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Recommended Citation

"IT Certification Offered Free to UD Students, First in the Country to Provide Service" (2003). *News Releases*. 9846.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/9846

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NEWS RELEASE

IT CERTIFICATION OFFERED FREE TO UD STUDENTS,
FIRST IN THE COUNTRY TO PROVIDE SERVICE

DAYTON, Ohio — It's one thing to indicate on a resume that you've mastered the use of Word or Excel software. But prospective employers are going to be more impressed if you've got certification to back that claim.

"The job search is brutal," said Mandy Pouder, a graduating management information systems major who was among the first handful of University of Dayton students to take advantage of a new information technology certification program that's offered free to students. "A lot of people are fighting for one position. If the candidates are otherwise equal, the person with certification might have the edge."

As the program rolls out in February, it may be one more example of UD leading the way in technology issues. "This might be a first," said Phillip Harris, executive director of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. "I can't come up with any other institutions that offer IT certification."

Pouder failed her first attempt at Word certification, but she was successful on the next try. "It's kind of picky. It wants the most efficient and accurate way to do things," she said. "For highlighting, it doesn't want you to click and drag across the text. That was my big fault. It wants you to click for a word and double-click for a sentence and triple-click for a paragraph. It's a little bit quicker and more efficient."

Pouder, president of the senior class, got a 78 on her first try — passing is 80. She's in a class preparing for the Excel certification now and plans to follow that with an Access attempt.

The University offers certification in basic and advanced Word and Excel and basic Windows, Powerpoint, Access, Front Page and Lotus Notes.

"Computer literacy requirements are not uncommon at colleges and universities," said Mary Jo Barrows, senior IT trainer for educational IT at the University of Dayton. "But certification is very different. One of the things we're hearing is that IT competency can give

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you greater success in your college career. Then a student can get an updated certificate before they graduate and make their resume a little bit better than Joe Schmo who says he's competent in Word but doesn't have a dated certificate that proves it."

The University provides two paths for certification. Students can attend an eight-hour class, typically spread over four weeks, to prepare for the test, or they can opt to take the online 25-question test to prove their abilities. An online assessment allows them to gauge how prepared they are for the test. All of the services are free.

UD has invested nearly $10 million into wiring the campus neighborhoods and creating a campus-wide technological infrastructure. Prospective students are required to apply online, and students register for classes and choose their University residences online. UD's computer requirement, now in its fourth year, ensures that students find in their rooms computers fully loaded with the same Microsoft and Lotus software their professors use. A laptop requirement will be in place for fall 2003 incoming students, so they can tote their best tools to class and team meetings. About 90 percent of faculty members are using at least the basic tools of technology -- e-mail, Web sites, threaded discussions and list serves -- in their classes.

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