



“Certification has changed my life! It has helped me more in life than I ever believed possible. Most importantly, certification has helped me be more confident.”

Ashley Masters  
Washington



## Certiably Confident and Rightfully So!

Ashley Masters, a senior at Kalama High School in Washington state, former MOS US National Championship competitor and FBLA Champion, has completely changed her life through certification. She's earned nine Microsoft Office Specialist certifications, and is definitely using her skills to break into a brighter future. See where her Microsoft skills have taken her.

## Sharing Her Story

**Certiport:** Ashley, thanks so much for taking the time to chat with us today. Tell us a little bit about yourself, where you are in school and what you do for work.

**Ashley:** I'm so happy to share my story! Right now, I am a senior at Kalama High School and I also attend Lower Columbia College as a sophomore through the Running Start program to earn my general Business AA. I have worked for a large, national construction company called Pacific Tech Construction, Inc. as an administrative assistant for over a year. Crazy enough, I started there after posting on Facebook about my national win in the Excel Expert competition at the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) national competition. The team at Pacific Tech Construction offered me a job training their secretaries in Excel spreadsheets for a few hours a day, a few days a week. The part-time status didn't last long though. After about two weeks, their administrative



assistant was promoted and they wanted to hire me full-time even though I was only 15!

**Certiport:** That is incredible! You're working full-time, going to high school, and also earning college credit. Do you ever have any time to just be a teenager?

**Ashley:** I try! In my spare time, I like to do photography, explore the great outdoors, spend time with my friends and family, and plan for my future.

My MOS certifications helped me obtain a full-time job at the age of 15 as well as helped me find a career path I'm passionate about, business finance.

- Ashley Masters -

## Passion for Certification

**Certiport:** Good to see you're still finding time to pursue your passions. Is certification something you're passionate about?

**Ashley:** Absolutely! Certification has changed my life! It has helped me more in life than I ever believed possible. Most importantly, certification has helped me be more confident. Having these certifications and being able to help people around me understand Microsoft programs and use them to their full extent is something I love to do. Having these certifications has also helped me in my own school work, being able to produce the most efficient and quality work from the Microsoft programs makes academic and work life so much easier.

And, of course, my MOS certifications helped me obtain a full-time job at the age of 15 as well as helped me find a career path I'm passionate about, business finance. There just aren't words for the sense of confidence and courage that certification has brought me.

**Certiport:** That's fantastic! Do you feel like that confidence has helped you as you've competed in different competitions?

**Ashley:** Of course! I've been able to use my confidence and skills at competitions for the Future Business Leaders of America and the MOS US National Championship. It's always fun to meet new people there and find out how they're using certifications to change their lives.

## Giving Back

**Certiport:** That's one of my favorite parts of working at Certiport. It's so great for us to see students succeeding with certifications. What's one of your favorite experiences you've had as a result of being Microsoft Office Specialist certified?

**Ashley:** I feel like I've had so many! Because of my MOS certifications, I have had the opportunity to travel to several states, get to know hundreds of students and adults, go on amazing tours of states, museums, and even amusement parks. But those are just the fun benefits! I was also able to visit Microsoft headquarters in Redmond and speak on a panel in front of other educators at the Global Educator Summit about my certification and how it has impacted my life.

But I think my fondest memory is seeing the impact of certification in the lives of others. I have learned that, like my teacher Mrs. Schmit always says, "It is not always what you know but what you do with what you know" that can lead us to the most growth.

I led a team of our high school students in a community service project where we taught Microsoft Office skills to women from the women's abuse shelter in our neighboring town. We arranged a partnership to allow them to use out-cycled laptops. We taught Microsoft Word certification courses and then they took the MOS certification exam. Although they did not all certify, it was amazing to see the tears shed for the changes that these skills made in their lives. Some women got a raise, some were able to get a better job, and others secured their first job! We also ran a professional clothing drive, partnered with our local credit union, to gather 450 items to help these women have better hiring opportunities.

To me, THAT is what certification is about: Confidence to do more and be more.



## Get Involved

Give your students a story to tell! Help them prepare to compete in the MOS Championship. Learn more at [www.moschampionship.com](http://www.moschampionship.com).