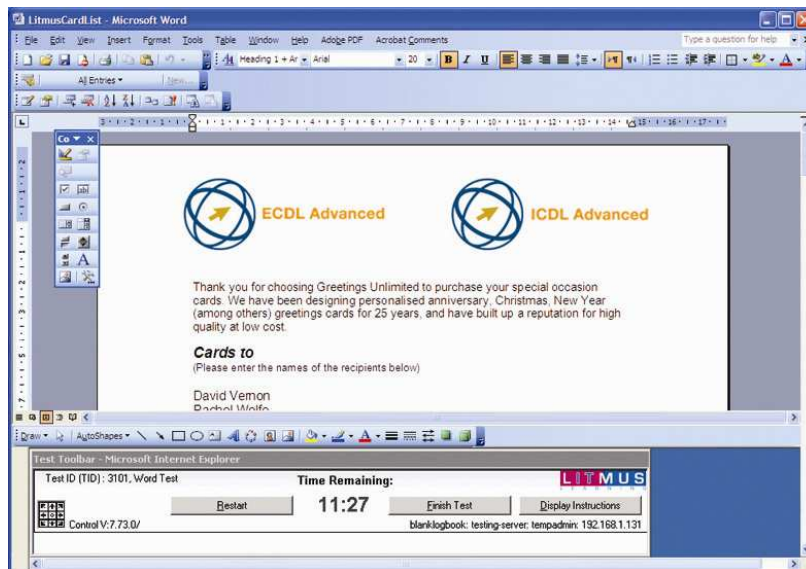


## ICDL GCC Foundation approves the rollout of ICDL Advanced Automated Testing in the region

Initial implementation is in partnership with select state-run universities

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) program in the Gulf States, has recently approved the first phase launch of Automated Testing for the ICDL Advanced program which has been designed to upgrade and certify the ICT qualification of common computer users. The new program, which targets the corporate and professional communities, is predicted to dramatically improve the human resource capital of organisations by enabling candidates to handle complex ICT tasks across four desktop applications.



The ICDL Advanced program builds on the huge success of the ICDL program in becoming the digital literacy standard; it currently has over 7 million candidates world-wide. ICDL Advanced is a high-level ICT proficiency programme designed for candidates that have successfully completed the ICDL certification and wish to further enhance their ICT qualification to meet the requirements of the competitive job market. Through an online in-application testing system, an ICDL Advanced candidate must demonstrate the ability to master the use of each of the four modules which include word processing, spreadsheets, database and/or presentation. Unlike the ICDL Core where a candidate receives a certification upon successfully completing 7 modules, ICDL Advanced requires a candidate to pass a test for each module, awarding a certificate upon the successful completion of each module. A candidate that holds an ICDL Core certificate who also successfully completes all four ICDL Advanced modules will be then eligible for the ICDL Expert Certificate which demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and skill level in computer applications.

"ICDL Core has established itself as an essential job pre-requisite by employers in the public and private sectors across the region as it provides evidence that an existing employee or a potential job candidate possesses the basic qualifications to use a computer and the common desktop applications. The ICDL Advanced certification was developed in response to a growing need expressed by employers and individuals to certify competence skills at expert level. The ICDL Advanced program allows organizations to benefit from productivity and efficiency advantages leveraged through effective use of IT, and offers candidates a new level of international computer skills certification to aspire to," said Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation.

The skills covered in ICDL Advanced include more in depth and complex tasks and dealing with more extensive functionalities in desktop applications. For instance, in the Word Processing Module, a candidate is required to produce advanced word processing outputs illustrating sophisticated typographical, formatting and layout presentations, including tables, forms or graphics, use tools such as macros and carry out advanced mail-merge operations; and in the Spreadsheets Module, a candidate has to be able and in depth to edit and enhance numeric, text and graphical data and to sort, query and link data. Candidates should also be prepared to carry out advanced formatting and presentation operations, use available analysis and audit tools and run and record simple macros.

The syllabus content as well as the Questions and Test Base (MTB) of the ICDL Advanced program have been developed by the ECDL Foundation and expert working groups comprised of professionals with wide-ranging specialist IT skills. The automated testing is an online system developed by Litmus Learning based on the ECDL Foundation syllabus and MTB, incorporating randomized practical exercises covering wide areas of knowledge, skills sets and task items. ICDL GCC Foundation is rolling out the ICDL Advanced automated testing initially through a pilot project that includes 400 exams by candidates in 4 GCC countries. The pilot will run in cooperation with existing partner universities from the region which includes Sultan Qabous University-Oman, Zayed University, Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE University, University of Dubai, UAE Academy, College of the North Atlantic- Qatar, and Sultan Qaboos University.

The ICDL Advanced program will be available for public participation in September this year where select universities and organizations will be approved to provide instructor-led training and online testing consistent with the unified global standard as approved by the ECDL Foundation.

The ICDL program is widely available and its syllabus covers the key concepts of computing and its practical applications, designed to provide a solid foundation of computer skills to enable people to confidently use computers. The Foundation was created to manage the implementation of ICDL in the Gulf region and has since contributed to the spread of digital literacy by working directly with government organisations and policymakers in GCC Member States.