

Article:	Want a degree from Oxford? That'll be £69.90: Man accused of selling hundreds of fake exam certificates
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A man has been accused of selling hundreds of fake exam certificates from as little as £39.95 including top class masters degrees from Oxford University.

David Fox, of Small Heath, Birmingham, sold fake certificates including health and safety qualifications and a degree from the prestigious university, a court heard.

A top grade masters certificate from Oxford University ordered from Fox cost £69.90 for a customer to buy, a jury was told.

Fox, 51, denied four counts of fraud at Birmingham Crown Court on Monday.

Mark Jackson, prosecuting, said Fox claimed his company Business Digest was producing 'novelty' certificates and that his customers were told this in a disclaimer.

But Mr Jackson said disclaimers were frequently followed with a semi-colon and bracket containing the words 'text speak for a wink'.

He said the city's trading standards began investigating Fox after the Post Office redirected a certificate from him to NEBOSH, the health and safety examining board it was said to be from.

An officer from the department posed as a customer and bought a grade A chemistry GCSE certificate awarded by Edexcel from Fox's website for £39.95.

When it arrived in the post the officer used the same false name of Christina McCulloch to order a 2:1 chemistry degree from the Open University and a top grade masters in chemistry from Oxford University, which cost £69.90.

Mr Jackson said: 'Students come out of colleges and universities these days owing tens of thousands of pounds.

'Fox and Business Digest were selling fake certificates for as little as £39.95.'

He added the investigation also recovered 'dozens' of signatures which related to specific colleges and universities and a similar number of crests.

'We say that the defendants must have known that Christina McCulloch might not have achieved a GCSE grade A in chemistry or been awarded a chemistry degree,' said Mr Jackson.

'Mr Fox certainly knew that the certificate he was producing couldn't have been certified by Edexcel or the Open University and we say he certainly knew that what he was putting on those certificates must have been misleading.'

Fox was interviewed on caution following a police search of the council maisonette he ran the business from in November 2009, said Mr Jackson.



'He maintained all the certificates were for novelty purposes and he pointed out the website had a disclaimer that certificates were novelty certificates,' added Mr Jackson.

'When asked how he had come up with the various designs he said it was a lot of intuition but he had been helped and guided by his customers.'

One of these customers ordered a BTEC as though it had been awarded from Edexcel in electrical electronic engineering, said Mr Jackson.

The customer even emailed Fox back to say 'the certificate looks excellent'.

Mr Jackson added: 'How funny would it be to prank your friends on the basis you had got a BTEC higher national certificate in electrical engineering do you wonder?'