

Article:	Bogus Qualifications
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In recent years there has been an enormous increase in the availability of counterfeit and substandard university degrees. The trade in these 'fake degrees' is now proliferating on the internet, and occurs in every country, including Australia.

Many fake degrees are offered by 'degree mills' which are unaccredited and little more than shelf companies. Others are substantial operations which, however, do not provide legitimate education services and are not accredited in Australia or overseas.

Many 'degree mills' have well-designed websites with convincing course descriptions, staff lists and descriptions of graduation ceremonies. Degrees purchased from these sites can be indistinguishable from genuine degrees, with university crests, student numbers and official signatures.

There are also fake degrees which fraudulently purport to have been issued by a legitimate university.

A prospective student should always check the status of the institution they are considering enrolling in before paying any money. Never trust statements about accreditation until you have checked with the appropriate accreditation authority. In Queensland, this is the Office of Higher Education.

An employer, or professional licensing or registration body, should never accept photocopies of academic qualifications or transcripts. Insist on seeing the original documents or certified copies.

There are currently nine universities in Queensland. You can verify the status of any degree issued by a Queensland university by contacting the university directly. You may need the degree holder's written permission to obtain verification of their degree from the issuing university.

There are also a range of non-university providers and overseas institutions accredited or authorised to offer higher education degrees in Queensland.

For information on interstate universities and interstate non-university providers, refer to the AQF Register.
