founded in 1965, the International Institute of Information Technology, better known as SUPINFO, is a worldwide institute of higher education, French leader in the field of Information and Communication Technology. A private school recognized by the French state, SUPINFO delivers a degree accredited by the state at the highest level, i.e. level I (Master’s degree, Engineering). It includes over 6,500 students in 2008. As a vocational school, the purpose of SUPINFO has always been to meet the precise requirements of the market. It has already trained over 5,000 engineers and managers immediately operational after graduation thanks to its educational laboratories created with the worldwide leaders of the industry, namely Apple, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, Novell, Cisco, Mandriva, and Sun Microsystems.

Initially based in Paris, the school now spreads over 40 sites in the world, with 27 located in France and in the French overseas departments. As such, SUPINFO is the IT engineering school with the strongest foothold in France, with over 1,000 degrees awarded every year, and the French school with the strongest foothold abroad. It has institutes in 4 Chinese cities, in Montreal and Vancouver (Canada), London (United Kingdom), San Francisco (United States), Brussels (Belgium), Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), Madrid (Spain), Milan (Italy), and Casablanca (Morocco). As such, the school provides its students with a unique opportunity for mobility since every year of study can be carried out in another site or abroad without additional cost. SUPINFO offers other programs in addition to its primary IT course: Validation des Acquis de l’Expérience (VAE) aimed at IT professionals; the SUPINFO International Masters of Science aimed at university, engineering or business graduates; short professional certification courses to stay up to date and become certified on technologies provided by Microsoft, Cisco, Sun, Novell, Apple, Oracle; and so on.

Since 2008, within the framework of a socially-aware operation, SUPINFO also offers a set of home IT classes and support for the general public under the name “SUPINFO Family”.

In response to the strong demand for IT skills throughout the world, SUPINFO is continuing its development on the international scene with the upcoming creation of schools and training centers in a variety of countries such as Brazil, Costa Rica, Mauritius, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, and Tunisia.

For additional information about SUPINFO, see <http://www.supinfo.com>

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³ IDC study, “Value of Certification: Team certification and organizational performance”, November 2006