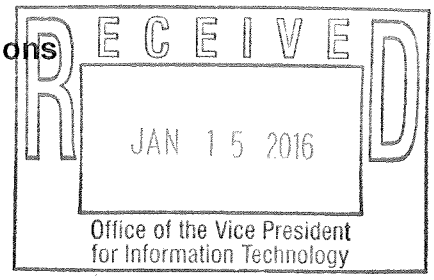
NDSU Technology Action Plan Request

#1606

I. Action Plan Introduction and Authorizations



NDSU ORGANIZATION OR UNIT
Division of Finance and Administration/ College of Business – Accounting, Finance and Information Systems Department

TITLE OF PROJECT Microsoft Office Specialist Certification Course for Students			
Project Duration (3 years maximum)	From: May 2016		To: May 2017
Type of Project (Check one)	New X	Previously Submitted	Renewal
Total Technology Fee Request $3,500			
Project Director (Must be NDSU faculty or staff) Matthew Chaussee	Campus Address: Old Main 9 Phone: 701-231-9764 Fax: 701-231-6194 E-mail: matthew.chaussee@ndsu.edu		

Name (Type or Print)	Signature	Date
Project Director Matthew Chaussee		1/14/2016
Unit Head Bruce Bollinger		1/15/2016
IT Division Consultant Steve Sobiech	Signature	Date 1-15-16

Executive Summary (maximum of 175 words)

An existing Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification program for NDSU faculty and staff is being considered as the base curriculum for a credit-bearing Management Information Systems course for NDSU Students. The proposed course would culminate with students earning both academic credit and MOS certification(s). The technology fee assistance being requested is to fund the cost of a campus wide practice examination software license that is a key component to successfully encouraging NDSU students to work toward MOS certifications.

We will only accept for consideration Technology Action Plan Request forms which are fully completed and signed according to the guidelines listed in the Instructions, pages 1 and 2.

Technology Action Plan Request forms will be opened and reviewed after the submission deadline.

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II. Project Overview

1. How does this project meet student needs?

This project would allow students across campus to take practice examinations to prepare for earning Microsoft Office Specialist certifications. Funding of the practice exam software through the Student Technology Fee would enable us to install it on all campus machines making it easier for students to work toward certifications and align their skills with respect to Microsoft Office applications to Microsoft's standardized skill sets.

2. What audience does this project directly serve? What audience is indirectly served? How many students are affected?

This project directly serves any NDSU student interested in earning Microsoft Office Specialist certifications and who enrolls in a yet to be established MOS Certification course. The faculty and staff population is indirectly served since they would have an option to exercise their tuition waiver benefit to take the aforementioned course to earn a certification. An exact number of student beneficiaries is difficult to determine as the certification course has not yet been established, but when at capacity, the goal would be to have several hundred students earn an MOS certification each academic year.

3. For projects that target a subset of NDSU's students, please describe the possibility for broader application in the future.

Since this license is campus wide, anyone with NDSU electronic services stands to benefit by using the practice exams as a learning tool regardless of their decision to work toward certification or register in the credit bearing course. Making practice exams available to all students would also serve to help promote enrollment in the yet to be established credit bearing MOS Certification course. Since much of the work students perform would be self-paced, this initiative is relatively light on instructor resources making it easier to scale once a working credit bearing model has been established. Success in this initiative would also help pave a path toward considering expanding offerings for certifications in Adobe, IC3 Digital literacy and several other technical software applications.

4. Describe both the immediate and long term impact of this project.

The immediate impact of this project is that NDSU will be able to offer students valuable professional credentials that are directly applicable in the workplace. Longer term, supporting this initiative is a step toward encouraging NDSU students to pursue industry-specific professional development. Success with this project will provide NDSU students with professional credentials that make NDSU graduates even more desirable to employers.

5. Who will pay for ongoing expenses following the technology fee funded portion of this project (e.g., who will replace hardware or software after it has reached its end of life)?

Tuition revenue and/or course fees from students enrolled in the certification course would be the source of funding for ongoing expenses not related to the practice exam software. These expenses include the cost of the certification vouchers for students wishing to take the official certification exam and the costs to the College of Business/ Accounting, Finance and Information Systems department for administering the course. Since the course has not yet been approved/established, the exact details regarding funding ongoing expenses are yet to be determined.

6. Describe how this project will follow NDSU's best practices in information technology. (Please make sure the NDSU IT Division staff you consulted signs in Part I of this form.)

This program leverages well established support and infrastructure that is already in place. The existing professional development program for faculty and staff serves as a working model that has needed minimal support from NDSU's IT division and can used as a template for how to offer these technical certifications to students. All software licenses have already been vetted and approved and the program has been quite successful in enhancing software skills for NDSU employees.

7. What service on campus is most similar to the one proposed here? How does this project differ?

The most similar services on campus are the existing MIS courses focusing on Microsoft Office applications. This service differs in that the practice exam software has potential to augment those offerings and allow students an opportunity to prepare for taking Microsoft Office Specialist examinations to earn an internationally recognized professional credential in addition to earning college credit.

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III. Project Description (5 pages maximum)

Include information on the background of this project: how did it come to fruition?

This project started with an investigation into how one individual on campus could pursue professional development by earning Microsoft Office Specialist certifications. The closest locations for taking MOS certification exams were at Bismarck State College and Bemidji State University. It was quickly determined that the travel and time commitments for certifying in multiple Office applications was cost prohibitive. However, it was apparent that all of the infrastructure was already in place for offering MOS exams on the NDSU campus. The first phase of this initiative was to introduce MOS certification as a professional development opportunity for NDSU faculty and staff. This was supported by a grant from the NDSU Development Foundation and financial support from the Finance and Administration, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions. The net impact of this initiative is that over 300 individuals on campus have started working toward MOS certifications and we are on track to issue over 100 certifications to individuals in just one year's time.

Expanding this program to students was considered initially but because there were somewhat limited staffing resources, direction of the initial project was based out of Finance and Administration and there was not a registration mechanism for managing student enrollment, it was determined that the program would be established for staff and faculty only. Since the faculty and staff population is a somewhat limited audience, the program was intentionally restricted to a one year window. We are now nearing the end of that window and have received inquiries from NDSU students, an instructor at MSUM (via Tri-College) and existing faculty and staff members about the possibility of making this program a perpetual offering.

The most effective path to making certification readily available for NDSU students appears to be repurposing the existing curriculum for the faculty/staff certification program to create a credit bearing course. This course would culminate with the students earning academic credit as well as a professional MOS credential. Making certification available in this manner also enables participation from faculty and staff as well as the Tri-College student population.

There are a number of other institutions who have incorporated MOS Certification into their curricula. URLs for several examples are included below. At the University of Denver - Daniels College of Business, MOS Certification is offered as professional development (they have also opted to make certification a prerequisite for undergraduate admission to their Business School). At Tulane University – Freeman School of Business, MOS certification is a credit bearing course.

University of Denver, Daniels College of Business:
http://www.certiport.com/portal/common/documentlibrary/U_Denver_Success_Story.pdf
http://daniels.du.edu/academic-programs/undergraduate/approach-to-business/technical-expertise/

Tulane University, Freeman School of Business:
http://www.certiport.com/Portal/common/documentlibrary/Tulane_Success_Story.pdf
http://www.freeman.tulane.edu/students/bsm/pdf/Course%20Descriptions.pdf (INFO 1010 course)

Offering MOS Certifications as a credit bearing course for students has several key benefits:

- There are more opportunities to market the program... particularly during freshman registration and academic advising
- Students are further incentivized to participate because it helps satisfy free electives
- Enrollment procedures are the same as for students' other academic courses
- An established mechanism exists for Faculty and Staff participation via tuition waivers
- Tuition covers costs of the course rather than managing invoicing of participants through a third party system
- Increases completed credits at NDSU which has a net positive impact on state funding

It is important to note that the only portion of this project being requested to be funded by the student technology fee is the cost of the campus wide practice exam software. This is being requested so that practice exams are widely available for student learning and will encourage pursuit of certification. Practice exams would be available to students regardless of their decision to enroll in the credit bearing course. While practice exams could be taken regardless of students' decision to earn a certification, it is important that the option for certification is available as a next step for those taking practice exams. Taking that into consideration, if technology fee funds are awarded, their use would be contingent on the approval of the credit bearing MIS course which is currently being pursued.

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IV. Milestones

List the date for each project milestone. These milestones should represent the ***significant*** accomplishments that will be associated with the action plan. For each milestone, please indicate its expected outcome and the means for assessing that outcome. (The table may be extended as needed.)

	Date	Milestone	Expected Outcomes	Means of Assessment
1.	May 2016	Certification Course approved	MIS curriculum committee agrees to offer course	MOS Certification course is listed in Fall 2016 course catalog
2.	May-August 2016	Practice Exam Software available	Practice Exam Software is installed on campus machines and course is promoted to students	Practice exam accounts are created for students individual preparations and/or for their registration in the upcoming term
3.	August 2016	First Course begins	Students enroll for credit bearing MOS Certification course	Enrollment and pass rates are evaluated for determining future need
4.	Ongoing	Course offered in subsequent terms	Students continue to enroll and demand increases	Enrollment and pass rates continue to be evaluated
5.				

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V. Supporting Documentation

Letter attached from Rhonda Kitch, NDSU Registrar.

NDSU Technology Fee Action Plan Request
VI. Budget

(double-click on the form to begin entering data)

1.	NDSU ORGANIZATION OR UNIT Division of Finance and Administration/ College of Business – Accounting, Finance and
2.	PROJECT DIRECTOR(S) (Must be NDSU faculty or staff) Matthew Chaussee

3.	SALARIES AND WAGES			
	Personnel description	Number employed	Number of months	Funds Requested
	A. Staff B. Graduate students C. Undergraduate students			
4.	TOTAL SALARIES AND WAGES			$0.00
5.	FRINGE BENEFITS			
6.	TOTAL SALARY, WAGES AND BENEFITS			$0.00

7.	EQUIPMENT	
	A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H.	
8.	TOTAL EQUIPMENT	$0.00

9.	MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES	
	A.Gmetrix Microsoft Office Secialist Campus License B. C. D. E. F. G. H.	$3,500.00
10.	TOTAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES	$3,500.00

11.	TOTAL TECHNOLOGY FEE REQUEST	$3,500.00
12.	MATCH (Describe in Match Section)	
13.	TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE	$3,500.00

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VII. Budget Justification

The requested expenditure is for $3500 which would be used to purchase a campus wide Gmetrix Microsoft Office Specialist practice exam software license. This estimate was provided by Certiport, a Pearson Vue company who is the exclusive provider of MOS practice exams.

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VIII. Budget Match

1. Attempted Budget Matches:

None for the practice exam software license.

2. Actual Budget Matches:

None for the practice exam software license.

3. Additional Budget Match information:

Funding for other related expenses still needs to be discussed and secured, particularly with respect to the approval of the associated credit bearing course. These costs include use of facilities, staff/faculty for instructing/proctoring exams and purchase of official exam vouchers for students enrolled in the course. Funding for these expenses is not being requested from the Technology Fee.

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

To: Technology Fee Advisory Committee (TFAC)

From: Rhonda Kitch, Ph.D., University Registrar

Date: January 14, 2016

Re: Support for Microsoft Office Specialist certification software

I am writing this letter of support for the Microsoft Office Specialist certification software funding request. This program has been well received by the faculty and staff who have received the training and certifications.

The Office of Registration and Records understands first-hand the significance and importance of students improving their technology skills. There are several examples of MOS Certification as a course at other post-secondary institutions, including the University of Denver, American University and Tulane University. I know discussions are in progress with NDSU's College of Business and I am committed to supporting and facilitating course development in any way that I can. I have provided several examples of course structure options at NDSU that would be straightforward to implement with our academic structure and course development process.

I think there are many potential positive outcomes with MOS certification access available to students. As I mentioned, students would expand their technology skill set. If the course is for credit, students could complete the course and satisfy free electives to be used towards degree completion. In addition, marketing the course to Tri-College students, which would include Concordia College, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Minnesota State Community and Technical College, and North Dakota State College of Science, would most certainly create a unique niche for North Dakota State University.

I am committed to supporting MOS certification and its expansion to become available to NDSU students. If you have any questions, please contact me at rhonda.k.kitch@ndsu.edu or 231-7987.

OFFICE OF REGISTRATION AND RECORDS
110 Ceres Hall | NDSU Dept 2831 | PO Box 6050 | Fargo ND 58108-6050
701.231.7981 | Toll 1.800.608.NDSU (6378) | Fax 701.231.8959 | www.ndsu.edu/registrar

NDSU is an EO/AA university.