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Bogus certs: Tertiary institutions not helping to check authenticity

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Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) Executive Director Shamsuddin Bardan says employers seldom receive any feedback when they want to check the authenticity of certificates.



PETALING JAYA: Tertiary institutions have been slammed for giving employers lukewarm response when asked to check on the authenticity of certificates before offering jobs to candidates.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) Executive Director Shamsuddin Bardan said a lot of employers wrote to local and foreign universities and colleges but seldom received any feedback.

“Ideally, employers should be checking with the university stated on the certificates.

“But many of them do not feel obliged to reply to employers from the private sector,” he said, adding that it could be one of the reasons why many Malaysians were still using bogus degrees to get jobs.

He said the reluctance in not giving the information needed had caused many employers not to check the authenticity of the potential candidates’ certificates.

Due to that, he proposed that companies sign a personal data agreement with the candidate to allow employers to do background checks.

He said at the moment, a job seeker can take action against the company under the Communications and Multimedia Ministry's Personal Data Protection Act.

He said employers are usually cautious when doing background checks on potential staff.

Shamsuddin said employers should not hire candidates who refuse to sign the waiver to allow employers to verify their resume information.

Former Universiti Malaya Vice-Chancellor Prof Ghauth Jasmon said those who produce bogus degrees should be jailed.

He said the practice of producing fake certificates was considered cheating, and it was "absolutely wrong and should be considered a criminal case".

"They should be jailed... It is becoming rampant," he told FMT.

He said such a situation was not considered unusual because there was a constant demand for such certificates.

He said the crime of bogus degrees should be treated the same as those claiming to have received the title of “Datuk” from Sulu to make their resume look good.

“People who are not trustworthy need to face justice,” he said.

He added there had also been cases of fake SPM certificates used by students to get admission into the university.

“When I was the VC in UM, there were cases of students sacked in the second year for producing fake SPM certs.”

He said it was easy to spot a fake SPM certificate as it would be darker and well printed when compared with the original ones.

Fake certificates are in demand in Malaysia. People who are desperate for jobs or better salaries have been buying them.

Checks by FMT showed some 10 million hits on Google on buying bogus certificates.

There was also a website advertising SPM certificates, diplomas and degrees, that could be ready in three days.

Prices range from a few hundreds to thousands of ringgit, depending on the “courses taken”.

Those found with fake certificates can be charged under Section 420 of the Penal Code (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property).

The punishment is imprisonment of between one and 10 years, with whipping and a fine imposed.