

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT ILM

The Institute of Logistical Management has been around for a long time – since 1923, to be exact. The organization is the oldest logistics distance learning program in the world and began as the Academy of Advanced Traffic.

Things have changed since then and so has ILM. Today the Burlington, N.J.-based learning center has courses in warehousing, transportation law, hazardous materials compliance, global logistics management and freight claims management and others. But it is still focused on transportation and logistics.

In recent years the school has received National accreditation and added new courses and faculty members, said Frank Breslin, Dean of ILM and former vice president of transportation and distribution for Scott Paper Co. The Distance Education Training Council, the largest distance education accreditation agency in the world, nationally accredited ILM. ILM is listed in the ACE directory of accredited Postsecondary Educational Institutions, recognized and approved by the Veteran's Administration, and recognized by DANTES, an agency that handles distance learning for all U.S. service branches worldwide. The school now has 16 courses worth 48 transferable recommended college credits. It offers 8 Career Tracks for Professional Practitioner/Certifications.

The Council of Supply Chain Professionals (CSCMP) also recognizes ILM and has an Articulation agreement with the University of Phoenix.

"Many of our students have college degrees but there are also many who do not," he said. The typical student is in his or her late 30s or early 40s and is at the "not quite mid-management level," said Breslin. About 40 percent of ILM's students are female. The students want to enhance their professional career and move to the next level. It is an opportunity "to learn while they earn."

The introductory courses may appeal to someone just out of high school or college who is interested in learning more specifics about transportation and logistics. ILM is also looking at developing courses for senior management, including CIOs and CFOs, and at recertification courses for its Certified Logistics Practitioner offering.

ILM has students from five continents, representing over 40 countries, including students in Denmark and Hong Kong. The school has no immediate plans to expand its offerings to include an associate's or bachelor's degree.

ILM's competition includes the Logistics Institute at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Wisconsin, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and numerous other fine schools, said Breslin. "They are all excellent programs, and many of our students have gone to some of these programs," he said. The difference is that ILM is completely distance-learning based and less expensive.

Currently ILM students prefer not to have virtual classrooms, as that would require that they check in at a specific time during the day or week. "What our students have told us is that it can be difficult to take the time out of work to check in, and if they miss that week, the professor moves on," he said.

The courses are independent self study. Interaction between the students and faculty is "very personalized." Students have a maximum of six months to complete a course, but the average student completes a course in less time. The time can also be extended for personal hardship such as illness, work, or military deployment.

Interested students are only required to have a high school diploma and the ability to read and speak English. Ideally they should have access to computers. ILM focuses on enabling students to understand and improve their own transportation and supply-chain systems as well as impact the bottom line of their businesses. "We believe we provide the quality of education that you would receive at other fine schools, while ILM has the added competitive advantage of the faculty all having experience in the "real world," Breslin said. Courses are "not about theory but about making a difference in your job," and your company's business results.

For more information go to www.logisticseducation.edu, and a recently released ILM enhanced website called www.mylogisticscareer.com or call ILM at 1-888-456-4600.