



Press Release:



Women with Special Needs to Benefit from New ICDL and University of Sharjah Initiative

ICDL standards and relevant technologies to provide accessibility and IT certification

Dubai, UAE (12 March 2013) - ICDL GCC Foundation, an activist in digital skills, use and safety for-all and the sole operator of the ICDL certification program across the GCC and Iraq, joined forces with University of Sharjah to launch a new initiative to empower women with physical disabilities to learn ICT



skills. The program is being implemented by University of Sharjah with the aim of educating deaf and partially paralysed women from the “Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services”.

Through the initiative, the University of Sharjah and ICDL aim to raise awareness on the importance of people with special needs and their ability to live full and enriching lives as well as contributing to society. The two partners called for greater concentration and efforts from government entities and corporate citizens to facilitate the development of individuals with special needs so that they can pursue further education or employment opportunities and fulfil their ambitions.

Mrs Zainab Al Nuaimi – Manager of ICDL Academy Centre at the Continuing education centre in University of Sharjah said: "The cooperation between the University of Sharjah and Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services and ICDL came to translate our overall objective towards supporting the creation of a safe effective digital society, we continually work on the upgrading of our technical programs offered to cadres, where we want to reach to all segments of society with our IT Literacy programs, including people with special needs, which will build on the distinct and prominent and outstanding achievements of the University of Sharjah, and today we are reaping the first results of this excellent cooperation through the success rate achieved by women with special needs, which amounted to 90% passing rate in the first ICDL module test, it is indeed a clear distinction. "

Naimi also pointed to the clear role of ICDL by providing all ways that will support and assist those candidates by extra time in each test reached to 15 minutes, making the total time of the test 60 minutes instead of 45 minutes.

ICDL has been present in the region for more than a decade and has enrolled more than a million individuals in its programmes including women. It has, at the same time, been dedicated to cater to the needs of minority groups such as divorcees, jobseekers, retirees, and people with disabilities as they tend to be on the periphery of economic and welfare focus. This latest initiative will enable women with varying disabilities such as deafness and partial paralysis to gain valuable skills leveraging ICDL’s internationally recognized standards and quality standards. The specially adopted ICDL procedures and standards will cater to women with special needs by including additional hours of practice as well as test retakes and extended test period duration.



To further its cause in spreading digital skills for-all, ICDL is keen to apply best practices to assist special needs candidates in overcoming any barrier to become digitally skilled by integrating technologies and tactile writing systems that make ICT skills more accessible to this significant group.

Director General of ICDL GCC, Mr Jamil Ezzo commented “Our primary goal is to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of all GCC citizens through learning of essential ICT skills. Since the inception of ICDL, our philosophy was based on empowering people, all the people, with digital skills to improve their quality of life. This new and unique initiative with the University of Sharjah that involves women of special needs is an example of our renewed commitment to remain as an inclusive programme for-all irrespective of age, background, gender, and physical abilities. These women have as much potential as any other individual and deserve the opportunity to realize that potential. As we look to a brighter future, we call on others to join us and expand their reach so that one day every child and adult with special needs can access the learning and development he or she desires.”

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The International Computer Driving License (ICDL) concept is a global computer literacy initiative developed to raise the level of knowledge about Information Technology (IT) and increase the level of competence in using personal computers and common computer applications for all the citizens of the world. The ICDL GCC Foundation is the sole body to implement and disseminate the programmes across the GCC States and Iraq with the support of leading educational institutions and accredited bodies. The ICDL GCC Foundation mission is to enable proficient use of Information and Communications Technology that empowers individuals, organizations and society, through the development, promotion and delivery of quality certification programmes throughout the world.