

## Registration and licensing of teachers and leaders is key to reform



Teacher excellence is a crucial element of Qatar's K-12 education reform. Having accomplished and qualified teachers and school leaders will ensure that the students are equipped with the right skills to be able to compete in the 21st Century workplace. This year, the Evaluation Institute of the Supreme Education Council (SEC) launched the Qatar Office of Registration, Licensing and Accreditation (QORLA) of Independent School Teachers and Leaders to enhance and support teachers when they enter the field and throughout their career. The program also helps independent school leaders and staff attain the skills necessary to run and coordinate extraordinary schools. It is expected that by the end 2010, all independent schools from Cohorts 1 to 4 will be part of QORLA.

The Evaluation Institute Assistant Director Dr. Hamda Al-Sulaiti explains that the process of registering independent school leaders and teachers provides an objective system to monitor and assess the quality of our school and classroom leaders.

"The program provides leaders and teachers with licenses and accreditation in accordance with the worldwide standards. It is one more way Qatar's educational reform effort supports the country's ambitious social development objectives," she said.

Education for New Era, now in its sixth year, is built on the principle of accountability and objective measurement. One such program is The National Professional Standards for Teachers and Leaders of independent schools. Announced in August 2006, the National Professional Standards create a benchmark for teaching excellence. They provide details of the skills and knowledge necessary for schoolteachers and leaders to

acquire as they develop their careers in the independent schools. QORLA is responsible for issuing licenses to teachers and leaders who meet the National Professional Standards that have been set by the Education Institute.

QORLA Director Noor Al Huda Al Rashid says, "The ultimate purpose of the QORLA licensing and accreditation is to foster excellence in the classroom, and then expand it to our entire society, making Qatar an even better place to live and work."

### A Three-Year Process

The three-year registration process spans three levels - entry, professional, and advanced license. These levels are granted in accordance with the standards achieved by teachers and leaders through the demonstration of their understanding of the National Professional Standards. Each teacher or school leader is granted a license based on their level of proficiency.



In addition to teachers (including those who head Kindergarten and Special Education classrooms), the program also certifies staff in independent schools. These staff members are an important part of the school community and include kindergarten coordinators, subject coordinators in all primary schools, and coordinators of English, Arabic, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Islamic Studies and sports in preparatory and secondary schools. Coordinators of students with learning difficulties as well as social workers are also part of this group. Kindergarten and primary school teachers will also be certified. School leaders include principals and managers in academic and administrative complexes as well as librarians and coordinators of all subjects – both mandatory and optional.

### Registration is Underway

The first step in the process is registration beginning this school year. Schools leaders of Cohorts 1 to 5 are registering as well as independent schools teachers of cohort five and new teachers in Cohorts 1 through 4. Leaders of non-independent schools will be part of the registration and licensing process over the next few years as well.. .

The registration process begins when teachers and leaders complete a form requesting their updated data and information. A subject coordinator, academic or administrative deputy or direct supervisor then signs the form.



The school principal does final verification of data. The licensing process starts in the school where teachers will have the opportunity to demonstrate their improved teaching methods and practices. The process ends at QORLA where officials grant each license.

Although it is expected that three years is an adequate timeframe to attain the highest skill level, there may be circumstances in which teachers need additional time to demonstrate their abilities. In such situations, teachers will be allowed to go beyond the time limit to showcase their growth and capabilities. This also applies to leaders.

If a teacher moves to a different independent school, he/she maintains his or her license as long as the teacher demonstrates the appropriate competencies.

### Current Status

All forms have been distributed to the Cohort 1 to 5 independent schools. The forms must be completed by the end of November 2008.

In addition to information booklets that are available at the schools, in-person visits can be arranged in order to address any questions.

