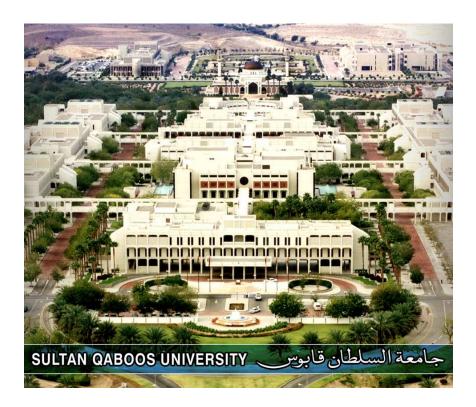**<u>Press Release:</u>**

ICDL applauds Sultan Qaboos University for spreading digital literacy in Oman and for complying with its global standards

Over 800 government employees completed their ICDL certification through SQU

24 June 2007

ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) program in the Gulf region, has praised the effort of Sultan Qaboos University in the promulgation of digital literacy in the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of over 800 candidates completing their ICDL certification.

The Sultan Qaboos University's Centre for Community Service and Continuing Education had endorsed the ICDL standard in 2005 and launched the program as part of its offering to enhance the community's computer competency. Since the commencement of the program, the Centre has successfully trained and tested candidates from various organizations in Oman's public and private sectors as well as individuals.

"The ICDL program at the Sultan Qaboos University's Centre for Community Service and Continuing Education has been very well received by employers, in the public and private sectors, We are delighted to have crossed the 800 candidate mark in such a short period, and we are expecting this number to increased to 1500 trainee by the end of the year. As we look forward to furthering our positive contribution to the community's digital literacy, we are also pleased to announce the expansion of our capacity to accommodate more trainee to meet the increasing demand for the program," said Mr. Rushed H. AL-Kiyumi, Centre for Community Service and Continuing Education Director at Sultan Qaboos University.

The very first batch for the ICDL program reached 176 candidates, and the number continued to increase, reaching 238 candidates in the 4th batch. In total, the centre has now trained and tested over 800 candidates from various organizations in public and private sectors .in Oman .

"SQU and ICDL Foundation have a common goal - provide digital literacy to all members of society. Since our partnership, we have come a long way in realizing the spread of digital literacy in Oman. Today, we consider SQU as an exemplary partner in bridging the digital divide not only at the local level but at the regional level. We take this opportunity to congratulate Sultan Qaboos Centre for Community Service and Continuing Education on its achievements thus far and express our appreciation for advocating the ICDL program as the digital literacy standard," noted Jamil Ezzo, Director, ICDL GCC Foundation.

ICDL GCC Foundation and SQU have been working closely on a number of other projects including public awareness on the benefits of digital literacy. SQU is also participating in a pilot that includes 400 candidates from 4 GCC countries to tryout the automated testing of the ICDL Advanced program prior to its full rollout in the region.

ICDL is an inclusive digital literacy program that empowers individuals with the essential concepts of IT and practical use of common desktop applications, providing a solid base of computer skills that enables people to confidently use computers in the workplace and at home. The ICDL syllabus offers a broader perspective on computers and its netiquettes by concentrating on the responsible use of computers and Internet, covering areas such as intellectual property rights, virus protection and recycling. Other key concepts include the use of lifestyle technology such as digital cameras, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) and third generation mobile devices. The ICDL certification is endorsed by governments and academic institutions worldwide as the global benchmark for computer competency..