Oman Ministry of Education integrates the ICDL programs and makes it part of its computer teaching syllabus in public schools

Ministry urges all its teachers to acquire ICDL certification to enhance IT competency regardless of their teaching subject matter

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The Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman has unveiled its endorsement of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) program and its adoption in all its public schools effective this academic year, as a standard for upgrading the computer skills in the education sector across the Sultanate, following the success of the program in other parts of the Gulf region. ICDL has also made rapid strides in raising IT literacy all over the world.

This follows the signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Education and ICDL Oman. The agreement was signed by H.E. Yahya bin Saud El Sulaimi, Minister of Education, Sultanate of Oman, and Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation, the regional governing body and the operator of the ICDL program in the Gulf States. ICDL GCC Foundation recently opened its ICDL Oman office in Knowledge Oasis Muscat, as part of its overall strategy to establish local offices in each GCC member state for promoting IT literacy and providing local support to the ICDL program on the ground.

According to the recently signed agreement, the Ministry of Education will work in partnership with ICDL Oman to integrate the ICDL standards and syllabus in its teaching of computer to 11th grade students. As fist phase to this ambitious project that calls to making ICDL obtainable by all teachers and students, ICDL Oman will begin by initially accrediting 360 schools as ICDL approved training centers and 12 schools as ICDL approved testing centers. With this project aiming to train over 50,000 students annually, the Ministry is providing each 11th grade student with ICDL approved training material that includes courseware books and access to ICDL interactive courses. These courses are hosted on a Learning Management System (LMS) that will track the student's learning progress. The Ministry will also urge teachers to obtain the ICDL certification regardless of their subject matter.

H.E Mustafa Bin Ali Bin Abdullatif, Undersecretary for Administration and Finance, Ministry of Education, commented: "Providing students with the right tools to enhance their computer skills is a major priority for us and we seek to achieve this goal by adopting proven models, such as the ICDL program, which has attained global recognition as one of the most effective syllabus in this field. We are confident that our efforts in furthering IT literacy will accelerate our pace to reaching an eSociety."

The initiative is greatly supported by Oman's Ministry of National Economy, which is the apex body for enhancing IT competency in the government as well as the overall society in the Sultanate. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of National economy will work closely with ICDL Oman to put in place the necessary technological infrastructure and ensure that all the training and testing centers adhere to the international standards set by the ECDL Foundation and ICDL GCC Foundation. In addition, all government organisations in Oman are exerting tremendous efforts to providing egovernment service to its citizens.

"ICDL GCC Foundation has trained several people to support the implementation of this project. We are currently evaluating and certifying the centres that will provide ICDL training and testing through out the sultanate," said Ezzo.

"The growth and success of ICDL in the region has prompted us to work with the ICDL GCC Foundation to integrate the program proven syllabus and methodologies into our education system. We will work closely with the Foundation to adopt the ICDL program as part of our syllabus, adhering to the international quality standards set by the ECDL Foundation for training and testing around the world," added Mr. Bin Abdullatif.

"We consider the endorsement of the ICDL program by the Ministry of Education in Oman as a further enhancement to the value of ICDL as the most practical and cost-effective tool for upgrading computer skills not only on the education front, but also on the social level to bridge the digital gap," said Ezzo. "The ICDL program has become an integral part meeting the objective of national computer literacy programs set by governments around the world due to its flexible approach and its vendor neutrality. We are delighted to work with the Ministry of

Education and the Ministry of National Economy in Oman to provide access to all, aiming at enhancing education and improving quality of life," added Ezzo.

ICDL GCC Foundation is the governing body of ICDL program in the Gulf States and the regional arm of European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), the not-for-profit global governing body of the ICDL member countries dedicated to helping raise the basic computer competency in societies and providing access for all to the information society. The ICDL training program has achieved remarkable success in the Middle East since its introduction in 2001 by UNESCO Cairo Office. Currently, several education ministries and academic institutions in the region have adopted the ICDL training and testing within their organisations to enhance IT skills of their workforce.

The ICDL certification comes as part of the strategic plan followed by Ministry of National Economy to furthering computer literacy and providing all parts of society to benefit from the today's technologies and information access.