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Waqas Ali
Pakistan



Standing Out in a Crowd

Pakistan is home to over 193 million people, which can make standing out a little tough. But where there’s a will, there’s a way.

Waqas Ali, former MOS World Champion and MOS Word and MOS PowerPoint certified user, knew that earning his Microsoft Office Specialist certification would help him stand out from the crowd. And his experiences have taken him all around the globe.

Global Jet Setter

Certiport: Waqas, we’re so excited to hear more about your experiences. You’ve done so much since participating in the competition.

Waqas: Thank you for thinking of me. I’m excited to share more of my story.

Certiport: Tell us about where you’re going to school and what you’re studying.

Waqas: Right now I’m studying at the University of Hong Kong to earn my Bachelor of Engineering degree. I’m majoring in computer science and plan to graduate in 2020.

Certiport: That’s interesting that you decided to study outside of your native Pakistan. Tell us what made you decide to move to Hong Kong for school.

Waqas: I wanted to study Computer Science at a top-ranked university and University of Hong Kong was not only highly ranked, but also offered me a full scholarship! The decision was rather easy for me.

Certiport: What an amazing adventure! Is this the first time you’ve traveled like that?



Waqas: Actually, no. Back in 2014, I participated in the MOS Pakistan Championship, and I was selected to compete in the MOS World Championship as well. However, my visa was rejected due to lack of travel history. So, after that I traveled to Singapore and Malaysia, two countries I wouldn't have traveled to otherwise. The experiences I had in both of these countries were very eye-opening for me and taught me a lot. I met amazing people and had a great time.

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- Waqas Ali -

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Compete to Succeed

Certiport: So you didn't make it to the MOS World Championship in 2014, but you did in 2015 and 2016. Tell us about your experiences competing in the MOS Championship.

Waqas: When I was ultimately able to participate in the 2015 and 2016 competitions, I felt so lucky! I got to see Dallas and Orlando, I met some really talented and nice people, and even won third place in my chosen exam track both times. Plus, I got to see a real American rodeo, which I'd never seen before. And the second time, I saw Disney World. I must say, it was very fun. After all the fun, I also received prizes and extensive media recognition back in my home country. All of these experiences not only led to a lot of personality building for me, but also were shining parts of my profile which opened up many more opportunities for me.

Landing the Internship

Certiport: What other opportunities?

Waqas: The first one that comes to mind is my internship with Microsoft Hong Kong. In hindsight, my internship all started with my participation in the MOS Championship, so I'm really grateful I got involved in it. Participating in the competition helped me be selected for the Microsoft Student Partnership program. That's where I developed a lot of my Microsoft skillset and where I heard about my internship.

Microsoft doesn't do research and development in Hong Kong but, they require technical expertise for increasing the adoption of their technologies such as Azure, Office 365, etc. My title was Technology Solution Professional - Cloud Intern in the Small and Mid-Market Solutions and Partners department. I was able to use my expertise to show businesses what's possible with Microsoft Cloud (Azure) and hence help them realize the benefits of switching to this new technology.

It was an exciting internship and opportunity because Azure has thousands of possible applications and is rapidly growing. Usually when I self-learn, I try to learn everything first and then start working on some project. But at Microsoft, I started with projects and then learned on the way. Although this was challenging, I developed an ability to learn and implement fast. I also worked on cutting-edge stuff such as a facial recognition systems and chatbots which was quite nice.

Certiport: What an amazing opportunity! And how cool that you were able to use Microsoft certification to land yourself an internship at Microsoft!

Waqas: Yes! The certifications were the start of something which drastically changed my life, and I hope other students use certifications to open up new opportunities as well.