

QATAR UNIVERSITY IMPLEMENTS DIGITAL LITERACY EXAM TO ASSESS INCOMING STUDENT COMPUTING SKILLS



"We believe no structure can stand up to the test of time without a proper foundation, and the IC³ exam ensures all Qatar University students begin their studies with a good knowledge of basic computer skills"

- Dr. Khalid Al Ali, Qatar University
Foundation Program Director

Partner: Certiport
Program: Certiport IC³
Market Sector: Higher Education
Sub-Sector: Undergraduate University

BACKGROUND:

The Qatar University Foundation Program (QUFP) was established in 2004 to provide incoming students with the necessary math, English and computer skills to bridge the high school experience with higher education at Qatar University. As part of the Foundation Program, the Computer Program at Qatar University includes non-credit courses made up of two levels of intensive computer instruction. Each level consists of an integrated skills curriculum, allowing students to enhance their skills in Microsoft® Office tools and basic keyboarding.

Qatar University implemented Certiport's Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³®) to assess the basic computer skills of all incoming students. All students are required to take the IC³ exam and the University analyzes the results to place students in Foundation Computing I, Foundation Computing II, or to exempt them from the requirement based on an exceptional exam score.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS:

- Strong relationship between Certiport and solution providers
- Qatar University validation of IC³
- Qatar University becomes an IC³ testing center
- Ability to position Certiport IC³ as fair assessment of basic computer skills

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Problem Assessment: Previously, Qatar University administered their own exam to determine student placement in the Foundation Computer courses. The exam was time consuming to design, administer and analyze. QUFP administrators determined that using an industry exam that met the same goals and measured the principles taught in the Computer Program was a better solution.

2. Research: Qatar University learned of various technical certifications through IT conferences and online searches. QUFP nominated a team of faculty members to examine all the certifications on the market and narrow the field to three international certifications known to meet their basic requirements.

3. Evaluation: Faculty members evaluated three exams based on the curriculum covered, the quality of the exam, use of the English language and how well it mea-



sured critical thinking. In addition, they considered the reputation of the certification in the industry and how well it could be customized for the QUFP. Faculty members completed the IC³ exam, and their feedback indicated the exam would provide a detailed measurement of student computer skills based on a detailed evaluation summary.

4. Visit: C4 Advanced Solutions, the Premier Certiport Solution Provider in the United Arab Emirates, and Chris Hatton, Middle East Channel Manager for Certiport, visited Qatar University as a critical first step in the partnership. QUFP Director Dr. Khalid Al Ali and his team discussed their requirements for administering the IC³ exam, security and pricing for the exam.

5. Approval: IC³ exam and support materials matched the Computer Program's curriculum perfectly. The QUFP determined Certiport's IC³ exam was the best choice to assess the basic computing skills of incoming students and they approved the administration of the exam in early 2008.

6. Implementation: C4 Advanced Solutions supported the QUFP by sending training materials and a specialist for the first administration of the IC³ exam. The specialist checked the software installation and other technical requirements required for the smooth administration of the exam.

RESULTS:

Since 2008, the QUFP has administered the IC³ exam to more than 9,000 students. Certiport's IC³ exam measures the principles of the Computer Program, and allows the QUFP to simplify the exam administration and process results quickly with an online format.

"Any educational institution with large number of students can use the IC³ exam to accurately and rapidly determine the level of students in basic computer skills," said Dr. Khalid Al Ali.

