



Troy University College of Business Equips All Students with Microsoft Excel Certification

Troy University is a public university in Troy, Alabama serving over 18,000 students on four campuses. Troy University's Sorrell College of Business is an AACSB accredited business school offering bachelor's and master's degrees in business, accounting, and economics to more than 4,700 enrolled students.

Recently, the Dean of the Sorrell College of Business, Dr. Judson C. Edwards, set data analytics knowledge and skills as a priority for all business students. "We found that our students were coming into the business program with a wide variety of skills," said Dr. Edwards. "We wanted to make sure all of our students were on an even playing field when they exited, ready to use technology on the job from day one."

In addition to Dr. Edwards' focus on data analytics, the School of Accountancy's Industry Advisory Council asked that students with accounting degrees possess additional Excel skills. As a result, the School of Accountancy and

Ms. Fran Smith, an instructor, developed a course to reinforce and expand Excel skills, and students in the course took the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Excel exam.

As Sorrell worked to increase the data analytics skills for all business students, it made sense to expand the MOS program. Sven Aelterman, Director of IT for the Sorrell College of Business, had received his own Excel and Excel Expert certifications back in 2004 and led the way in expanding the program.

"Our decision to offer MOS Excel and Excel Expert certification was driven by requests from advisory boards to increase Excel skills in all of our business graduates," said Mr. Aelterman.

MOS Certification is Expanded for All Business Students

MOS certification, delivered by Certiport, provides industry-leading assessments of skills and knowledge through project-based testing, giving

students real-world exercises to appraise their understanding of Microsoft Office. This guarantees that every certified user has demonstrated the ability to command the full features and functionality of Microsoft Office, preparing them for future academic or workforce opportunities.

In order to offer MOS exams, Troy University became a Certiport Authorized Testing Center at the main campus and encouraged all faculty to earn the certification. A year later they rolled it out to their three other Alabama campuses. Troy also has a large online population of students who can take the exams at any Certiport Authorized Testing Center around the world.



Sorrell expanded their MOS Excel program so all business students would take the exam, and the School of Accountancy students would take the MOS Excel Expert exam as part of a more advanced course. The Expert exams show a higher level of competency with the program and an ability to perform advanced functions in Microsoft Excel.

"We didn't have to change the curriculum of our courses to implement MOS Excel certification for all business students," said Sven Aelterman. "We simply inserted the exam into our existing courses and gave students access to GMetrix, a practice software for the exams."

Students Who Earn Certification are Prepped for Success

During the first three years of widespread rollout, Troy students achieved the top scores in the State of Alabama and were invited to participate in the MOS U.S. National Championship. To date, approximately 800 students

have earned MOS Excel certification and another 87 have earned MOS Excel Expert certification.

"The feedback from the advisory boards who originally suggested we get our students certified in Excel has been overwhelmingly positive," said Mr. Aelterman. "The students certainly have bragging rights when it comes to their Excel skills and we are pleased with the program."

M. Joann Rouse, who teaches the Intermediate Excel course, said, "The on-campus MOS Excel certification course has a very high pass rate, which shows that Sorrell students recognize the value that the MOS certification brings to their career success."

A local and national employer, Coleman Worldwide Moving, hired three interns from Sorrell's HR program and complemented their Excel skills. Director of Human Resources Andy Hoekenga said, "I've seen tremendous value in the Excel skills the Troy students brought to the

table thanks to the certification they had to get. I'm glad certification is part of the Sorrell curriculum."

When asked what advice he would give to other schools thinking about implementing MOS certification, Mr. Aelterman said they should consider how the certification aligns with the curriculum goals, the institution's mission, and the employer demands. "It takes some effort to set up a large-scale program – you have to have a good idea what is driving it."

Sorrell has considered expanding to MOS Word and PowerPoint certification in their communication course and also some interest in adding Microsoft Technology Associate certification to the program in the future.



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