



## Press Release

# **Lack of essential digital proficiency marked as major obstacle for job seekers in GCC**

*Ezzo: Being ready for today's job market requires more than knowledge in Internet, email and common office applications*

April 22, 2014

On the sidelines of Career UAE 2014 – a leading recruitment, training and education exhibition, ICDL GCC Foundation, an organisation dedicated to promoting digital skills and cyber safety for-all across the Gulf region, has announced that fresh university graduates in the GCC are likely to face stiff challenges in securing good employment opportunities due to their lack of readiness with the essential ICT skills required by today's job market. ICDL further stated that this is due to technology progressing much faster than education, and hence, our region's education system falls short of providing students with the relevant skills needed in the 21st century workplace.

In a world where even job seeking is increasingly changing, a job seeker must possess the skills to leverage ICT in the job search. A job seeker must be able to use the available online search tools, upload a CV on the various job portals, and utilize the popular social media platforms. According to a digital literacy survey provided in 2013 Prince's Trust Report, one in 10 unemployed young individuals cannot even send their CV online, while more than one in six believe they would be in work today if they had better computer skills. With this alarming problem facing the world's job seekers, let alone our own, the education system must prepare teachers to deliver the needed skills to students and must incorporate practical ICT training in the curricula before students graduate.

Major changes in ICT are happening and happening too fast, evidenced by the introduction of technologies relevant to cloud computing, cyber safety, IT security, social media, collaboration, and web meeting. Employers in the public and private sectors are pushing to leverage these technologies in order to become more cost-efficient and customer service oriented. These rapid changes have also brought about drastic shifts in the GCC's job landscape. According to the European Commission Digital Agenda, 90 per cent of jobs will need at least a reasonable level of ICT skills by 2015.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation, emphasised on the need of equipping the youth with the relevant ICT skills to ensure their readiness for today's workplace. He said: "Being ready for today's job market requires a bit more than knowledge in using the Internet, email and the common office applications. Employers are demanding ICT skills that are aligned with the latest technologies, they are employing. The education system in the GCC must keep up with these technological developments and fully understand the region's job market demands to ensure that graduates are ready with the skills to be able to take the first step in their careers."

"ICDL GCC Foundation has been working in collaboration with qualification and educational regulators to implement various internationally recognized computer certification programs that help UAE Nationals to be skilled, re-skilled and up skilled in line with the latest international trends in ICT training and certification. As the UAE moves towards knowledge-based economy, it is imperative the Emiratis are trained with the latest digital skills for functional industry experience to give a boost to the policy of Emiratization" concluded Ezzo.

Driven by the emerging trends and latest technologies, ICDL has revealed recently a new structure for its ICT certification offering prospective employees as well as employers the flexibility, diversity and relevance to acquire the ICT skills they need. The New ICDL is currently being widely reviewed and accepted by schools around the world and particularly in the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain.

-ends-