IIUM
TRACER STUDY 2013

Editor
Rohaiza Rokis

Alumni and Career Services
DIVISION
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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PREFACE

Much research has been conducted to studying graduates' employability and their pattern of employment after graduation. Research of such nature is known as Tracer Study. The aim of the tracer study is to track graduates' performance or progress after completing their undergraduate studies. This study on IIUM graduates identifies the employability of graduates from the International Islamic University Malaysia who completed their studies in 2013. A total of 4057 graduates completed the questionnaire of IIUM Tracer Study 2013 assessing various issues related to employment and employability.

While data on employment among graduates is important, other higher-education related issues are as equally important. Thus, IIUM Tracer Study 2013 goes beyond studying the employment related issues of IIUM graduates. It studies graduates' perception on Islamisation of human knowledge, graduates' perceptions on academic programme, involvements in co-curricular activities, facilities and services, teaching and learning resources at IIUM, predicators of graduates' employability among IIUM graduates and graduates' suggestions to improve the quality of programme by *Kulliyyah*.

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Abbreviations and Terminologies

Undergraduates	:	Students who graduated with first degrees (Bachelor's degree)
Postgraduate	:	Students who graduated with postgraduate degrees (Master's degree or Doctoral degree)
Kulliyyah	:	Faculty
IIUM	:	International Islamic University Malaysia
Employability	:	A state of being employed
Employment	:	A person's work or occupation
M	:	Mean
SD	:	Standard Deviation

Chapter 6

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF STUDYING AT IIUM

Ainol Madziah Zubairi
Mohd. Yazid Zul Kepli

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents graduates' perceptions on the advantages and disadvantages they gain while studying at IIUM. The graduates were given opportunities to point out and elaborate their opinions on the open-ended sections. They were further asked to give constructive suggestions on various levels, namely Departments, *Kulliyyah, Mahallah,* and at the University level.

6.1 Advantages of Studying at IIUM

Prior to their convocation, the graduates were asked about the advantages they gained while studying at IIUM (Table 6.1). From a total of 4057 graduates, almost three in ten of them stated that the Islamic learning and environment was the main advantage being as IIUM graduates (34.2%). They believe that their exposure to Islamic aspects of learning gave them a huge advantage as compared to graduates from other universities. Many claimed that studying at IIUM within Islamic environment and culture allows them to be closer to Islam. Some of the graduates stated:

"Islamic studies applied to each aspect of people everyday undertakings including professionalism field"; "It (IIUM) enables you have both Islamic and secular perspective in your daily activities"; "It (the subject) increases students understanding on Islam and incorporate Islamic awareness to all students"; "Islamic environment which provide rooms and opportunities for spiritual enhancement and dakwah"; "getting both balanced knowledge of ukhrawi and academics".

In addition, the Islamic environment of IIUM enables students to polish Arabic in their interactions. They said:
"Islamic environment (that) enhances my languages (Arabic and English); "We learn how to communicate in various languages with different Muslims all around the world and also the Islamic way of life"

But most importantly, the Islamic environment of IIUM enables them

to practice the true Islamic way of life. A respondent said:
"(Having to) live in an Islamic environment gives us opportunities to live in Islamic way (for example) I can go to Masjid easily"

Besides that (7.8%) of students also said one of the greatest advantages in IIUM is having multicultural environment which means they can learn other cultures from each other in all over the world. Few of them voice out: *"Integration with different Muslim people from all over the world and the use of English as the medium of instruction at the maximum level"; "I get to know people from different countries and their culture as well as integrate Islamic values in studies"; "Have a better surroundings and people. Also, we can meet people from all over the world and we can share the knowledge and change opinions".*

Other key advantages mentioned by the graduates were the linguistic aspects and excellent facilities and environment (both 4.6%). On one hand, they argued that they gained a significant advantage by learning the courses in various languages particularly English and Arabic. On the other hand, they strongly agreed on the facility as well as environment that IIUM provided. Some comments include: *"(I am) maximising the use of English and Arabic language with the assistance of well-verse lecturers"*

Apparently, English as the main medium of instruction at IIUM helps students to be fluent in their speech, and to improve their written and verbal skills. The following excerpts stated few views of the graduates with regards to English language at IIUM: *"The main advantage of studying in IIUM is helping the local students to communicate in English and learning Arabic"; "Classes and exams were conducted in English language. Therefore, I am able to improve my English proficiency"*

They also underline the fact that IIUM is one of the few universities that encourages students to learn English makes them better students compared to others at other universities. Many stated that: *"having many International students requires us to speak English everywhere".*

In addition, (3.7%) of the students were satisfied with the academic

programme. One comment stated that: *"I am able to incorporate contemporary knowledge with Islamic values that I have studied in IIUM'; "It provides a holistic teaching that cover 'ilm fardu and kifayah that mold the student to be a better Muslim for the ummah and country".*

IIUM also provided chances for students to enhance diverse skills such as Communication and Soft Skills (3.5%). A statement stated: *"Sharpen my interpersonal skills, writing skills, and thinking skills".*

Other views about the advantages that IIUM offers are: *"Hostel provided for all students"; "Living in the Islamic environment"; "One of the prestigious universities in Malaysia".*

Lastly, many other advantages students can get from IIUM which are knowledge enhancement (2.2%), international integration and recognition (2.2%), excellent lecturers (1.0%), and few others. Table 6.1 summaries the various other advantages of studying at IIUM written by the graduates.

Table 6.1: The Advantages of Studying in IIUM (Class of 2013)

Advantages	n	Percentage
Islamic Environment and Learning	1386	34.2
Lingual Advantages	187	4.6
Multicultural Environment	317	7.8
Excellent Facilities and Environment	186	4.6
Excellent Lecturers	42	1.0
International Integration and Recognition	91	2.2
Enhance Various Skills (Communication and Soft Skills)	142	3.5
Good Academic Programmes (Balance Of Worldly and Islamic Knowledge)	152	3.7
Promising Future Job	20	0.5
Knowledge Enhancement	91	2.2
Comprehensive Learning Experience	7	0.2
Others/ irrelevant Comments	122	3.0
No Comment	1314	32.4
Total	4057	100.0

6.2 Disadvantages of Studying at IIUM

Several disadvantages of studying at IIUM were mentioned by the graduates. Table 6.2 below highlights the most disadvantageous points, which worth to be elaborated here.

Table 6.2: Disadvantages of Studying in IIUM (Class of 2013)

Disadvantages	n	Percentage
Programs and Courses	306	7.5
Study Period	181	4.5
Facility - General	135	3.3
Administration and Management	116	2.9
Intercultural Interaction	126	3.1
Facility - Labs/Internet	49	1.2
Tuition Fees	50	1.2
Facility - Parking Lots	60	1.5
Administration Staff	18	0.4
Rules And Regulation	57	1.4
Academic Staff	37	0.9
Grading System	32	0.8
Facility - Transportation	24	0.6
Co-Curriculum Activities	7	0.2
Facility - *Mahallah*	11	0.3
Biases - Favouritism	19	0.5
Student Welfare (Health, Safety and Scholarship)	44	1.1
Facility - Toilet	4	0.1
Facility - Cafeteria	9	0.2
Maintenance	10	0.2
Lack of Islamic Environment And Practice	28	0.7
Facility - *Kulliyyah*	10	0.2
Facility - Library	5	0.1
Others/Irrelevant Comments	223	5.5
No Comment	2496	61.5
Total	4057	100.0

The most frequent disadvantages reported by them were matters regarding to the academic programme and courses offered in the university (7.5%). Specifically, the graduates mentioned that the university needs to revise some courses. The graduates stated:

"The student's works are not exposed to the world; hence the students have less opportunities of gaining recognition in the job world";
"Too many university requirements somehow rather repetitive thus it requires an improvement in term of the material used in classroom";
"Competition with the international/foreigner students and some requirements courses which are no need to be finish such as EAW and so on".

A more specific quotation is obtained from a graduate from KAED who mentioned:
"Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design (KAED) do not provide architecture students with practical training which can help the students experience the working environment."

In addition, many complaints were about the length of study period in the IIUM (4.5%). They argued that the duration taken by students in order to complete their study is significantly longer than any other universities, and therefore, it should be shortened. Some of the graduates stated:

"The English programme is very long make many student spend long time in this programme";
"Long way to graduate which create sort of disappointment";
"The durations of the studies which is too long and limited courses offered".

They also believe that in general, the university facilities should be built and/or improved (3.3%), such as air-conditioning system and courts for students to have their sports activities. Other facilities such as parking lots (1.5%), laboratories and internet (1.2%), transportation (0.6%), Mahallah (0.3%), cafeteria (0.2%) and toilet (0.1%), required some improvements. Many graduates cited that maintaining facilities is extremely important for the university. Among the relevant excerpts are:

"Lack of labs leads to more students share the same instrument";
"Lack of public transport and walking lane is not systematic";
"The transportation and food services are still have no improvement".

Several other disadvantages were also stated by the graduates, namely problems of intercultural interaction with other students (3.1%), lacking of quality in administration and management (2.9%), inconsistent rules and regulations (1.4%), expensive tuition fees (1.2%), low services and attitude of the administration and academic staff (0.4 and 0.9% respectively), and several others. Some of the graduates mentioned:

"In term of service from administration, there are still lacking in term of technology and facilities";
"Sometimes the staffs did not entertain the student politely. They don't even smile at the student when dealing with them";
"Bureaucratic system in administration made internal process slow";
"The administration of some departments or administrations did not work smoothly".

6.3 IIUM Graduates' Suggestions for Departments

Table 6.3 shows the result of the graduates' suggestions in improving the facilities and services in the Departments in IIUM. The suggestions can be classified into thirteen categories.

The foremost complaint received which requires improvement is regarding staff's attitudes at IIUM. About (9.4%) graduates elaborated their comments and furthered some suggestions on the matter:

"Train the staffs seriously and intensively to achieve the missions and vision";
"Some workers, lecturers need to be friendlier and change their mindset, be friendlier. All facilities could be up to date";
"Some department staff should improve about the communication skill to deal with students";
"Employ staffs that really are responsible and willing to co-operate and be helpful to student"

Meanwhile, as many as (9.3%) graduates suggested for upgrading the laboratory facilities in order to accommodate the needs of student. Students commented: *Some lecture theaters are not well maintained and the university should focus on improving class conditions particularly on Human Sciences building"; "IIUM needs to refurbish the look of the departments to suit its internationality level"; "Provide convenient classes with better equipment and lighting so that can enhance the attention and focus of the students in the class".*

On the other hand, (5.5%) of them elaborated about improvising teaching and learning system for the improvement of their Department. They suggested: *"I suggest that IIUM department should reduce the number of courses that is not relevant"; "Hope the Department will review the curriculum of accounting degree, reduce subject and to concentrate on more what the industry want"; "Increase the number of experienced lecturer hence increasing the number of class available for the students".*

There are about (55.3%) of the graduates stated "No Comment" and also did not answer the question by leaving the space blank, whereas the other (8.0%) of the graduates gave irrelevant answers.

Table 6.3: IIUM Graduates' Suggestion for Department (Class 2013)

Suggestion For Department	N	Percentage
Staff Attitude/Communication with Students	380	9.4
Upgrade Lap/Building	148	3.6
Upgrade/Maintenance Facility	377	9.3
Improvise Teaching and Learning System	225	5.5
Student Society/Student Welfare	60	1.5
Add More Staff	58	1.4
Upgrade Online Services/Pre-Registration	62	1.5
Upgrade Toilet/Cleanliness	72	1.8
Student Survey	93	2.3
Upgrade Wireless Coverage	28	0.7
Budget	44	1.1
Management	101	2.5
Parking	38	0.9
Others/Irrelevant Comment	127	3.1
No Comment	2244	55.3
Total	4057	100.0

6.4 IIUM Graduates' Suggestions for *Kulliyyah*

Table 6.4 shows the result of the graduates' suggestions for improving the facilities and services at the *Kulliyyah*. There were eighteen categories noticed. Among the suggestions are directed for facility improvement, (11.4%) of the graduates suggested to do the maintenance on the provided facilities. They mentioned:

"Ensure the facilities in a good condition and enough for student's usage; any reports of students regarding the facilities should be taken into consideration";

"The air-condition system in certain classes is not working well. ; Improving facilities which is outdated and install friendly used system that can ease students' life".

Besides, (5.3%) of the graduates gave their suggestions regarding staff's attitudes at the *Kulliyyah*. They complained that: *"General Office does not reflect manners in handling with the students"*. In relation to that, they further suggested the staff to be more professional and discipline when handling things. Some students specifically suggested to: *"have a wonderful quick and patient person as the front desk officer is always helpful in many ways"; "Manage some courses to staff especially front desk staff so that they can be more patient and friendly work handling"; "Provide ethic course for the management officers to create friendly and professional management".*

Apart from their dissatisfaction towards some personnel at IIUM, they also suggested the university to improve laboratories/buildings. About (6.0%) of the graduates suggested for adding more equipment to cater the needs of the students. Some students stated that:

"All computers in the lab need to be serviced and some of them do not have the software needed by the students throughout their course work";

"More comfortable and provide many classes to support the number of students";

"Classrooms furniture's should be changed and walls should be repainted".

Among the 4057 graduates, (54.0%) of them did not answer the question by writing "No Comment" and (1.9%) provided "Others/irrelevant comment" in the space provided.

Table 6.4: IIUM Graduates' Suggestion for *Kulliyyah* (Class 2013)

Kulliyah	n	Percentage
Staff Attitude/Communication with Student	214	5.3
Upgrade Labs/Building	244	6.0
Upgrade /Maintenance Facility	463	11.4
Improvise Teaching and Learning System	167	4.1
Student Society/Welfare	41	1.0
Add More Staff/Lecturer	36	0.9
Upgrade Online Services/Pre-Registration	48	1.2
Upgrade Toilet	112	2.8
Student Survey	85	2.1
Upgrade Wireless Coverage	13	0.3
Budget	35	0.9
Upgrade Café/Food	71	1.8
Parking	71	1.8
Provide More Services	94	2.3
Add More On Islamic Value	40	1.0
Management	54	1.3
Others/irrelevant	79	1.9
No Comment	2190	54.0
Total	4057	100.0

6.5 IIUM Graduates' Suggestions for Mahallah

Table 6.5 presents the percentage of IIUM graduates suggestions to improve *Mahallah's* facilities and services. The result of the survey indicates that improvement is needed in *Mahallah* management (8.8%). Some graduates suggested that: *"Make sure that all the residents would get notified and benefit of big event which conducted by Mahallah"; "The Mahallah should listen to the voice of students and try to eliminate giving compound to students".*

Complaints also have been made against staff attitude and cafeteria/food (6.1% and 6.0% respectively). They suggested that Mahallah cafeteria should be upgraded by providing variety of foods to the students, and the price of the foods should be standardised and monitored. Some of them complained on these two issues, that are 1) the ethics of Mahallah's staff, and 2) the quality of Mahallah's eatery. They wrote:

"Staffs are working in the Mahallah office should be more polite to students and they should seek to benefit the students in many ways as possible"; "Mahallah officers should be friendlier in dealing with the students";

"The receptionist should be friendlier and the cafeteria should provide variety of foods with reasonable price";

"Some staff at the Mahallah management office needs to learn how to treat students nicely and most importantly learn how to smile".

Moreover, they provide their comments on the eatery that:

"Mahallah should always do checking for the price and quality of food provided by cafe operator."; "The cafes should be monitored to ensure the cleanliness is maintained and they do not over-charge".

Additionally, some other suggestions were to have ATM machine (0.6%) and laundry service (2.0%) near *Mahallah.* The relevant excerpts include: *"Please provide ATM machine in each Mahallah, because it is not secure enough for student to go to center ATM at night time";*

"Please provide student with sufficient facilities like laundry and heater/ water cooler for each level".

Moreover, parking space (4.7%) is also an issue that students are very concerned for. As stated that:

"The parking is limited for student's car. There is large space at the back of block B Mahallah Bilal. The space is suggested for the parking".

In addition, (0.4%) would suggest that the *Mahallah* should give them the priority to cook by providing at least one kitchen in each block. Some of the statements mention that:

"I think it will be better if IIUM provide kitchen to accommodate those who feels not suitable with the food".

The issue of toilet cleanliness is also emphasised to improve of *Mahallah* facility. It has been recorded from the data that (2.9%) give much complaints on that matter. As stated below:

"Add the number of bathrooms, toilets and cleaners to guarantee the college cleanliness";

"Need to refurbish the toilet and watering system at the block, especially at Level 1, Block B, Mahallah Faruq".

Table 6.5: IIUM Graduates' Suggestions for *Mahallah* (Class of 2013)

Suggestion For Mahallah	n	Percentage
Staff Attitude	248	6.1
Upgrade Room/Building	72	1.8
Maintenance/Upgrade Facility	181	4.5
Upgrade Wireless/ Wifi Coverage	125	3.1
Toilet/Cleanliness	117	2.9
Budget	21	0.5
Management	355	8.8
Safety and Security	120	3.0
Parking Spaces	192	4.7
Upgrade Laundry Service	80	2.0
Upgrade Sport Facility	23	0.6
Upgrade Cafeteria/ Food	244	6.0
Add More on Islamic Value	15	0.4
Provide More Buses	10	0.2
ATM Machine	26	0.6
Cooking/Kitchen	17	0.4
Others/Irrelevant Comments	68	1.7
No Comment	2143	52.8
Total	4057	100.0

6.6 IIUM Graduates' Suggestions for University

Table 6.6 indicates the IIUM graduates' suggestions for the university, precisely in terms of improvement. About (8.8%) mentioned that, the management should be more transparent and update rapidly towards IIUM community pertaining any upcoming or future plans of IIUM. Furthermore, all the inquiries needed among students should be considered and fulfilled by the management from time to time. As stated among the graduates of IIUM regarding to this matter:

"Upgrading relation and connection between department's system for easier management"

"Keep real close monitoring of facilities and cut cost on unnecessary things like the fountain, use the fund for more student use".

"Provide feedback area where students can provide opinion and suggestion towards University"

Other than that, parking spaces is also another never ending issue in IIUM. In fact, about (5.7%) of IIUM graduates mentioned that IIUM needs to provide more spacious parking area around campus due to the increasing number of vehicles in IIUM. This can be seen from several views from the graduates, such as:

"Provide more parking space, drainage system, street lamp, stricter in observing student dress code"

"The university could improve the internet service, more parking for students with cars and security from monkeys to attack or get into students rooms"

"Provide more parking facilities because the number of students/staff using cars are kept increasing"

In the meantime, IIUM graduates mentioned that all facilities provided by IIUM need to be regularly inspected and maintained. Around (5.3%) of them stated that maintenance should be made thoroughly so that all facilities provided for students can be used without any hassle. Some even mentioned that:

"Create more organised lists of facilities and services and make them

bigger and more noticeable (in term of advertisements and etc.)"

"Improve all the facilities provided because they are too old and unsuitable for international university environment".

Table 6.6: IIUM Graduates' Suggestions for University (Class of 2013)

Suggestion For University	n	Percentage
Staff Attitude	113	2.8
Upgrade Lab/Building	28	0.7
Maintenance/Upgrade Building	213	5.3
Toilet/Cleanliness	59	1.5
Safety/Security	130	3.2
Upgrade Cafeteria/Food	44	1.1
Upgrade Sport Facility	41	1.0
Upgrade Wireless Coverage	71	1.8
Budget	47	1.2
Transportation	92	2.3
Parking	232	5.7
Management	356	8.8
Add More Activities/Services	105	2.6
Hire Professional Staff/Lecturer	41	1.0
Add More On Islamic Value	46	1.1
Others/irrelevant Comments	103	2.5
No comments	2336	57.6
Total	4057	100.0