

## Mobile learning to impact the future of education in Qatar

**Doha, 25 December 2013:** A mobile learning application being developed by Qatar University (QU) is set to change the face of corporate technical training in Qatar's oil and gas sector.

The 'm-learning' project, which recently received an honourable mention from the International e-Learning Association, was awarded a three-year grant under Qatar National Research Fund's (QNRF) flagship National Priorities Research Program (NPRP). The research is underway in partnership with Canada's Athabasca University and is led by Dr Mohamed Ally from the same University.

According to Dr Mohammad Samaka, the co-lead researcher for the 'm-learning' project, the research, which is now in its second year, is the first of its kind to be used for professional training in Qatar and possibly the world's oil and gas sector.

"There is no history of mobile learning applications utilised to train employees in the work place in Qatar. This project is novel," said Dr Samaka. "During our most recent literature review, a hunt for existing applications yielded nothing, indicating that this could be the first mobile learning application under development in the oil and gas industry worldwide."

Testing of the 'm-learning' project was conducted on a pool of around 30 Qatari trainees located at five different Qatar Petroleum (QP) sites as a supplementary element to their on-going corporate training. The application is designed to help employees familiarise themselves with technical English language terms specific to the energy sector in order to enhance their professional communication.

"Mobile learning is an evolving style of education delivery and through 'm-learning' we are establishing instruction methods to suit professional training at the corporate level," informed Dr Samaka. "The innovative aspect of this project is the marriage of pedagogy and technology to develop an entire solution for QP's employee training needs."

'M-learning' uses a blended approach to deliver specialised content on mobile devices with unlimited access to the material, allowing learners to advance at their own pace and convenience.

"We are not looking to replace conventional classroom teaching," explains Dr Samaka. "'M-learning' complements face-to-face teaching by enhancing the educational experience through our developed interactive multimedia content, based on existing course material."

This QNRF-funded project is aligned with the Qatar National Vision 2030; it is a contribution to Qatar's advancement towards a knowledge-based economy by facilitating learning and knowledge dissemination. Although 'm-learning' is in the fine-tuning stages of further development and testing, Dr Samaka is confident the benefits of this tailor-made application could extend far beyond the oil and gas industry.

"We are currently testing 'm-learning' on QU's foundation level students learning English," he said. "I am sure once it is fully developed 'm-learning' can be deployed into other areas of society, at school or university level, due to the nature of its interchangeable and adaptable content."

**PRESS RELEASE**

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QNRF funds this project as part of its aim to develop a local culture to support research that will benefit Qatar, the region, and the world. The NPRP encourages international research collaboration with institutions in Qatar, as in the case of this grant. To learn more about QNRF-funded research or to participate in one of QNRF's programs visit: [www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org).

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### **About Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)**

Driven by the aim of fostering a culture of research in Qatar, Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) was established in 2006 to advance knowledge and education by acting as a support system for researchers. It is a centre within the Research & Development establishment at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

QNRF administers funding for original, competitively selected research and furthers collaborations within academia, the public, private, governmental and non-governmental sectors through effective, mutually beneficial partnerships. While QNRF actively seeks internationally recognised researchers, it is dedicated to funding research that meets the needs of Qatar. For more information, visit: [www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org)

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