

## **The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation For Education Launches its Open Learning Scholars Program with a Collaboration To Break The Barriers of Open Learning Across The Globe**

The first collaboration of this program is with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

**Dubai, UAE – 17th May, 2016:** The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, one of the largest privately funded philanthropic education initiatives in the world, today announced the launch of its Al Ghurair Open Learning Scholars Program. This program is the first of its kind in the Arab world. This program will make some of the best STEM education in the world available to Arab youth through innovative online and blended learning (a combination of face-to-face and online) accredited degrees programs and recognized credentials.

The Al Ghurair Open Learning Scholars Program allows high-achieving Arab youth to study STEM online. The program is designed to give youth who may not be able to travel or forgo their current employment the chance to access high quality education from anywhere within the world.

Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, Chairman of the Board of Trustees said, “the program will not only allow them to upgrade their skills while living in the region, but it will also improve their job prospects in a rapidly changing and globally competitive marketplace.”

The first collaboration of this program is with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the world’s top ranked university, in the QS world ranking and a leader in open learning, to fund the development of two new programs as part of a new form of credential known as the MicroMaster’s. The Foundation will soon be announcing other collaborations with leading universities that are at the cutting edge of open learning.

MIT and the Foundation believe education is critical to solving the world’s greatest challenges and fostering sustainable development.

"The new MicroMaster’s is an innovative and important next step in MIT’s engagement with learners worldwide. Through modular offerings and credentials for the digital age, as well as through blending online and on-site pathways, it offers new opportunities for lifelong-learning," said Sanjay Sarma, Vice President for Open Learning at MIT.

This new program will offer a flexible professional credential that can be gained online and is available to all youth in the Arab world and beyond as long as they have the ambition and self-discipline to succeed. The first of two MicroMaster’s credential offered in the program will be in the area of Data Science and Management and will be directed towards training statistics-enabled professionals to better understand the ever-increasing complexity of

today's global challenges. The focus of the second MicroMaster's will be determined jointly and will have a strong foundation and emphasis on science, technology, engineering, mathematics and systems.

Participants in a MicroMaster's program must complete five individual online courses to earn an MITx credential. Students can then apply to complete a Master's at MIT or another university or seek highly competitive employment opportunities in reputable companies across the region and the world.

"We are extremely proud to announce this innovative scholarship program and to kick-start it with MIT," said Maysa Jalbout, CEO of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education. "We want to break the boundaries that students face in accessing high-quality higher education and believe that the Arab region must embrace new technology-based models of education or risk falling further behind the rest of the world."

Professor Eric Grimson, Chancellor for Academic Advancement at MIT, said, "MIT is delighted to collaborate with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education in pursuit of our shared mission to make high-quality educational opportunities available to talented, motivated learners throughout the region and the world."

The signing ceremony and press conference were held in the presence of Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, Maysa Jalbout, and Eric Grimson.

The launch of the Al Ghurair Open Learning Scholars Program has been lauded by government and business leaders in the Arab world. Commenting on the program, Mohammad Al Gergawi, UAE Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the Future, said, "With this innovative online initiative, the Al Ghurair Foundation for Education is setting the highest standards for institutional philanthropy and investment in new models of education in the UAE and the Arab region. This program not only brings educational opportunities to young people in the UAE, but reaches across the wider Arab World and we are keen to see the ongoing development and expansion of this and other regional online learning initiatives."

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education is focused on providing access to high-quality education for high-achieving, underserved Arab youth who excel in the fields of science and technology and are committed to giving back to their community and the Arab world.

**ENDS**

### **Notes To Editor**

Founded by Abdulla Ahmad Al Ghurair in July 2015, the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education provides high-achieving, underserved Emirati and Arab



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Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

youth with unrivalled educational opportunities. The Foundation's board of trustees is chaired by His Excellency Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair; Abdulla Ahmad Al Ghurair's son.

The Foundation's primary focus is to create opportunities for at least 15,000 promising Arab youth from underprivileged backgrounds and help them prepare for university, work and life. With an initial budget of AED 4.2 billion over the next 10 years, the Foundation will award scholarships based on a highly competitive process.

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education aims to empower the youth of today to write a new Arab story by designing education programs that are tailored to the needs of the younger generations and the needs of the regional and global labor market.

For more information about the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education please visit: [www.alghurairfoundation.org](http://www.alghurairfoundation.org).

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