

## SEC teacher training process launched

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### Staff Reporter

THE Education Institute of the Supreme Education Council (SEC) yesterday began recruiting candidates to participate in a new programme to train individuals interested in serving as primary school teachers.

The programme is the result of a partnership between the SEC, the University of Qatar, and Texas A&M University, US, to provide high quality teacher training as part of Qatar's comprehensive education reform effort, a release issued by the Education Institute said.

A service of the SEC's Teacher Preparation and Certification Programme, the training consists of two phases - intensive English language training and teacher preparation training.

Applicants must first complete the six-month English language course. This portion begins in February followed by the 10-month teacher preparation phase beginning in August.

Successful candidates will graduate in May 2005 and receive a diploma from the University of Qatar and a certificate from Texas A&M University, US, the release said.

"The training is an essential part of our effort to build a highly skilled teaching staff for the new Independent Schools," said Sabah al-Haidoos, acting director of the Education Institute.

"It also contributes to our goal of Qatarisation, providing an opportunity for Qataris to pursue a teaching career while making an important contribution to the reform effort," al-Haidoos pointed out.

The training is open to individuals with a Bachelor's degree (especially recent graduates), current teachers who have been working for five years or less, and individuals currently working in other careers who are interested in becoming a teacher.

More information and the application form are available on the SEC website [www.education.gov.qa](http://www.education.gov.qa)

All applications must be received by November 30, and candidates accepted into the training will be notified on December 20. Preference will be given to Qataris.

The Supreme Council was established by an Emiri decree in 2002. It serves as the primary authority on education policy in Qatar and, with its three institutes, is leading the effort to transform the nation's schools into a modern, world-class education system.

Education Institute director Dr Eiman al-Ansari said the institute's intent was to prepare individuals to teach at the Independent Schools.

"In doing so, we also aim to raise the standards for the teaching profession in Qatar," Dr Eiman said.

"The programme is closely aligned with the nation's comprehensive education reform effort and in fact is an important element of reform. We need highly trained and skilled teachers in order to improve student learning and enhance achievement. Our task has great importance to the future of Qatar - we are strengthening our education system to better prepare the next generation of Qatari leaders in government, industry and academia," Dr Eiman pointed out.

Last May the institute's first class of 68 students graduated.

Most of them are now working in the new Independent Schools that were opened in September. The one-year training was conducted by CfBT, a UK teachers' organisation, and graduates received a certificate of completion from the University of Southampton.

The next class will begin in February 2005 but the training will be slightly different.

The Education Institute recently formed a new partnership with the University of Qatar and Texas A&M University, US (TAMU) to provide specialised training for individuals who want to teach at the primary school level.

Currently, plans are made to launch training programmes for preparatory and/or secondary schoolteachers. One hundred candidates will be accepted.

The programme is essentially for 'pre-service' teachers, meaning individuals who have not yet begun teaching.

"We are especially interested in new college graduates but will also consider ministry and other teachers with less than five years of experience. The programme is also open to those who may be working in other fields but are interested in starting a new career in education. At a minimum, candidates must hold a Bachelor's degree and have basic English skills," Dr Eiman said.

In addition to greatly enhancing their skills, graduates of the programme will also be looked upon favourably by the new Independent Schools in terms of job placement for academic year 2005-06 and beyond.

Ultimately, the institute hopes to provide in-service training and other professional development opportunities for teachers in the Ministry of Education (MoE) schools, and plans are currently being developed in this area.

This is being viewed as a critical issue since most Independent School teachers will come from the Ministry of Education schools.

However, the initial focus will be on training teachers specifically for the Independent Schools because this is the immediate and growing need as more of these schools open each year.

The Independent Schools are designed to allow teachers to be creative and innovative in their approach to teaching, which is not something that has traditionally been encouraged.

"By providing new types of training for Independent School teachers, we hope to not only raise the level of teaching but also empower teachers to be creative and to seek ways to inspire children to want to learn.

"Because the purpose of the reform effort is to build our nation's capacity, our primary focus is on training Qatari nationals to fill the critical role of teachers and mentors to the next generation. However, qualified non-Qataris will also be admitted to the programme, subject to a maximum of five percent of the class strength," Dr Eiman said.

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