



## Press Release

### **College students in the GCC to benefit from ICDL Fund for Development Programmes**

***Qualifying academic institutions to offer subsidized ICDL Certification to their students***

September 19, 2011

University students across the GCC region are poised to benefit from subsidized ICDL training and certification following the broadening of scope of the ICDL Fund for Development Programmes (IFDP). ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and the certification authority of the International Computer Driving License program, is partnering with leading universities in the GCC to implement the funding programme, which will provide subsidies to academic ICT projects offering ICDL certification for students.

The IFDP initiative complements educational reforms that occupy a significant part in the national development strategies of the Gulf States. Governments across the GCC are striving to foster knowledge-based economies and prepare their young nationals for productive citizenship and employment. Serving those same objectives, ICDL is extending the IFDP program in partnership with leading academic institutions to benefit the student community with access to the high quality skills of the ICDL certification.

“The ICDL Fund for Development Program works similarly to educational grants and scholarship programs whereby we would offer qualifying academic institutions with co-funding in support of implementing ICT skills in their teaching program. There are two dimensions to our IFDP initiative. The first is to primarily widen the reach of digital awareness within the student population. The second is based on economic principles to make it affordable for the educational community to adopt an internationally recognized and credible ICT benchmark,” commented Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation. “

Kuwait University (Kuwait), Dhofar University (Oman), Ajman University (UAE) and Al Hosn University (Abu-Dhabi-UAE) are among the first universities to benefit their students from the program, offering them the opportunity to validate their computer skills with the internationally recognized ICDL certification at a special student rate.

Through IFDP, these universities can now offer an added value to their students, empowering them with the required IT skills to better integrate in a demanding job market, be more productive in today’s digital world, and maximize their employability in the globalised economy.

Supported by UNESCO-Iraq and UN-ESCWA, IFDP was initially launched in December 2007 to subsidize digital literacy projects in Iraq. More than 18,000 individuals from various social groups in developing or economically disadvantaged countries, including women, job seekers, people of special needs, retirees and students, as well as thousands of teachers in Iraq and Yemen, have already benefited from IFDP through various ICT projects.

Owing to its worldwide recognition and its vendor neutrality, over 22,000 renowned higher education institutions from around the world recognize ICDL as the de facto standard for

basic ICT skills and integrate its syllabus as part of their academic program, rewarding students who successfully complete the certification with up to four credits. With the extensive success that this program has achieved so far and its substantial merit in equipping individuals with priceless skills, ICDL has decided to further expand the scope of IFDP to include countries in the GCC and to extend its benefits to disadvantaged entities with limited funding. Binding it initially for the student community and expecting to soon extend to specific disadvantaged social groups, ICDL strives to maximize the role of IFDP in supporting socio-economic development.

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