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Students benefit from SAS certification

If there's any debate about the value of certification, the "yeas" have it, according to longtime SAS user Mike Zdeb, assistant professor in the department of epidemiology at the [University at Albany School of Public Health](#) in Rensselaer, NY.

He should know. He teaches two SAS courses at the school, and a number of his students have secured positions due, in part, to their certification credentials. Students who have had summer internships in large health agencies or departments have seen how much SAS is used in the public health setting.

"I suggest to students that having a credential might differentiate them from others when applying for a position," Zdeb said. "In addition to the biostatistics and epidemiology skills they acquire at the school, a good knowledge of SAS will set them apart when they look for a job."

Because many of Zdeb's students look for jobs in the pharmaceutical industry, he believes it is worth the effort for them to obtain certification when they complete his courses. He also reminds them that numerous job listings require SAS skills, and students have told him that companies looking for potential employees often canvass certification lists.

The [SAS Certified Professional Program](#) has shown that it can cross geographic boundaries, provide verification of SAS knowledge and skills, and help people get jobs. Here are a few success stories from the many graduates of the University at Albany School of Public Health who have passed the Base Programming Certification exam:

- A physician from Mongolia's Ministry of Health, whose only computer experience prior to his public health courses was with Microsoft Office: He valued the concept of knowing how to work independently with data, which SAS allowed him to do. SAS skills also helped him obtain a job with the Rhode Island Department of Health, where he worked until he returned to Mongolia.
- A physician from Kazakhstan, now finishing her doctorate in Toronto: SAS skills helped her land a job with the Canadian Institute for Health Information.
- A biostatistics major from China who got a job with a major U.S. pharmaceutical company: In a message thanking Zdeb for teaching her SAS skills and suggesting she become certified, she noted that her new employer was "very impressed when I showed them the SAS programs I wrote with macros, formats and other skills I got from your 'advanced SAS' course."
- A computer science major from China who got a "dream job" with a consulting company: The former student also sent Zdeb a note: "When one of interviewers in Cleveland asked why I am so strong in SAS programming, I told them I am a student of 'Dr. SAS.' It was really an honor to sit in your class."