

Microsoft Australia partners with Charles Sturt University to develop world-first Masters qualifications

SYDNEY — November, 2002 — Microsoft Australia has partnered with Charles Sturt University to develop world-first, industry-based, Masters programs for IT professionals. The Microsoft and Charles Sturt University Masters programs are the only Postgraduate level qualifications where the achievement of IT industry certification is an integral part of completing the courses.

The first of the Masters is aimed at computer networking professionals with students being awarded a Masters of Networking and System Administration while completing their Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) at the same time. Plans for further Masters qualifications are currently in place.

According to Professor Jim Pratley, Dean, Faculty of Science and Agriculture at Charles Sturt University, "We are Australia's leading provider of Distance Learning and have always prided ourselves on our close relationship with the Australian IT Industry. We are genuinely excited by this initiative and believe that the Masters will grow into a major export earner for Australia when we begin accepting overseas students next year".

The target audience for the Masters is experienced IT industry professionals and the courses have been designed to cater for busy professionals who can continue in full time employment while studying. The recommended duration to complete the Masters is two years.

"At Microsoft Australia we believe that both industry certifications and university qualifications are of equal value," said Derek Kerr, Community Development

Manager for Microsoft Australia. "The ideal development path for IT professionals to take is a combination of practical industry certifications and the holistic, overall development that university qualifications provide".

A recent national survey conducted by Microsoft Australia at a TechNet Update event for IT professionals showed that as many as 50% of the 1,200 people who attended expressed interest in enrolling in the Masters program.

According to Derek Kerr, "We are planning for the Masters program based on Microsoft Certifications to be trialed in Australia and then promoted throughout the Asia Pacific Region. Graduates from the Masters degree will be highly sought after in the industry, both in Australia and throughout the rest of the Asia Pacific Region".

Financial support is available for students interested in undertaking the Masters program through the Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme (PELS). This scheme is part of an initiative by the Government in November 2001 to provide an interest-free loan facility for students who are enrolled in a Masters level course.

Charles Sturt University is currently accepting applications for the first intake of the Master of Networking and System Administration for December 1st 2002. Details about the Masters can be found at www.itmasters.com.au.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and Internet technologies for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide range of products and services designed to empower people through great software — any time, any place and on any device.

About Charles Sturt University

Charles Sturt University is the eighth largest university and the largest distance education provider in Australia, providing significant educational, social, cultural and economic benefits to its regions. The university has earned a reputation for working hand-in-hand with business, the professions and government to provide courses and advice to meet the demands of a changing workforce and changing times. CSU's partnerships and alliances are marked by a diversity and drive that make it distinctive from other universities in Australia.