

Enterprise Systems

Catalog Description

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the theoretic and practical issues related to the application of Enterprise Systems within organizations. The main focus of this course is to demonstrate how Enterprise Systems integrate information and organizational processes across functional areas with a unified system comprised of a single database and shared reporting tools. Enterprise systems, by their multi-dimensional integrative nature, offer the depth of functionality and breadth of integration to demonstrate how global operations of organizations are managed. Thus, students will gain an appreciation of the scope of Enterprise Systems and the motivation for implementing them. Example software will be used to illustrate how Enterprise Systems work.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn to:

- Understand the fundamentals of Enterprise Systems and issues associated with their implementation.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of implementing an Enterprise System.
- Understand how enterprise systems integrate functional areas into one enterprise-wide information system.
- Explain how “best practices” are incorporated in Enterprise Systems.
- Recognize how an organizational process often spans different functional areas.
- Describe the role of Enterprise Systems in carrying out processes in an organization.
- Learn to integrate key concepts from functional-oriented courses, such as accounting, marketing, and organizational behavior, to promote the development of integrative skills.
- Explain how integrated information sharing increases organizational efficiencies.
- Identify, describe, and evaluate the major Enterprise System software providers and their packaged systems.
- Understand current trends related to Enterprise Systems.

Topics

- Business processes and business process integration
- Making the case for acquiring and implementing Enterprise Systems

- Analyzing business requirements to support selecting and implementing an Enterprise System
- Selection of Enterprise Systems software
- Challenges associated with the implementation of global Enterprise Systems applications
- Organizational change
 - Strategic alignment
 - User commitment
 - Communications
 - Training
 - Job redesign
 - Governance of processes and data
- Post-implementation issues
- Enterprise System processes
 - Order processing
 - Purchasing
 - Production logistics
 - Accounting
 - Planning & Control
 - Human resource functions
- How Enterprise Systems support e-business

Discussion

- The course specification intentionally leaves Enterprise System software unspecified. Institutions have to make the decision of whether and how to provide students with experience with actual Enterprise System software. It is, however, preferable that the course include exposure to and hands-on use of one of the two large Enterprise System vendors in the market place, SAP or Oracle, or one of the several smaller vendors such as SSA Global, Microsoft (Axapta, Great Plains and Solomon), InTuit, or Minicom, to name a few. The importance of actual use is clear. Enterprise System software is in place in a majority of large organizations and increasing in use in small and medium sized organizations.
- A group project is highly recommended to assess both practical/applied aspects and the conceptual/theoretical content of the course. For example, a group project could require students to study a real-world organization and evaluate the suitability of SAP R/3 or another software solution. This evaluation would then be compared with other Enterprise System software products in terms of product functionality, support and flexibility for configuration and customization, architecture and technology compatibility, web-based functionality, ease of interfacing with other legacy systems, and implementation costs. If software resources permit, the group could then design and configure a simple workable integrated Enterprise System, using SAP R/3 for example, that demonstrates the integration of information from several modules, such as accounts receivable, sales, manufacturing/production, procurement, accounts payable, or general ledger. Students groups would analyze the functional areas in a real-world organization and map them into SAP R/3. Students would create an

enterprise structure, relevant master data in the software, transactions that demonstrate integration of core processes, and provide documentation. Students thereby apply specialist skills and knowledge drawn from other traditional disciplines to an actual organization and demonstrate the development of skills such as analytical skills, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork.

- The course provides a pedagogical basis for a change in the delivery of education from a functional orientation to a process orientation, leading to the integration of curriculum across functions.