

SAP University Competence Centers

Teaching Tomorrow's Employees



The same services that users in the business world may expect from Customer Competence Centers and Centers of Expertise are provided to students at universities and institutions of higher education by University Competence Centers: comprehensive expert knowledge, state-of-the-art software, and the guarantee that they will be optimally prepared for the future.

RWTH Aachen University, LMU Munich and the College of Further Education for Office Management and Services in Berlin are a few examples of German institutions of higher education that are involved in the SAP University Alliances program.

Using state-of-the-art enterprise software and a specially created virtual model company from SAP, students learn to understand and manage business processes from a global and integrated perspective. The SAP University Competence Centers (UCCs) are the backbone of this program. They are not-for-profit organizations that provide system infrastructures for educational institutions.

Since 1999, there have been two UCCs in Germany – one at the Otto-von-Guericke University in Magdeburg and the other at the Technical University of Munich. Like Customer Competence Centers (CCCs) and Centers of Expertise (CoEs), they are responsible for typical application-service-provider tasks, such as operating, maintaining, and supporting SAP solutions. Often the IDES version of an SAP solution is the basis of SAP system use in education. It is a virtual model company that includes preconfigured SAP components and a multitude of well-documented business processes.

The UCCs offer additional services that are tailored to the needs of research and educational training. These include developing training concepts and teaching materials that meet the requirements of the participating institutions.

In Germany alone, over 200 institutions of higher education teach process-oriented business management using SAP software; more than 60,000 students already have the opportunity to learn today what will be a significant aspect of their future professional lives. This ensures that the employees and decision makers of tomorrow are best prepared for the challenges that await them.

Around the world, the SAP University Alliances program benefits over 130,000 students at 600 universities. In addition to current UCCs in Europe and the Americas, further UCCs are planned in the Asia-Pacific region.

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Organization

The two SAP University Competence Centers are organized similarly to Customer Competence Centers serving geographically distributed customer companies. In both cases, they support a large number of users in multiple locations, and the UCCs/CCCs serve as mediators between the users' requests and the software manufacturer, SAP. Face-to-face meetings twice a year improve contacts.

Both business-oriented CCCs and university-oriented UCCs provide services such as end-user support, contract management, and training courses. Compared to a CCC with a similar number of users (approximately 60,000), the two UCCs are rather small, comprising no more than 12 employees. This is possible mainly due to the high degree of standardization in the SAP system landscape. The software products (such as the SAP ERP application) running within the 164 installed SAP systems are kept on a uniform release level for easier administration. Consequently, support requests are often similar, and system problems can be anticipated earlier and solved much more quickly.

Qualification concept

While CCCs are usually responsible for project-team and end-user training, the UCCs provide "train the trainer" sessions only to key users who will then act as knowledge-transfer mediators. Despite an average of five training days per key user, the level of required training is relatively low, while still ensuring knowledge transfer to the 60,000 users. Although the content of the training differs, the objective is always the same: Well-suited training should incorporate efficient system management into each practical training exercise. An appropriate course for UCC customers combines system knowledge with information about how to effectively integrate the SAP software into the customer's educational courses.

Instructors from CCCs and UCCs obtain invaluable feedback from their end users to understand potential problems with using the software.