# Diploma Mills and Fraudulent Credentials

# Breaking the Chain of Trust



ETINED 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Session Prague - November 28<sup>th</sup> 2019 Jayne Rowley - Chief Executive





#### Prospects Hedd

- UK's HE national degree verification service
  - Authentication of UK degree-awarding bodies
  - Verification of individual candidate credentials
  - Integration with international student data repositories
  - Investigation and prevention of degree fraud
  - www.hedd.ac.uk





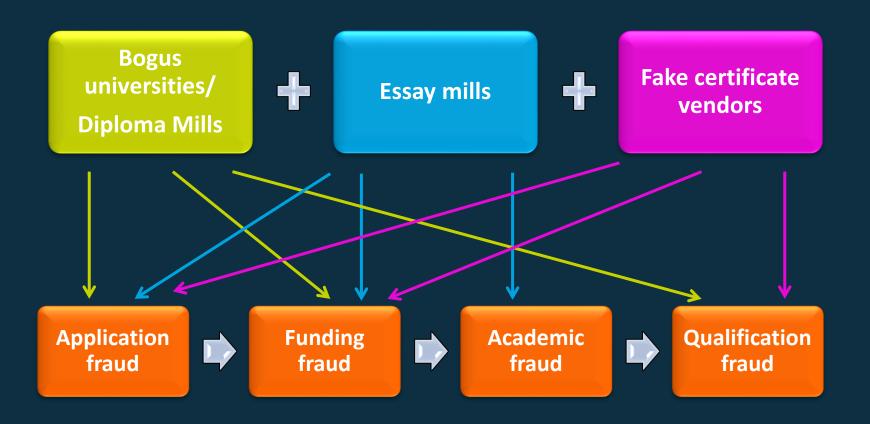
#### The Chain of Trust

- Trust is critical –
  Student/university/funders/employers
- University validity
- Prior learning claims
- Original, authentic academic work
- Entitlement to public financial support
- Legitimate qualifications for employment





# Breaking the Chain





#### Lies and statistics

Data gathered by the UK's Office for National Statistics reveal that, in the last three years, of 138,000 HR managers and directors in the UK 14% have dealt with at least five instances of employees not holding the certifications they claimed - the equivalent of about 100,000 job applicants. That number could be even higher if more employers made checks.



#### Fraudsters







40% of companies spent more than £10,000 in the last three years rehiring staff after employing someone who wasn't properly qualified.







#### Degree mills and bogus universities

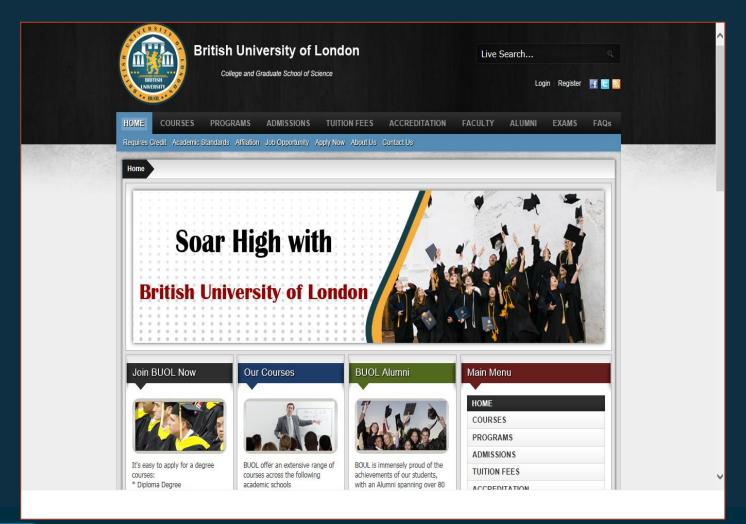
- Operate purely to make money
- Enrolment fees, course fees
- 'Life experience degree' awards
- Authentic-looking documentation
- Act as verification services for fraudsters
- Blackmail



Shoaib Shaikh (centre), disgraced CEO of Axact

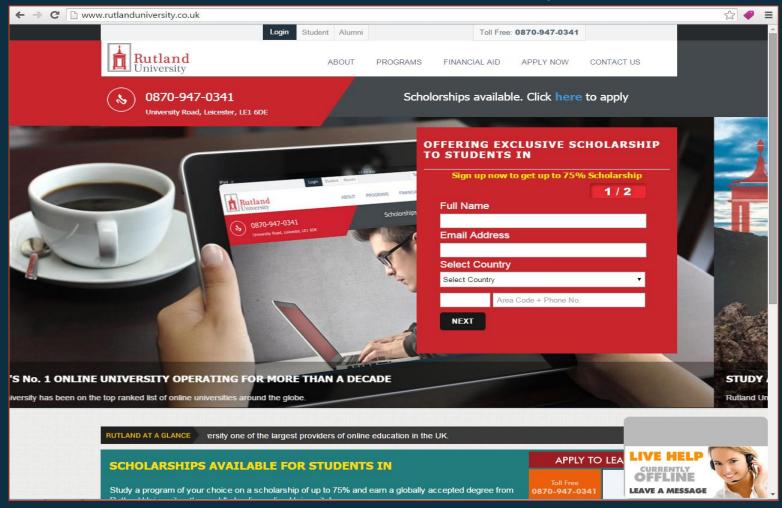


# 370 bogus university websites



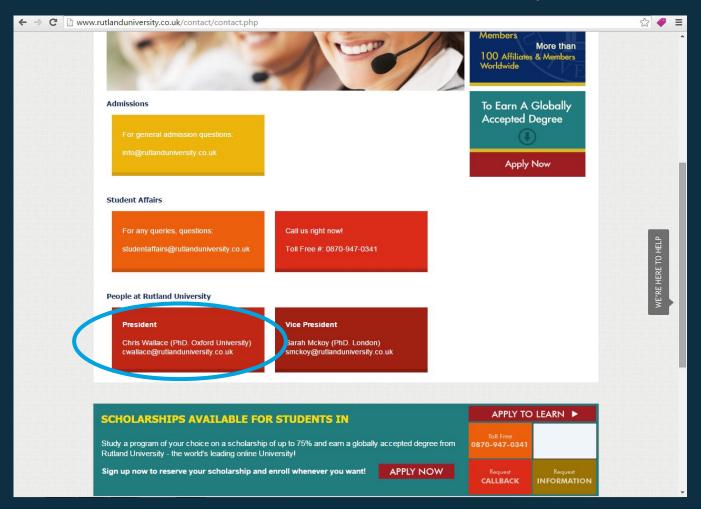


# Rutland University



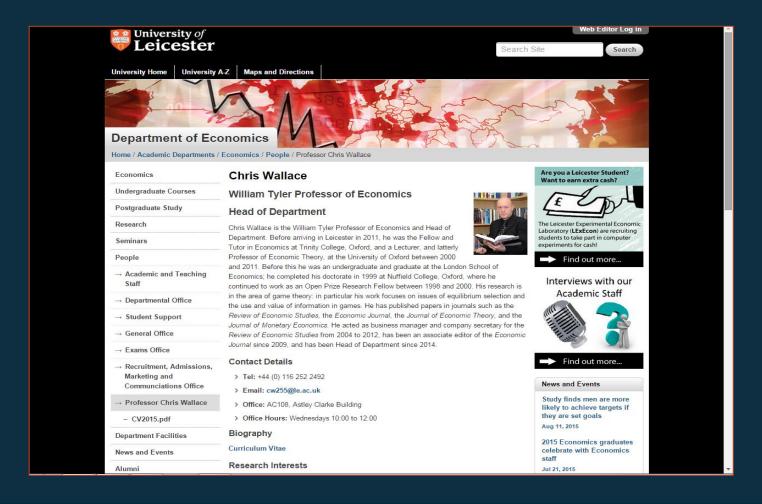


### Rutland University





#### University of Leicester





#### Canterbury University



hereby confers upon

the degree of

Associate of Business Administration

n

Computer Engineering

together with all the honours, privileges, rights and obligations thereunto appertaining in recognition of having fulfilled all requirements of this degree as determined by the Board of Regents and given on this Day under our Seal.

20th Day of March 1999

Dean of Studies

Charman of the Board of Regents

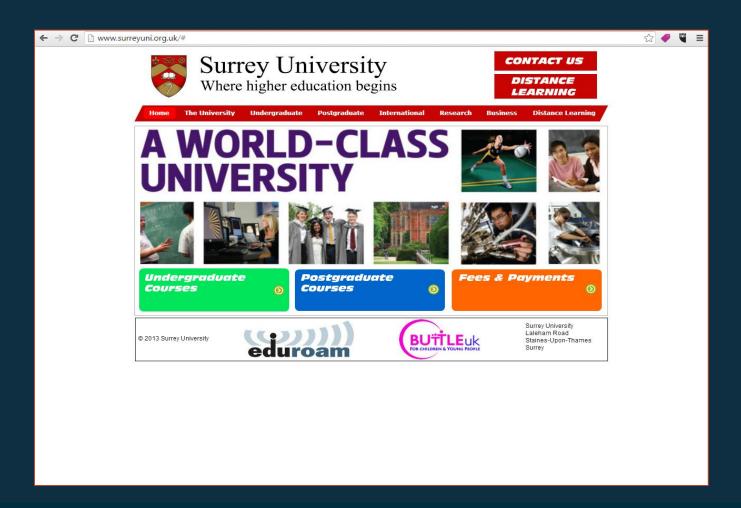


# Canterbury University campus



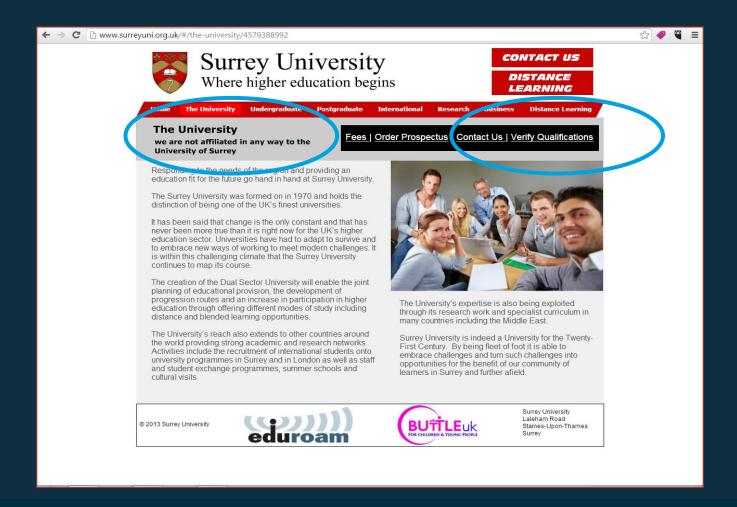


# Copycat websites





#### Surrey University





#### How does it work?



University of WOLVERHAMTON

This is to certify that

has been awarded

the degree of

Master of Business Administration

having followed an approved programme

Dated this 24th October 2008

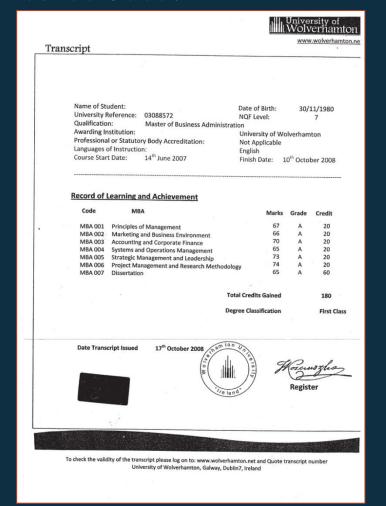
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University of WOLVERHAMTON

This is to certify that

has been awarded

the degree of

**Master of Business Administration** 

	University o Wolverhar
Transcript	www.wolverha
Name of Student:	Date of Birth: 30/11/1980
University Reference: 03088572	NQF Level: 7
Qualification: Master of Business Add	ministration
Awarding Institution:	University of Wolverhamton
Professional or Statutory Body Accreditation:	Not Applicable
Languages of Instruction:	English
Course Start Date: 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2007	Finish Date: 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2008
Record of Learning and Achievement	
Code MBA	Marks Grade Credit
MBA 001 Principles of Management	67 A 20

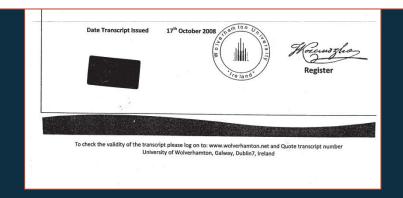
To check the validity of the transcript please log on to: www.wolverhamton.net and Quote transcript number University of Wolverhamton, Galway, Dublin7, Ireland





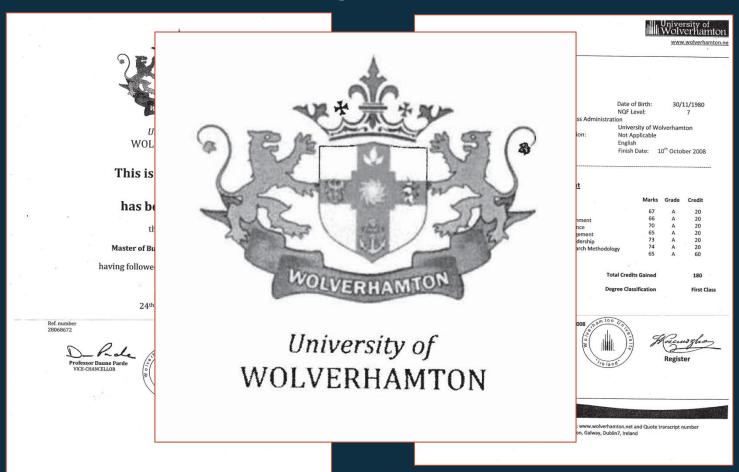
Kathleen A Sherlock HEAD OF REGESTRY







# Taking the 'P'





#### Spot the difference







Students' Union **Tuition Fees** & Scholarships for 2013

> Student Support Services to help you

**Key information** 

Site map | Contacts | Advanced search

SEARCH

Search



Why University of Wolverhampton?



#### **Facilities**

Campus life

At Wolverhampton, facts are delivered to your fingertips using the most advanced electronic systems. As well as printed and electronic information resources in Learning Centres, you will find a range of

What's it like to live on campus? Find out all about City campus, Telford campus and Walsall campus.

And get around for free with our shuttle bus linking each of our campuses and campus towns.

Living in the area

Student Charter

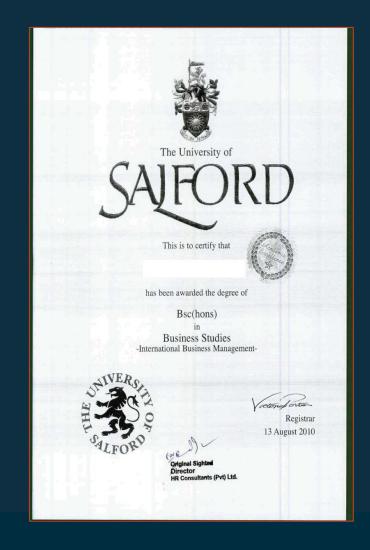
CONTACT US

Employability **HM Armed Forces** 

With sports facilities located on both Us and Ireland campuses

#### Fake certificates









#### THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

It is hereby certified that after having satisfied all the conditions prescribed by the University

was on the

sixth day of May, 2002

duly admitted to the degree of

Bachelor of Science with Honours in Computer Science and Information Technology in the Second Class, Division One



Vice-Chancellor





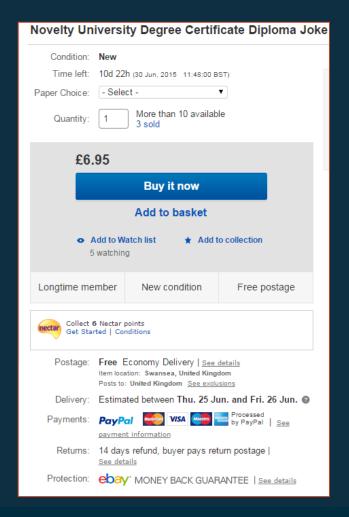
#### Twitter selfies

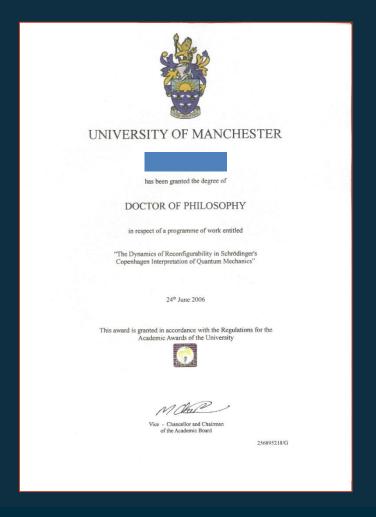






# The University of Ebay

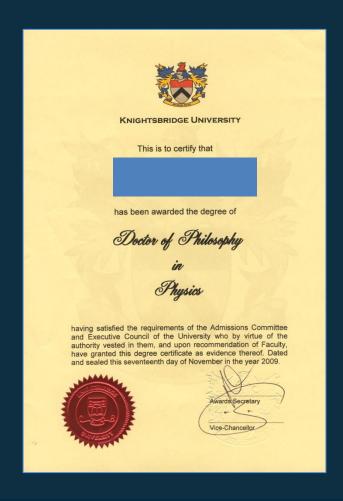






# DfE degree fraud reporting service

- Investigate and shut down bogus providers
- Collaborate with enforcement authorities
- Raise awareness of degree fraud
  - Universities
  - Employers
  - Students and graduates
- Encourage employers to make more checks





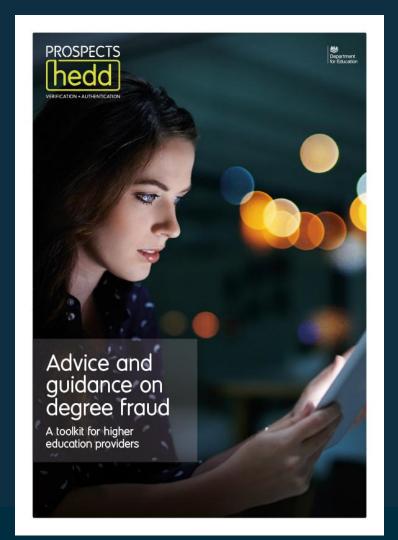
### DfE degree fraud reporting service

- 100+ bogus providers investigated
- 250+ bogus institutions now listed on Hedd
- -50+ websites shut down
- Ebay and Amazon commitment to ban listings
- Naming and shaming on the Hedd blog
- Network of enforcement contacts
- Toolkits for employers and universities published
- Advice for students published



### Advice for HE providers

- Types of degree fraud
- Case studies
- Recommendations for universities
- What action can be taken
- Who can help
- Templates





#### Degree fraud in the news



#### More than 30 fake UK universities closed by watchdog

Bogus degree-awarding institutions are on the increase, with one being no more than a shopfront and others having no physical presence at all



More than 30 fake UK universities have been shut down in the past year as concern grows about students being mis-sold fraudulent degrees.

University watchdog the Higher Education Degree Datacheck (Hedd), which monitors fake degrees, identified a total of 62 bogus institutions in the past year. So far, 32 have been closed by law enforcement and trading standards agencies, and 30 investigations are still in progress.

#### Websites selling fake Scottish degrees for £200

Scam leads to fears that small businesses could be tricked into employing people with bogus qualifications



Fake digress from Aberdeen are among those offered online



Fake degrees purporting to be from Scottish universities are being sold for as little as £200 online, offering students the prospect of well-paid jobs even if they flunk their courses.

Qualifications with the names and logos of some of the country's most prestigious higher education institutions, including Glasgow University, St Andrews, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, can all be easily obtained, a Sunday Times investigation has found.



#### Current initiatives

- Academic Integrity Advisory Group
  - Charter and Principles
  - Advice and Information Service
  - Legislation
- #banessaymills
- Ministerial priority
- Degree fraud service
- Groningen Declaration Network





#### Thank you

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- Read up: www.Heddblog.wordpress.com
- Follow Hedd on Twitter: @HEDD\_UK

