

ICDL GCC Foundation to launch 'ICDL Syllabus 4' for the GCC countries at GITEX Dubai 2004

ICDL Syllabus 4 focuses on end-user responsible use of computers

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the regional office for the ECDL Foundation and the governing body of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) programme in the Gulf States, will announce the launch of the new ICDL Syllabus 4 for the GCC countries at GITEX this year.

ICDL Syllabus 4 is the newest release that provides the latest update to the world's largest computer certification programme, building on the successes of the previous ICDL Syllabus 3, ensuring that the ICDL program continues to reflect on current trends and practices and staying relevant to ongoing advances in technologies and maintains the ICDL position as the global standard for end-user computer skills certification.

ECDL Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to furthering IT literacy and an inclusive information society, has developed the new syllabus over a two year period incorporating inputs from computer users, subject matter experts and practicing computer professionals from all over the world. ICDL Syllabus 4 has been adopted by most regions around the world, while the remaining regions will complete their migration to this new syllabus by the end of 2004.

Mr. Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation said: "End-user computing needs are constantly changing as a result of advancements in technology. Users now have to become familiar with new concepts and innovations for the seamless use of computers. The Syllabus 4 for ICDL's certification program factors in the changes that have come about in the relevant competencies needed for the everyday professional and personal use of computers. As GITEX Dubai presents a special platform for showcasing future technologies, it is an ideal time for us to launch the latest Syllabus."

ICDL Syllabus 4 provides stronger awareness for using a computer in today's society. It places more emphasis on responsible use of computers both at home and in the workplace. It also reflects on current trends in many new technology areas such as security, file compression, e-Government, netiquette, and lifestyle technology devices such as digital cameras and Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's); as well as it draws the users' attention to environmental considerations for recycling printed documents and printer cartridges.

"Introducing Syllabus 4 in the Gulf States as the official ICDL syllabus is a major part of our effort to consolidate ICDL training and testing as a standard for IT proficiency certification in the region," said Ezzo. "To be able to launch ICDL Syllabus 4 in our region, we had to ensure availability of appropriate training and testing material and not only in English, but more importantly in Arabic. We have been working closely with several international vendors for over a year to be ready with their products in time with our launch of ICDL Syllabus 4 in the GCC region. Over the coming months, ICDL GCC Foundation will put into effect a transition plan which will enable our ICDL accredited training and testing centres to introduce the new syllabus and service ICDL candidates in an organized manner."

Candidates who are currently undergoing ICDL training based on Syllabus 3 will need to complete their certification exams in the same syllabus before May 31, 2005. New training based on Syllabus 3 will discontinue as of January 1st 2005, and accredited training centres will start delivering ICDL training based on the new syllabus. ICDL certification based on Syllabus 3 will still be valid and recognized by international organizations and academic institutions around the world. ICDL Syllabus 3 certificate holders are not required to upgrade their certification to Syllabus 4.

ICDL GCC Foundation, with the support of its international vendor partners, is participating in this year's Gitex and will use its presence to highlight to visitors the overwhelming success of the ICDL program in the GCC countries and the latest developments within the ICDL program. ICDL GCC Foundation entered into significant partnerships with several GCC academic institutions, education ministries, and other government and semi-government organization to implement ICDL as a benchmark for IT proficiency. Organisations such as the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT) in Saudi Arabia, Oman Ministry of National Economy, Dubai e-Government, Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations (ADCO), Abu Dhabi Water & Electricity

Authority (ADWEA), UAE Air Force and Air Defence, Emirates Post, are among the long list of organizations who adopted the ICDL program.

Six leading partners will be exhibiting at the ICDL GCC Foundation's stand showcasing a range of innovative ICDL approved training and testing solutions for ICDL Syllabus 4 in Arabic and English. The training material providers participating are Aston Swann, CIA Training, Element K and ReDSOFT. Aston Swann will showcase its Arabic and English ICDL Syllabus 4 courseware material that is designed specifically for educators, teaching them how to apply computers in their teaching regardless of their teaching domain. CIA Training is showcasing its ICDL Syllabus 4 training material. Element K will be demonstrating its latest online ICDL Syllabus 4 courses and will be displaying its matching courseware in Arabic and English. The Regional Centre for Development of Educational Software (ReDSOFT), the Kuwaiti local accreditation partner for ICDL, will be showcasing its Computer Based Training (CBT) material for ICDL Syllabus 4 in Arabic and English.

The two approved Automated Testing Software providers for the Gulf region will also be on the ICDL GCC Foundation stand at Gitex displaying their enhanced testing solution for ICDL Syllabus 4 in Arabic and English. Electric Paper will demonstrate its new approved Arabic and English test for ICDL Syllabus 4. NCC will demonstrate its testing solution software that is designed to provide a broader view of candidates' capabilities by using an output-based methodology assessing what was done rather than how it was done.

"ICDL certification has been incredibly successful in each of the six GCC member states, particularly with the education ministries and those ministries responsible for the implementation of e-Government," stated Ezzo. "We are currently working with each GCC member state independently. With this phenomenal endorsement to the program, it only makes sense that we consolidate this effort to ensure the adoption of a unified syllabus within the education system. Hence, we have invited senior officials and policymakers in the government from each individual GCC country as well as representative from the educational and economic development GCC organizations to visit the ICDL GCC Foundation stand at GITEK to discuss ways in which we can cooperate and consolidate the GCC member states efforts in spreading computer literacy at the government level as well as the society in general."