



## NORTH CAROLINA MICROSOFT® IT ACADEMY PROGRAM

### **Q: What is a Microsoft® IT Academy?**

**A:** The Microsoft IT Academy is a subscription-based membership program designed to help schools offer students and faculty learning solutions for IT skills training and certification as well as technology essentials for professionals. The program allows teachers to integrate these technologies into new or existing curricula, so schools can tailor classes to meet the needs of students of all ages and levels of experience. Microsoft IT Academy Programs support all types of schools and communities by providing:

- The latest Microsoft software for labs, classrooms, and students' personal computers through DreamSpark;
- Teaching and learning resources to prepare students for success in both technology and professional careers;
- Professional development resources that help faculty stay up-to-date on the latest technology;
- Access to a wide range of Microsoft E-Learning courses and the Instructor Learning Management System (LMS) to help track and monitor student progress;
- Microsoft Official Academic Course textbooks on many Microsoft Office and Microsoft Technology Associate titles are provided at no charge and other official courseware options are available at discounts to IT Academy members;
- E-Reference Libraries that offer instant access to more than 700 Microsoft Press books online; and
- Complimentary certification vouchers for professional development offer teachers the opportunity to upgrade their skills and credentials.

### **Q: How will Microsoft® IT Academy help students in North Carolina?**

**A:** Through the Microsoft IT Academy program, North Carolina high school students receive training in Microsoft technologies and are eligible to earn industry-recognized Microsoft certifications. The program provides students hands-on experience with the latest Microsoft software and hundreds of web-based, E-learning courses and allows them to link academic learning to real-world job skills.

### **Q: What do Microsoft® IT Academy students learn?**

**A:** Courses available to students cover a range of topics from Microsoft Office applications such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Access to more technical courses. Some schools that have had an Academy in place for a number of years offer additional advanced-level courses. When a student completes a course, he or she can choose to take an exam to receive a Microsoft certification such as the Microsoft Office Specialist.

### **Q: What does a typical Microsoft® IT Academy class look like?**

**A:** Courses are broken into different lessons which require students to complete reading assignments, watch videos, follow a computer demo, complete a lab and then validate their learning with exams. Microsoft

also provides additional lesson plans for teachers to use to supplement E-learning and a website on which Academy teachers may share additional ideas and lesson plans.

### **Q: What students are eligible/recommended to take these courses?**

**A:** Any student currently attending a public high school in North Carolina has the opportunity to take a Microsoft IT Academy course. At most high schools, the Academy courses are offered as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint; and Microsoft Excel and Access which is a part of the state's Essential Standards for Career and Technical Education. This course is currently among the state's largest CTE electives, with an average of about 40,000 students enrolled annually. Students do not have to enroll in the Microsoft Word and PowerPoint course to learn through the Microsoft IT Academy, however. For example, some schools have offered students shorter lessons as a supplement to what they are learning in English or science classes. Schools have a large amount of flexibility in how they use the resources offered through the Academy.

### **Q: Can teachers learn through the Microsoft® IT Academy too?**

**A:** As part of the Academy, teachers across the state have access to learning content and lesson plans designed for the latest Microsoft technologies. Teachers have access to online learning on dozens of technical topics and benefit from community news groups and web pages hosted by Microsoft where they may share insights and best practices. Educators who formerly may have been teaching on older versions of software now have resources they can use to keep their skills current and help students learn the newer Microsoft technologies that businesses across North Carolina are deploying.

### **Q: Why did North Carolina partner with Microsoft® in this statewide effort?**

**A:** The Microsoft IT Academy Program aligns with North Carolina's education goals by providing cost-effective tools that help to provide high school students skills for success in college and their careers. The program is also valuable as it provides high-quality, relevant professional development to educators. As an added bonus, the initiative keeps the state on the cutting edge of technology by providing teachers and students access to the latest Microsoft programs and software, all which are widely-utilized in the workplace today.

### **Q: Where can I get more information?**

**A:** To learn how to enroll in an IT Academy course, contact your local high school's guidance counselor or your school district's CTE director. More information is also available on the following websites:

#### **Microsoft® IT Academy:**

<http://www.microsoft.com/education/msitacademy/default.msp>

#### **NC Public Schools:**

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/>