

The Experience of the Swedish Enic-Naric in Dealing with Fraudulent Credentials: The Case of the Middle East with a Focus on Syria



Adnan Dautbegovic Samir Gabro



"Wherever there are exams, there is cheating. Wherever credentials are valued, there is fraud."

Noah, H.J. & Eckstein, M.A. (2001), Fraud and Education: The Worm in The Apple





Policy documents on fraud prevention at the Swedish Council for Higher Education

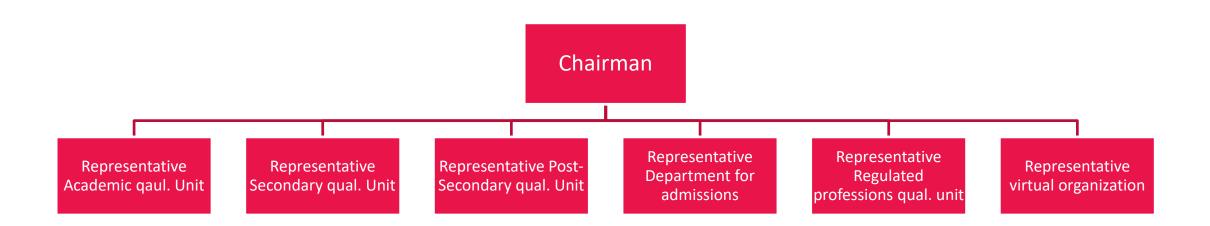
- Guidelines for handling suspected falsifications (2014-01-24) Signed by the Director General
- Manual for reviewing documents in the recognition procedure (2016-06-10)
- Internal procedure when fraud is detected and reported to the police (2017-11-13)
- Guidelines for reviewing secondary and academic qualifications from Syria (2018-06-12)







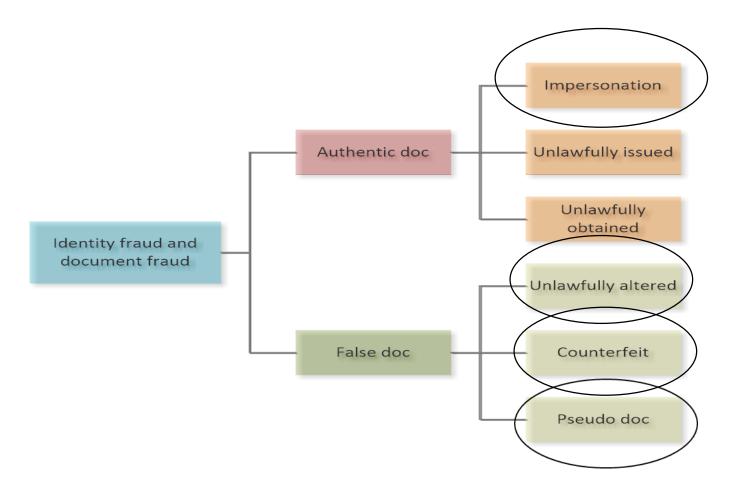
Organization of the anti-fraud squad at the Swedish Council for Higher Education







Types of falsifications



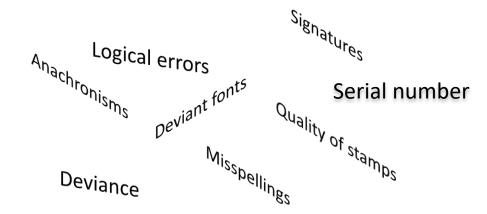
Source: PRADO* Glossary (Technical terms related to security features and to security documents in general) *PRADO (Public Register of Authentic travel and identity Documents Online)





Internal guidelines for reviewing documents

- What tools can be used to detect falsifications?
 - Official transcripts (E-transcripts)
 - Online verification services
 - Reference material
 - Computer software/ Software equipment
 - Discrepancies









Internal procedure when fraud is detected

Detected discrepancies/other errors in the documentation

Request for official documentation

Verification of the authenticity of the documentation

Consultation with Head of Unit

Report to the police

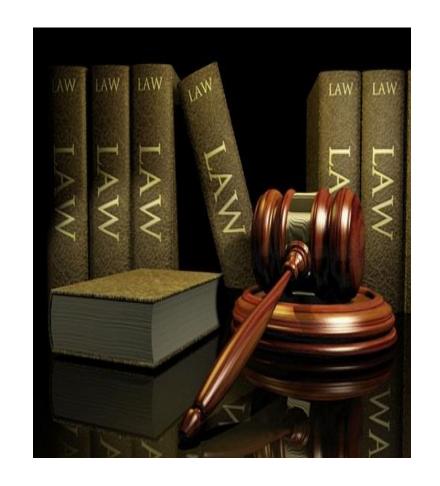




The Swedish Penal Code (Ds. 1999:36)

• Crimes of falsification is defined as followed in **Chapter 14, 1§ SPC**:

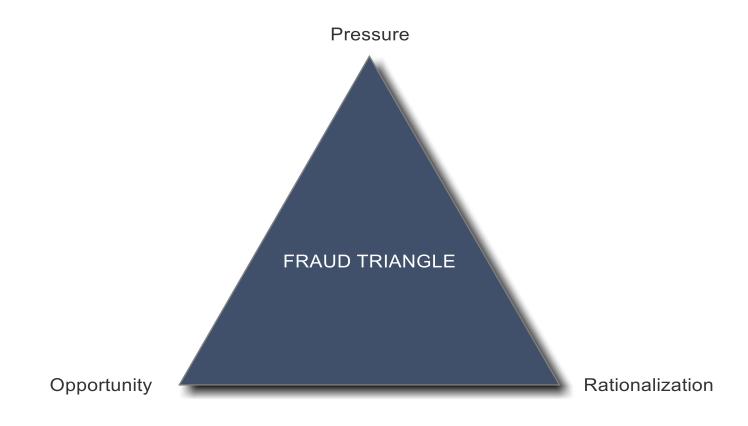
"A person who, by writing the name of another person, real or fictitious, or by deceit obtains another's signature or in other ways produces a false document or deceitfully alters or adds to a genuine document, shall, if the act jeopardises proof, be sentenced for falsification of a document to imprisonment for at most two years. A document is to be considered as including a protocol, contract, promissory note, certificate or other record established as evidence or otherwise important as evidence and also an identification card, ticket or similar evidential token."







The Fraud Triangle

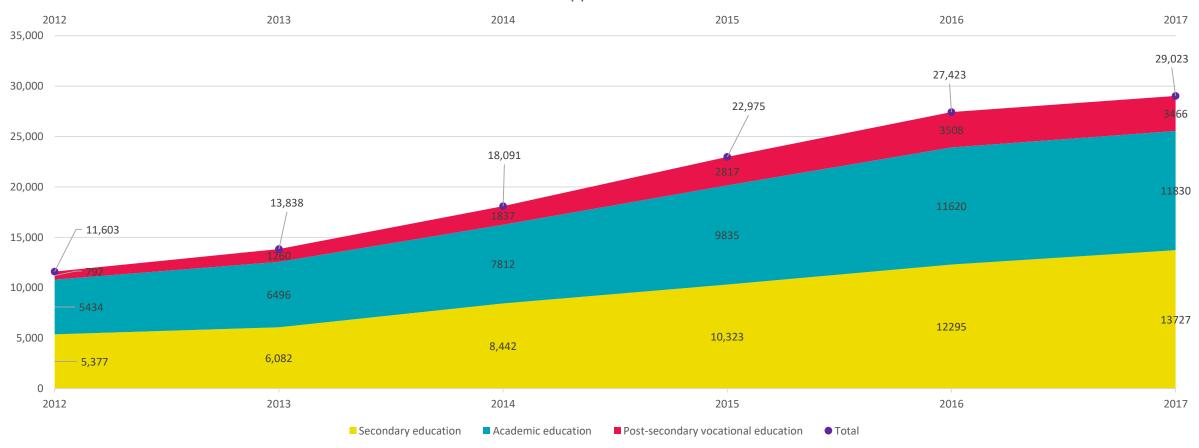






Number of applications 2012-2017

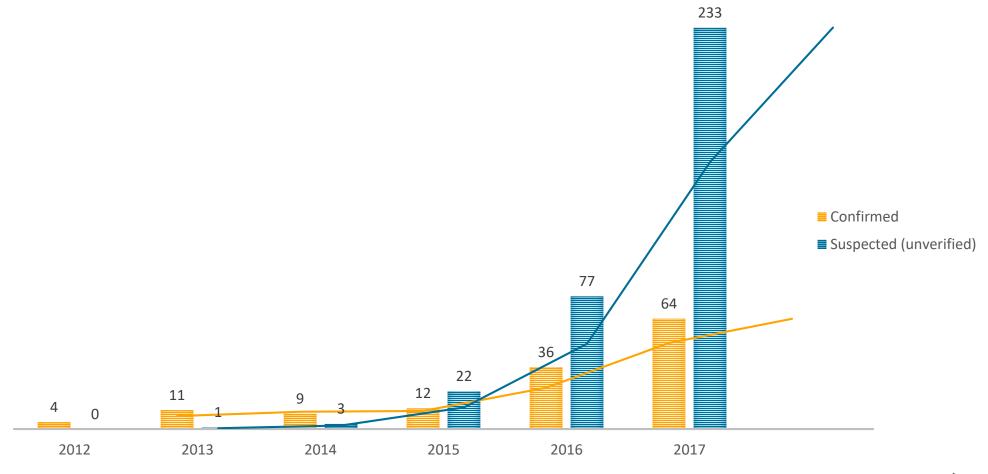
Number om applications 2012-2017







Number of fake degree detected (2012-2017)

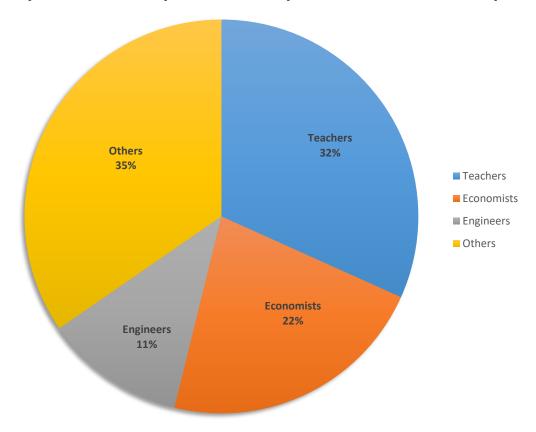






Statistics – Academic qualifications that are most attractive to falsify

Academic qualifications reported to the police 2008-2017 - Per qualification

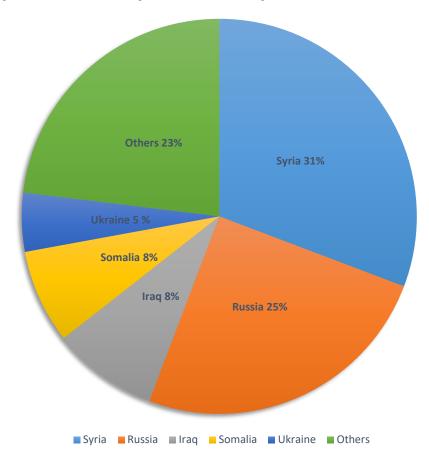






Statistics – Which countries are represented?

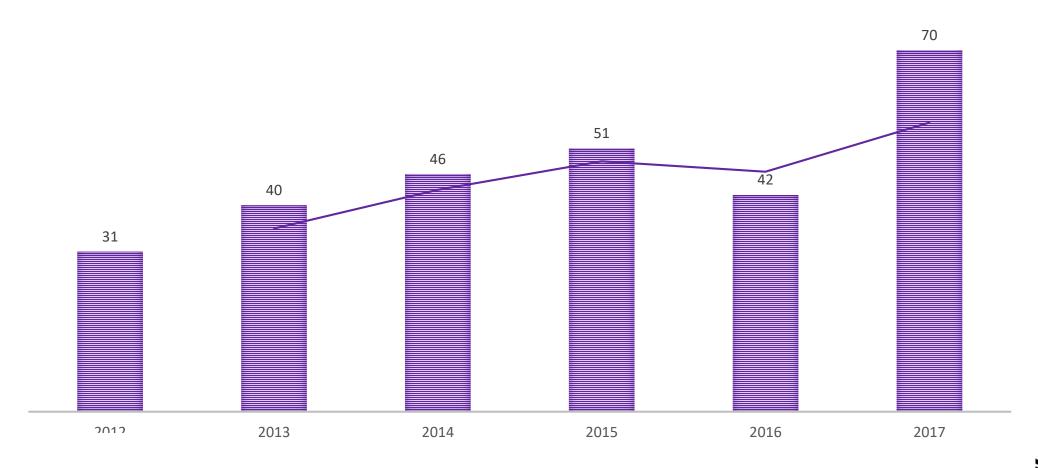
Academic qualifications reported to the police 2008-2017 – Per country







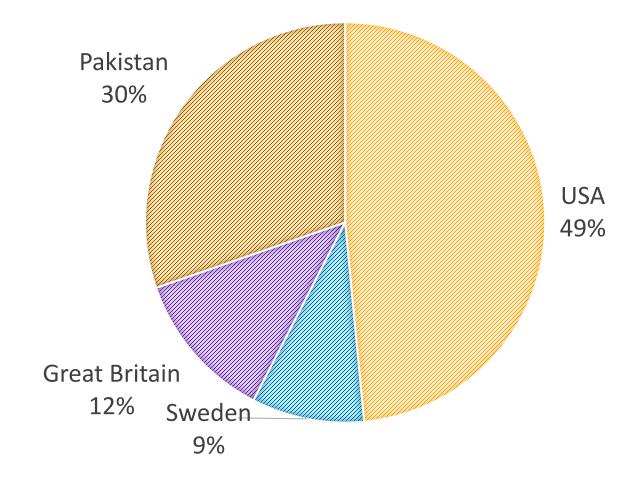
Number of dubious institutions – broad definition (including diploma mills)







Dubious institutions – Per country (statistics from 2017)





Methods for establishing a more efficient anti-fraud group

- Highlight the importance of the issue and spread the knowledge!
- Convince the employees of the gate keeping role of Higher Education. Fraud prevention is for the common good of the society!
- Establish key policy documents which facilitates the work of fraud prevention within your organization. (Policy documents signed by the Director General/ Head of Office signals the importance of the issue)
- Establish an internal organization specialized in fraud prevention.
- Assist and educate employees systematically in fraud prevention.
- Try to play down the judicial procedure and the contact with police authorities (when the case has turned into a police matter)
- Country specialization and language competence are important skills in fraud prevention.

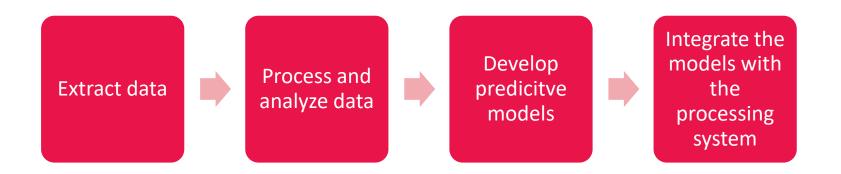


How can we work with prevention of fraud in the future?

Predictive analytics

"Predictive analytics is the process of using data analytics to make predictions based on data.

This process uses data along with analysis, statistics, and machine learning techniques to create a predictive model for forecasting future events."







Establish contact points with whistleblowers

- Who are potential whistleblowers within our sector?
- What information can they provide?
- How do we reach them?

Tools needed:

- Data privacy (ability to provide information anonymously)
- Secure communication link
- Ability to classify the information



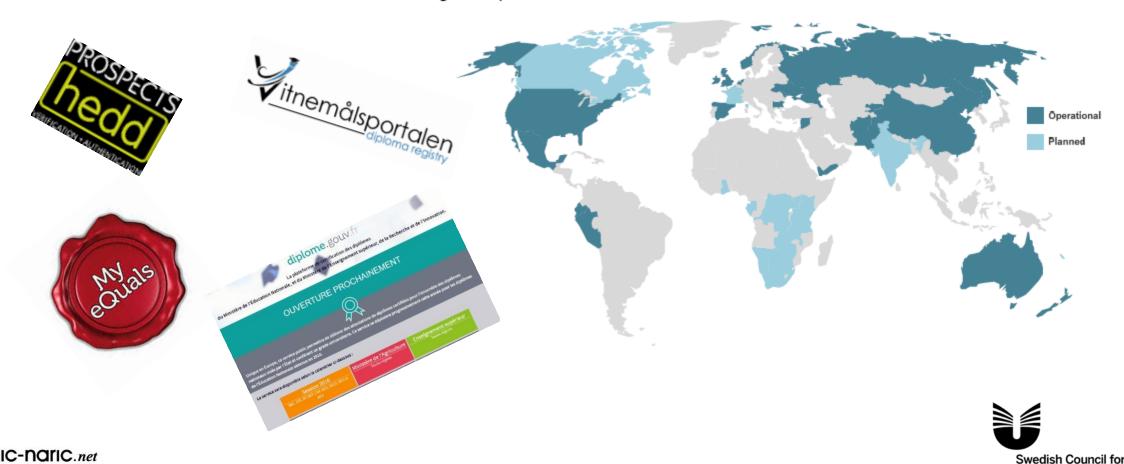




The Digital Era – An easier and more efficient way forward

• Verification services (My eQuals, Vitnemålsportalen, HEDD etc.)

Image 3: Map of online verification services.



The Digital Era – Continuation

- The Groningen Declaration
- EMREX
- Erasmus without papers Project



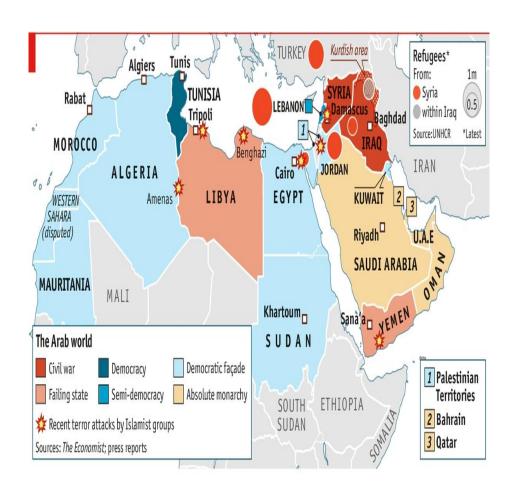






Fraud in the Middle East

- Arab uprising, 17 December 2010.
- Civil war and failing state in Libya.
- Two revolutions and instability in Egypt.
- Continuous instability situation in Iraq and the role of ISIS.
- Yemeni civil war and failing state.
- The bloodiest civil war in the 21st century in Syria.

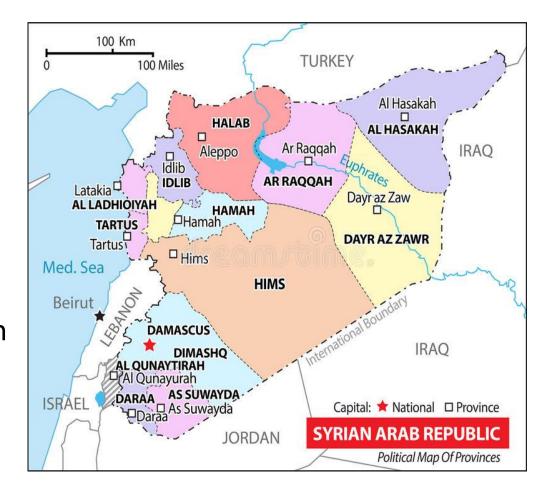






Syrian Arab Republic

- Capital: Damascus
- 18.2 million (23.2 million before the Syrian war)
- Languages: Arabic (official), English and French (second languages)
- A bloody civil war since March 2011. Around 5 million are refugees outside Syria and more than 500,000 had been killed.
- Main universities: University of Damascus, University of Aleppo, Al-Baath University, Tishreen University, Al-Furat University.2



2 Public universities in Syria: http://www.mohe.gov.sy/mohe/index.php?node=5510&cat=1712& Private universities in Syria: http://www.mohe.gov.sy/mohe/index.php?node=5510&cat=1717&





Marketing of fraudulent Syrian degrees on Facebook

- There are over 30 pages on Social Media mostly on Facebook.
- These pages are a platform for forgers advertising their services.
- Most forgers work in Turkey by using alias names like "Abu Youssef", "Abu Ahmad", etc.
- Titles of Facebook pages: "General services for Syrians", "Selling degrees for Syrians", "Syrian universities degrees", etc.



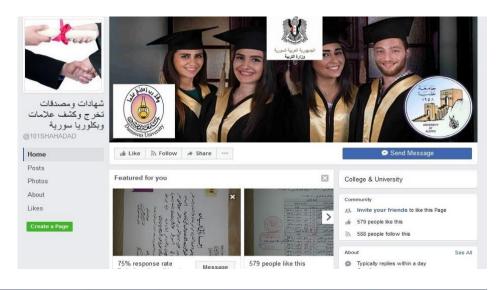




Facebook pages

- Forgers clarify that these certificates are not valid in Syria but can be valid in other countries.
- Forgers mentioned also that certificates which are issued by them are just ink on papers inside Syria with no official records at Syrian universities.
- There is also a market for selling Egyptian, Saudi, Jordanian, European and American degrees.







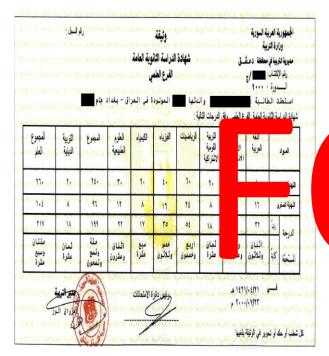




Advertisements on Facebook

Special offer!! For a limited time only!!

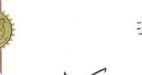
Buy degrees of Bachelor, Master, PhD and get a free General Secondary Education Certificate





عرض خاص!! لمدة محدودة!! اشتري شهادة بكالوريوس ماجستير دكتوراه واحصل على شهادة بكالوريا مجاناً





ر بجلين جامعة ومشق في ولساوي هشر من تكري لاثاني عام ولفيها الله وي ولا الله ولفيها الله وي الله ولفيها الله وي الله وي الله ولفيها الله وي ال

وزير (التعليم (العالي (الركتور فيأكن بركاك

رنبین جامعة ومشق والرکتور وارنگ معل هدير كلية (لهندرية (لمعلومانية محمول ودركتور همار خير بكر

جامعة ومشيق

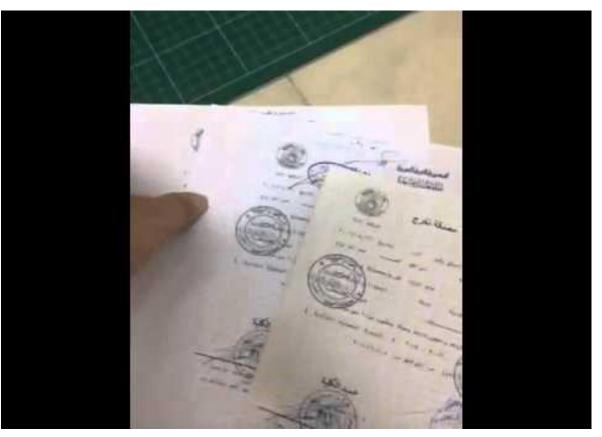




Marketing of fraudulent Syrian degrees on Twitter and YouTube

- "University degrees for sale."
- Weak markets compared to Facebook.







How forgers work (the case of Syria)

"Please note that I only sell fraudulent degrees and help those who were university students with the same field and not to those who have only general secondary education certificates because they could harm the society, Syrian citizens and Syria."





How forgers work (the case of Egypt)

How we make a fraudulent degree!

```
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته
                 النهاردة هانعمل شهادة جامعية ( بكالوريوس )
             بكالوريوس جامعة عين شمس وبكالوريوس جامعة حلوان
                                المتطلبات:
 ١. خبرة بالفوتوشوب ٢. طابعة ليزر ٣. وجود خامة الورق ( هانشوفها دلوقتي )
                ٤. خبرة بطباعة السلك سكرين (عشان الأختام)
            ٥. وطبعا يكون معانا أصل عشان الأمضاءات تكون مظبوطة
إن شاء الله هانزل دروس فوتوشوب وطباعة سلك السكرين قريب لأننا هانحتاجها كتير
        إحنا هانعمل الاتنين كتجربة وهانعملهم بصورة وأسم جوني ديب:)
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Materials

Many forgers explain that they don't issue any certificate using a computer printer because it would be exposed immediately but it would be like obtaining a certificate from a Syrian university when using live stamps and seals.











My own investigation on WhatsApp

Fake degrees

Me: I want a doctorate degree

Abu Ahmad: a doctorate in what?

Me: Whatever in management

Abu Ahmad: Business management is ok or general manazement.

Abu Ahmad: management*

Me: Business management

Abu Ahmad: done

Me: How to arrange this

Abu Ahmad: I want you to send me a copy of your ID card and a copy of.....

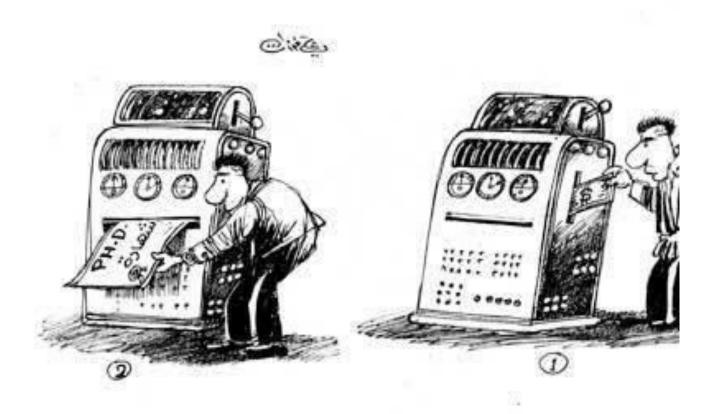






Price list

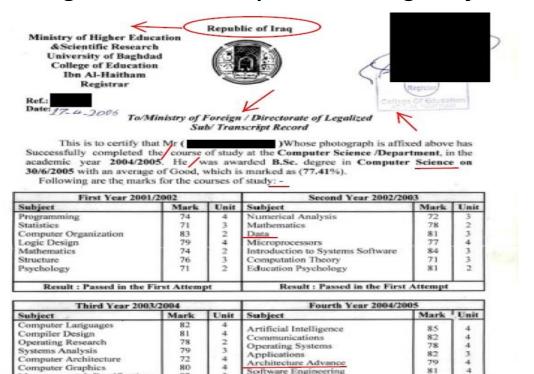
- \$ 150 300 for a general secondary education certificate.
- \$ 300 600 for a bachelor's degree certificate.
- \$ 600 1,500 for a master's degree certificate.
- \$ 1500 2,000 for a doctorate certificate.
- Different prices depend on the quality, the quantity, the level of the degree, the field, the shipping duration and company, etc.





Confirmed fraudulent degree, University of Baghdad

"Be Curious. If something is dubious to you, investigate further".1



Project

Teaching Method

Notes: The scale of grades as follows: - 100-90 Excellent , 79-70 V. Good , 79-70 Good , 69-50 Medium, 50-59 Pass, 49 and less = Fail .

Measurement & Rectification

Result: Passed in the First Attempt

Data Base

National Education

Dr. Hussin S. Al-Asadi

Result: Passed in the First Attempt

67

77

Swedish Council for

Higher Education

1 FRAUDOC, Guidelines on Diploma Mills and Document Fraud for Credential Evaluators, Handbook on Document Fraud for Credential Evaluators (2018) http://www.enic-naric.net/c_home.aspx

Confirmed fraudulent degrees

Think logically!

Alexandria University



University of Aleppo





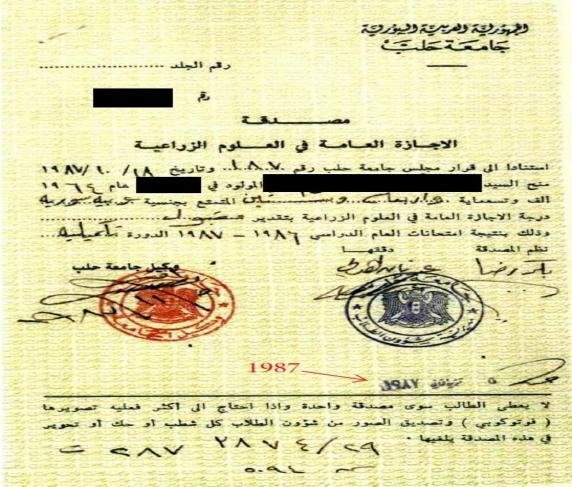
Authentic degrees

Did you really think logically?

Ain Shams University

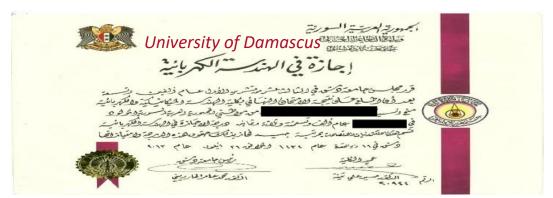


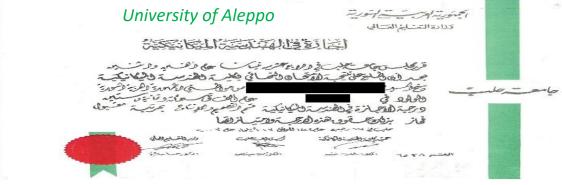
University of Aleppo

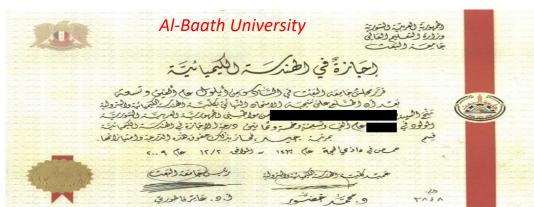




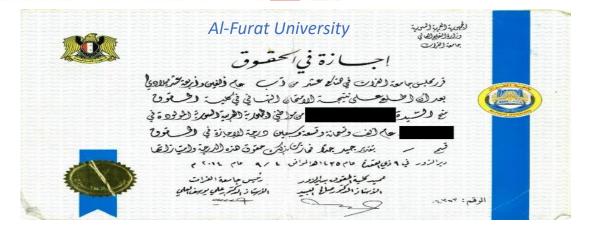
United colours of Syria (authentic wall certificates)







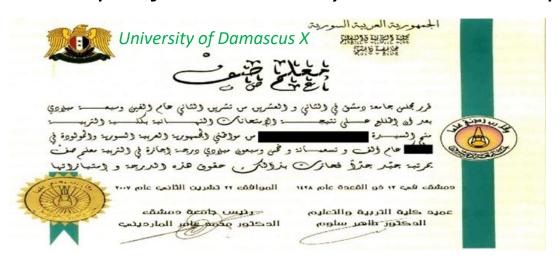


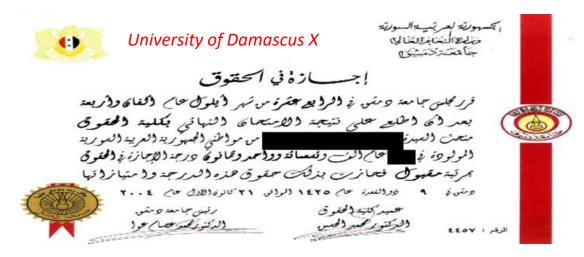


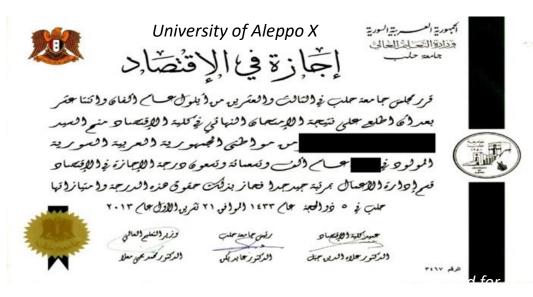


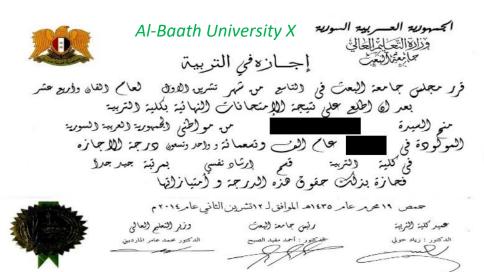
Four fraudulent degrees

"Fake qualifications rarely come unaccompanied. If you received one, look for siblings".3







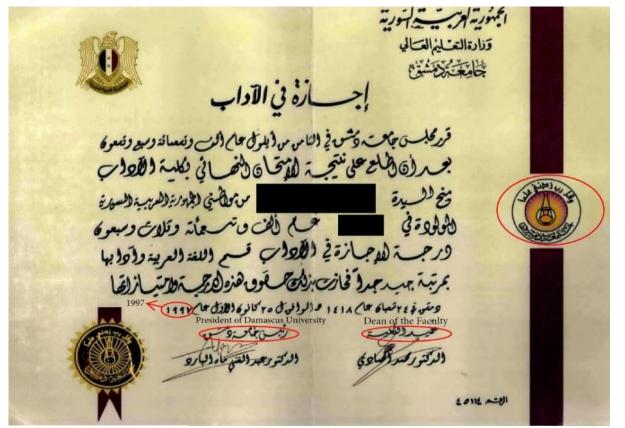




Confirmed fraudulent wall certificates

I believe that there are no perfect fraud crimes, forgers always leave signs which differ from those in authentic documents and should therefore be detected by us.

University of Damascus







Confirmed fraudulent graduation certificates

The quality assurance should always come first in our job because evaluating fraudulent academic credentials is like money laundering.

University of Damascus







University of Aleppo

Fraudulent graduation certificate



Authentic graduation certificate



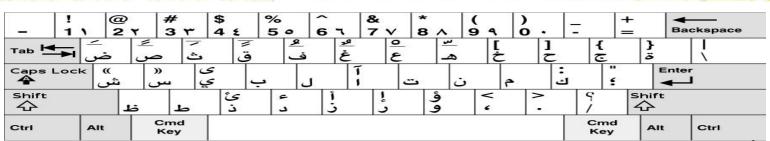


Confirmed fraudulent graduation certificates









Measures taken by University of Damascus

New certificates and transcripts with security features.



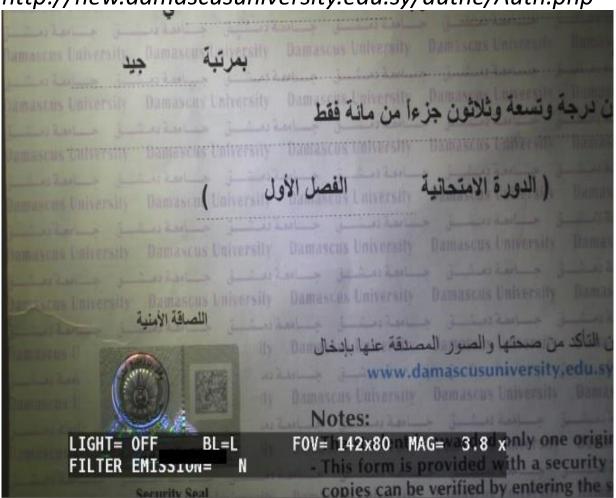




Measures taken by University of Damascus

Security seal with a code to verify:

http://new.damascusuniversity.edu.sy/authe/Auth.php



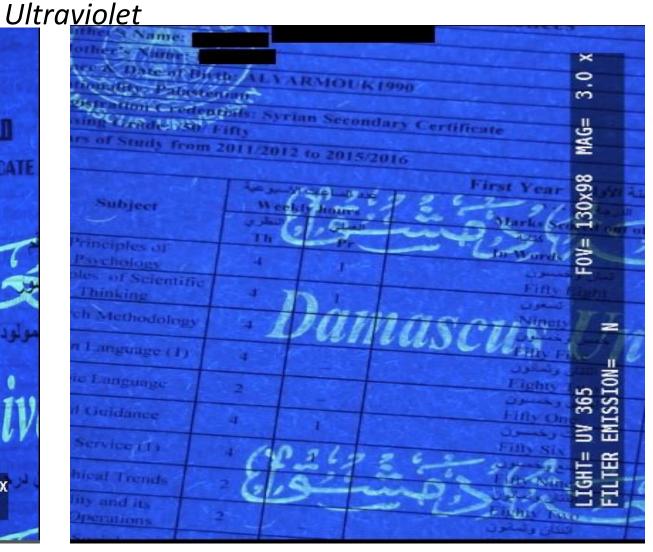
Watermark





Measures taken by University of Damascus

Faculty of Arts and Human LIGHT= UV 365 FOV= 130x98 MAG= 3.0 x FILTER EMISSION= 1001006201



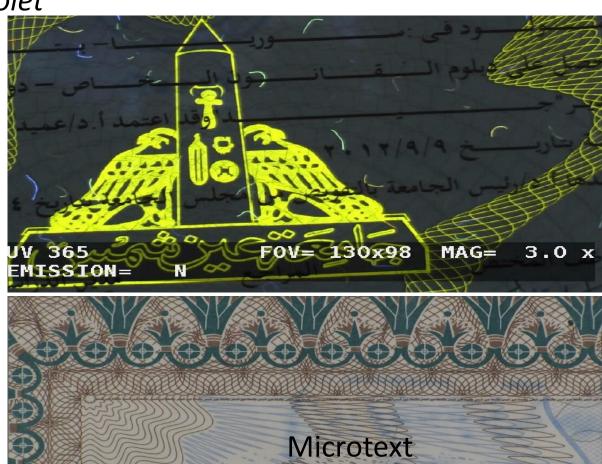


Measures taken by Egyptian universities (Ain Shams University)

Ultraviolet









Statistics of the Swedish ENIC-NARIC

From 2014 until the 1st of September 2018:

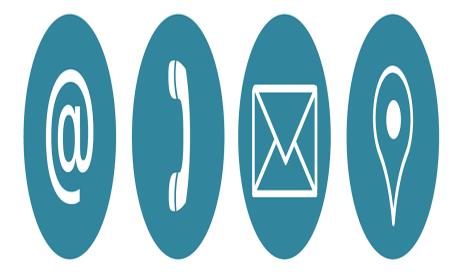
- Syria (academic level): 115 confirmed fraud of 11400 total cases.
- Iraq (academic level): 9 confirmed fraud of 2450 total cases.
- Egypt (academic level): 1 confirmed fraud of 1018 total cases.





Contacting issuing authorities

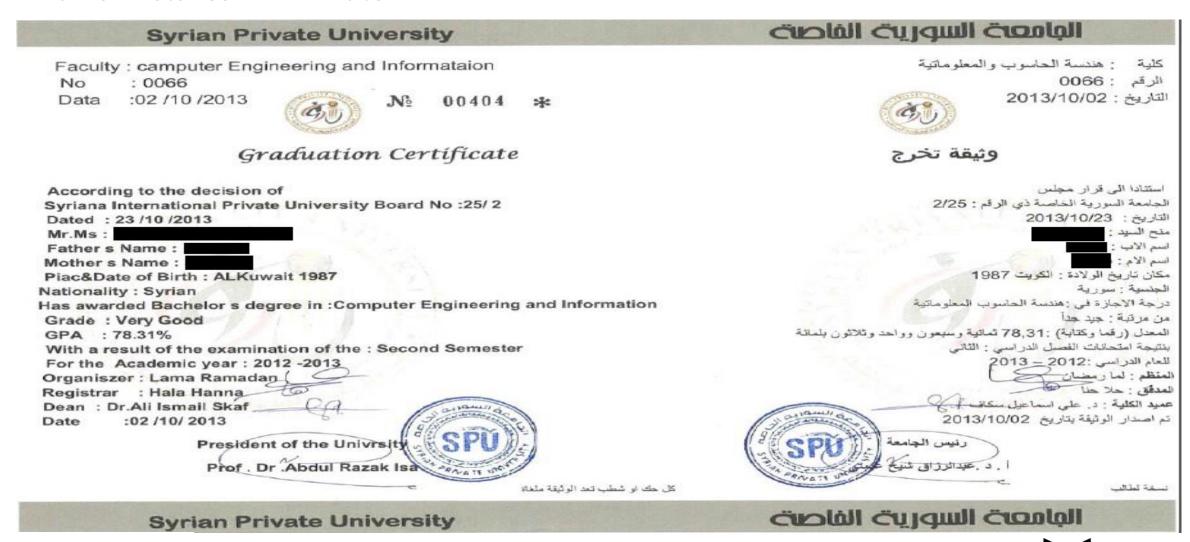
- University of Damascus, verification unit.
- Other public universities in Syria via the embassy.
- Student affairs, International cooperation.
- Send a copy of your verification request to University's president.





Extra fraudulent example

Find 10 mistakes in 1 minute!





THANK

