

FIRST DEGREE AND POST-GRADUATE  
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Editor  
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**Alumni and Career Services**  
**DIVISION**  
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA



Ministry of Education  
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## CHAPTER 8 : DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## Chapter 8

### DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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*Aznan Zuhid Saidin*

*Mohd Feham Md. Ghalib*

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*Wan Rohaida Wan Husain*

## 8.0 Introduction

This chapter elaborates the recommendations based on the findings in the previous chapters. Specifically, it embraces the following areas: (1) programmes and services, (2) study programme and self-readiness, (3) further studies, (4) employment pattern, and (5) unemployment pattern.

### 8.1 Programmes and Services

A majority of IIUM graduates rated overall satisfaction for all items related to curriculum and course contents with the range from (80.4% to 86.8%). They rated highly satisfied particularly on the suitability of the study programme (86.8%) and the compulsory subjects required by institution/university (84.6%). Suitably, KOM graduates rated the highest satisfaction with the suitability of the study programme (93.2%) as well as the balance between theoretical and practical/application components (91.4%), whilst INSTED showed highest satisfaction rates on the compulsory co-curricular subjects (89.8%). Indeed, health and medicine together with teaching and learning are the two academic programmes that vividly embrace both theoretical and practical components.

Universities are places where students learn subjects in-depth. For achieving complete knowledge, theoretical knowledge and practical experiences are essential. People and many agencies may accuse that universities and higher learning centres do not integrate well enough the practical relevance into academic syllabuses, especially with regard to humanities and social sciences. To succeed in this competitive world, all universities must provide a well-balanced education giving equal importance to both theoretical and practical training (Etzkowitz, 2003). The theory is the basic of practical training. Students acquire knowledge more easily when they are given relative theoretical examples to build upon. For instance, studying subjects like history or sociology, textbook examples allow students to unravel complex socio-historical theories, which they could further expand onto the reality. Human brain learns better by doing. The understanding of the theoretical aspects enables them to apply in the real sense. For instance, university degree involving the evaluation of numerous long-winded academic lessons provides little inspiration for the students. On the other hand, interest can be stimulated through empirical research in the class. Furthermore, job market

seeks students with experiences and thus perhaps they can gain employment more easily.

Both methods have benefits and drawbacks if implementing alone. If the curriculum incorporates these two approaches in a right way, then the learning process will be more understandable, enjoyable and useful for their future. In this regard, IIUM may take the initiative to have overall improvement on particular aspects. Among the recommendations which may be useful are:

#### 8.1.1 Theoretical and Practical/application Components

IIUM is suggested to have more focus on actualising the existence of theoretical and practical/application components in the overall curriculum particularly for *Kulliyah* science-based majors such as engineering, science, ICT and architecture design. This is to ensure that the graduates may have the opportunities to merge the two throughout their study period.

#### 8.1.2 Evaluation and Appraisal System

In addition, the evaluation and appraisal system for the university should be frequently revised to cope with the notion of transparency and fairness in accessing our graduates. The fact that some of the graduates scored less than 80% level of satisfaction in this respect indicates that the assessment needs more than just a semester final examination. Some plausible practices can be proposed and later implemented in order to increase the integrity of the evaluation system adopted by the university. These include the use of the rubrics in accessing students' assignments and adding more tasks for formative assessment.

#### 8.1.3 Career Guidance

It appears that the components of career received less satisfaction among the graduates (<80%). It is thus recommended to have more career guidance oriented programmes organised by related parties such as *Kulliyah*, Alumni and Career Division, students' clubs and societies.

#### 8.1.4 Online Interaction

The level of satisfaction for teaching staff of the University is rather satisfactory with most of the components reported above (80.0%). It is however worth to note here that online interaction should receive more than what have been reported (some *Kulliyah* scored less than (80.0%). This is to ensure the agenda of Higher Education under the preview of Ministry of Education

Malaysia can be eventually realised. Since more endeavours nowadays have been forwarded on the so called MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses), the findings of this report on online interaction should be enhanced and accelerated more in the future.

### 8.1.5 Counseling and Career Support Services

The previous year report on utilisation of counseling and career support services was rather not satisfactory. Similarly, the findings of this report replicate this consistent trend with a very minor increase of (27.4%) of the graduates utilised the service. It is suggested that the *Kulliyyah* should work hand-in hand with the Counselling Unit and Alumni Career Services Division by making use of the frequent locations visited by the students and graduates in rendering the best approach in offering counseling and career support services.

Counselling Unit and Alumni Career Services Division have to ensure the satisfaction percentage should be increased in future because so far the level of satisfaction with counseling and career support services is still low. ISTAC graduates showed the lowest level of the overall satisfaction with the percentage of (55.6% to 60.0%) on the seven items, whilst KOM rated most of the items with the highest level of satisfaction (78.6% to 88.8%). It was indicated that as low as (21.8%) graduates in 2012 utilised the Counselling and Career Support Services (Tracer Study Report, 2012), and this latest 2013 data found an increase to only (27.4%). Both Unit and Division must take up more strategic initiatives to benefit the students, particularly to increase students' employability skills.

### 8.1.6 Industrial Training

Industrial training has benefited students in obtaining jobs. The curriculum must ensure a cohesive academic programme that contains industrial training/practicum. To increase employability capacity among IIUM graduates, it is advisable for each *Kulliyyah* to offer industrial training/practicum during their final year of study.

### 8.1.7 Facilities

Since 2008, the library has been maintaining the highest level of overall satisfaction in all aspects such as comfort and conducive study area; resources volume (books, manuscripts, etc); online library resources; and online library

services each with. On the contrary, parking facility and transportation were the least satisfied facility. It is important for the relevant agencies to look into the matter. Without doubt, better programme and services/facilities will produce integrated students.

## 8.2 Programme and Self-Readiness

The positive responses to the 12-items are clear indications that the IIUM has successfully projected itself as a well-image higher learning centre. Majority of the graduates of 2013 would recommend IIUM to their family members as well as to their friends.

Ironically, majority of IIUM graduates from various *Kulliyyah* were not willing to be employed outside their own country, with the exception of IIIBF and KICT graduates. This situation should be reversed since the spread of IIUM alumni around the globe would be a strategic way to project the image of this institution beyond localities. It is therefore suggested that:

### 8.2.1 Employment Prospect

Graduates of all *Kulliyyah* must be encouraged to grab the opportunities to widen their employment horizon outside their locality. Not only they may receive the best working experiences, they may also promote IIUM as a prestigious higher learning centre to the world. IIUM graduates may be the agent of change for a better world.

### 8.2.2 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

In order to do so, IIUM graduates must be well-equipped with specific skills such as the information and communication technology as well as entrepreneurship skills. The data also shows that many students (KICT with 76.6%, KENMS with 75.9% and KOE with 72.7%) were interested to be entrepreneurs. Many of them attended entrepreneurial courses/programmes which were conducted by IIUM. It is, therefore, suggested that IIUM should embrace more practical programme in the academic structure.

### 8.2.3 Entrepreneurship

IIUM is recommended to take up the challenge of venturing into a world of entrepreneurship within its academic programme. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2000, a ratio on 1:10 adults in the United States, 1:8 adults in Brazil and 1:12 adults in Australia today is an entrepreneur. These

are the countries that lead the way. Other countries such as Germany (1:25), United Kingdom (1:33), Finland and Sweden (1:50) and Ireland and Japan (1:100) have lesser entrepreneurs.

Thus, graduates must be well-equipped with specific skills in information and communication technology (ICT). The advent of ICT has changed all aspects of the world today particularly the entrepreneurship. ICT contributes to the entrepreneurship in different ways. For example, ICT facilitates job access, it provides unique possibilities of flexible arrangements at workplaces, it grants accessible information system and also increases the employment rate dramatically through virtual workplace, particularly electronic marketing (Dangolani, 2011).

A well-organised programme, particularly at KICT may be established in order to assist students to cultivate a startup business idea in ICT, teach them basic strategies like estimating costs and writing a business plan, and help them network their ideas toward sources of funding.

### 8.3 Further Studies

From a total of 4093 graduates, only (14.3%) of first-degree graduates and (23.9%) post-graduate furthered their studies. Based on that, more than three-quarters of them (77.6 %) chose to further their studies on full-time basis, while the rest (22.4%) were on part-time basis. Even though only a small percentage of the students continued their study further, their interest in learning and seeking knowledge is commendable. The data shows that majority of the first-degree graduates (83.6%) and post-graduate (88.7%) furthered their studies in the area that was related to their first degree field of study, while the rest decided to take a different area of study from their previous degree. The reasons for changing the course/programme were unknown at the moment. It is wise for IIUM to seek the reasons behind their decision.

### 8.4 Employment Pattern

Since the foundation of the University in 1983, IIUM has been seriously striving towards producing fully functioning insan who will serve as agent of change. Efforts to market the students have been strategised to ensure that the trained workforces are accordingly placed in related places. In line

with this spirit, all *Kulliyah* in IIUM are encouraged to increase efforts to improve employability rate among IIUM graduates. Employers suggested that extra attention should be made to the following problems, particularly poor command of English language; poor character, attitude or personality; unrealistic salary and benefits demand; mismatch of skills; choosy in job or company; failure to demonstrate ability to solve problems; not in-depth skills and knowledge; lack of preparation for job interview; poor general knowledge; and little or no interest in the job applied.

In addition, Ranjit (2009) mentioned that primary weaknesses of Malaysian graduates are in the aspect of management; problem-solving; communication; leadership; creativity; critical thinking; proactive; self-confidence; and interaction skills. These aspects lead to the difficulties for the graduates in obtaining jobs, which meet their qualifications.

Another findings on youth and employment, Nasrudin (2004) stated the eleven factors that lead to the unemployment problem among the graduates are the relationship between capital intensive economy; a rapid increase of graduated workforce; lack of the relationship between educational institutions and the industry; lack of training for work preparation; rapid increase of the population rate; rapid decrease of the mortality rate; educational development; economic recession; quality of education; capability of graduates; and graduates' skills and personalities.

Malaysian industries are currently emphasising a set of skills that the graduates should have when they apply for a job, which are divided into two separate categories comprising hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are defined as the mastery and practice of a body of knowledge whereas soft skills are the development of largely inter- and intra-personal skills. IIUM students need to be equipped with both.

According to a survey conducted by Manpower Inc. (2008), the five most sought after attributes by Malaysian firms that were identified comprised a strong communication skills and the ability to relay information to others; a drive to ensure customer/client satisfaction with every contact, consistent high standards and commitment to quality service; consistent high commitment to integrity, honesty and ethical conduct; and self-motivated, and ability to work independently.

According to the report from Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) (2006), one of the underlying issues in graduate employability is the unknown market size and needs required in transforming Malaysia into a high income economy. This is due to the non-existence of a single authority responsible for collecting, assessing, analysing, and forecasting the actual number of jobs available or required by the current and future workforce market either in the public or private sector (Singh and Singh, 2008).

Despite efforts made by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Ministry of Human Resource (MOHR), and several other agencies to collect data on the current employability scenario, there is still much market intelligence that needs to be known before proper planning can be done. Existing data lack details and do not show the actual number of job opportunities available in a specific employment context, i.e., the type or the level of jobs required by the different sectors and the number of workers leaving or entering the workforce. Furthermore, since there is no real collaboration between the different agencies, data collected are kept in a silo instead of being shared for mutual benefit. In short, each agency will only have snap-shots or tip of the iceberg information on the true market needs. This might lead to University being faced with the dilemma of preparing curriculum based on assumptions rather than facts.

In the context of IIUM, it would be proper to verify the size of each job market (if possible). This endeavor requires collaboration with dedicated agencies – both internally and externally. The followings are the recommendations:

#### 8.4.1 IIUM Career Resource Room

All *Kulliyah* in IIUM are reminded to make good use of IIUM Career Resource Room. The IIUM Career Resource Room is sponsored by Shell Malaysia through 'Shell-Campus Ambassador Program'. The room provides space and facilities to conduct a wide range of careers and employment activities for IIUM students and graduates. Among activities that can be conducted are Career Clinic (advice desk, psychometric test, consultation, discussion and guidance); Student registration of job placement database; On-campus recruitment by organisations/companies; and Student Reference Centre for career information with an extensive and useful resources and self-help guides.

#### 8.4.2 Career Related Programmes

Whenever possible, all *Kulliyah* should consider providing variety of such programmes for its students. Among the most crucial aspects are Career awareness programme; Training of employability skills; Coordinating placement/attachment; and Campus recruitment.

#### 8.4.3 1Malaysia Training Scheme (Skim Latihan 1Malaysia or SL1M)

IIUM students and graduates are encouraged to participate in SL1M programme. The aim of this scheme is to improve employability level among graduates planning to join Government-linked companies (GLC). Online registration is possible.

#### 8.4.4 Mentorship Programme and Alumni

One of the methods to give graduates better exposure to the industry is to proceed with Mentorship programme. A template that can be considered is the Hong Kong University (HKU) Mentorship Programme. The HKU Mentorship Programme matches 500 pairs of Mentors (friends and alumni of the University) and Mentees (HKU second-year undergraduates, Exchange Students or Year 3 students following a 4- or 5-year curriculum) every year. Not only was it the first programme of its kind in Hong Kong, it has also become the exemplar from similar programmes. In addition, it is also a good idea to liaise more with alumni in organising programmes involving students. *Kulliyah* are suggested to have an updated list of alumni, timetable and plans for future activities. In this programme, the Mentees have the chance to look beyond the classroom and learn from HKU Mentors who are professionals and experts from different walks of life. Some unique features of this Mentor-Mentee relationship include a structured trio-basis or one-to-one relationship between a Mentor and Mentee(s); a special contract between a Mentor and Mentee(s) that requires two-way participation; cross-discipline matching to give Mentors and Mentees opportunities to learn from their unique alliance; and the hallmarks of respect, support, trust, sharing and understanding.

#### 8.4.5 Interview Skill

Many structured interviews, particularly those at large companies, start with a question like "Tell me about yourself." The interviewer does not really want the graduates to go back to grade school and talk about their childhood. This is a specific question with a right answer: in two minutes or so, the interviewer wants to get the graduate to relax and loosen out their vocal cords,

understand their background, accomplishments, reasons why they want to work at the company and what their future goals are. Unfortunately, many graduates still have very low interview skills. It is necessary to proceed with suitable programme to improve interview skills.

Moreover, once the graduates were called to sit for interviews, they must attend that occasion, or else they would be 'blacklisted' by JobStreet, TalentCorp, and any other employment agencies.

#### 8.4.6 Informational Interview

Graduates should be encouraged to do informational interviews. An informational interview is when someone invites a contact or a professional out to lunch or coffee, and asks them questions without the expectation of getting a job. Informational interviews are a great way to network, expand list of contacts, and find out tips and tricks from professionals who are on the ground.

#### 8.4.7 Collaboration with other University

*Kulliyyah* are suggested to collaborate with other universities to learn and improve employability rate whenever possible. For example, the employability rate among IIUM students is around 60-70%. On the other hand, the scenario is far better for students of the University of Hong Kong. The recent survey recorded a full employment rate at 99.7%, while unemployment rate has been kept steady at a low level over the years. More than one-third of graduates there secured job offers before graduation.

#### 8.4.8 Review of Academic Curriculum and Experiential Learning

Integrating employability into the curriculum through experiential learning is an agenda of growing international importance for universities. Curriculum reform offers many opportunities for innovative solutions to address this issue. Sometimes, it is necessary to review the academic curriculum of universities to ensure practicality and applicability to the industry. It is also suggested that *Kulliyyah* should consider introducing more soft skills into the university curriculum, for example the personality enhancement course. Attachment programme and industry work experience should also be improved. Continuous dialogue and cooperation with industry are fundamental.

#### 8.4.9 Social Media

Graduates should be mindful of their social media profile online. It is not uncommon for employers to check Facebook pages and other forms of social media, so graduates should be reminded to keep it clean.

### 8.5 Unemployment Pattern

It has been a tradition in Malaysia that most secondary education leavers prefer to pursue their education in a local university rather than a private university. This could possibly be due to cost environment and the facilities available at local public universities (Singh and Singh, 2008). Employers prefer to hire graduates from public universities as they perceive these graduates have the necessary academic qualifications and employability skills perceived to be important in the current job environment (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2006).

However, issues of unemployment in Malaysia remained unsolved since it first started to receive a public attention in 1960s (Ahmad, 1998). The intensifying unemployment rate of the graduates of public universities disturbs Malaysian quality of life. Many reasons contribute to this situation that varies from personal attitudes to lack of job required skills. Correspondingly, the current finding on IIUM graduates of batch 2013 shows a high unemployment rate among the graduates at the time of graduation. "Still seeking for job" is the most cited reason for unemployment. Apparently, the graduates still have employability issues.

The job market in general is so competitive that we need to do more than just present our background and qualifications. Graduates tend to fail because they never display or communicate their employability skills, only presenting their factual credentials. Employers place a premium on graduates who can move between various challenges and assignments drawing upon these skills. The improvement of IIUM graduates' employability must be the central agenda to the University. The focus strategies should be on improving their soft skills and flexibility to meet industry's needs. This should be implemented via both academic and non-academic programmes, particularly at the university level. Many researchers have offered recommendations for increasing students' and employees' acquisition of employability skills (Kazis

and Barton, 1993; Lankard, 1990; Spill and Tracy, 1992). Specifically, among the recommendations include:

### 8.5.1 Academic Related Programmes

Courses are to be taught so that there is a balance between learning its theoretical essence and practical applications. A feasible strategy is to arrange the classroom in such a way that it replicates key features of actual work settings, and assign students tasks similar to those performed by workers in those settings. Synchronously, the students must be reinforced that employers value basic, higher-order, and affective employability skills highly than job specific technical skills.

The existing internship programme should be improved. Suggestions received from employers who provide work attachments for our practical trainees include the duration of the attachment should be sufficiently long and the students should be sent for internship with specific projects to be completed. This is necessary so that students have enough opportunity to learn from working environment and have clear expectations of undertaking the training. Concurrently, employers for internship must be briefed clearly on the expectations and goals of the Universities to avoid them to treat students as cheap part-time employees. The students need some beneficial skills and workplace environment. Employers and IIUM must work hand in hand in projects, assignments, providing talks to graduates and providing a longer practical training duration, for example more than 3 months, to better groom graduates according to employers' requirements.

In addition, the allotment of government resources can be directed toward increasing lecturers' capacity to teach employability skills and engaging participation of the private sector in providing learning opportunities for students at worksites. Additionally, sabbatical leave should be given to lecturers to work in industry and organisations for better exposure in the academic environment (Kember, 2000).

It is important for the University to improve graduates' soft skills and to meet industry needs so that they could meet public expectations and achieve employment potentialities (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2006). As part of the corporate social responsibility of corporations, and to give exposure to students, field trips should be organised to factories and large

organisations. The students, on the other hand, should be encouraged to learn the use of performance assessments by developing "student's employability profiles" so that they can share with prospective employers.

### 8.5.2 Non-academic Programmes

Theory, knowledge and skills that are instructed in classrooms can be applied in a practical, organised and systematic manner where students involve in societies and association. It gives them chance to be independent, learn leadership and team work, enhance their skills including analytical thinking, communication, technical and problem solving as well as boost their confident to be in the public and most importantly nurture their creativity in making contributions to community.

Therefore, it is necessary that the universities provide sufficient funding and supports for students' activities which are not limited to giving sufficient monetary fund but also giving administrative support, facilities and links to sources of funding.

In fact, the universities should take the advantage of their existing links to the industries and MOUs as well as lecturers' involvements in professional bodies in order to enhance students' studying and learning experience.

Graduates must change their attitude to adopt continuous learning exposure in order to be comparable with other graduates. Every student should establish a top-priority personal goal that possessing sufficient employability skills necessitate to earn a decent living.

### 8.5.3 Database Link

Reliable databases and links in securing employment influence the effort to reduce the unemployment rate among graduates. It is therefore important for IIUM to create awareness among IIUM relevant agencies. Alumni and Career Services Division for instance can play an active role as a platform to establish database of the companies. The Division can work together with Industrial Relation Office, Research Management Centre and other potential centres and divisions based on contacts of IIUM prominent scholars, researchers and top officials.

External support should consist of alumni and community members. Often,

Alumni and Career Division, along with resources like LinkedIn, can help students find alumnus that have been involved in start-up businesses. These relationships can offer you free advice, resources, and even financial support. The grassroots approach may be the most effective.

#### 8.5.4 Opening employment Booth

Inviting potential employers to open booth during convocation ceremony and other annual university events (such as Quality Day, IRIIE), free of charge. Establish programmes which are long-term and in-depth, beginning with career awareness activities at the university. The programmes must be structured in keeping with the local needs and preferences that should reflect the kinds of employers in the community. Reach agreements with supervisors at learning sites about the importance of employability skill development for students. The experiential learning is important.

#### 8.5.5 Career Talks at *Kulliyyah*

IIUM must increase the frequency of career talks conducted throughout the year at *Kulliyyah*. It can impose a mandatory requirement for SRC at university as well as societies and associations at the *Kulliyyah* to conduct career talks and organise career fair as annual event that requires compulsory attendance and participation of the third and final year students. Among the content of such talks is to provide mindfulness about building employability 'profiles' or 'portfolios' which supply a more accurate picture of the students command of the skills and traits employers value.

#### 8.5.6 Entrepreneurship Related Activities

The University also should encourage and promote entrepreneurship related activities among students by providing support, facilities and means especially on campus. Most importantly, the entrepreneurship programmes must be backed up by active initiatives. Entrepreneurship clubs can be a pivotal hub to help students turn their ideas and passions into businesses and develop future business leaders. The University can become small business development incubators. Small businesses have generated 64 percent of new jobs according to a survey by the Kauffman Foundation (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2000).

Johns Hopkins University for instance, would be a good case study to be exemplified by IIUM. It establishes the Hopkins Student Enterprises, which is

student-run organisation that helps students' business ventures off the ground. Hopkins undergraduates developed the group in 2008 as an expansion of their profitable first business, which is known as the Hopkins Student Storage. It collects and stores student items over the summer. They have since launched three more student-run businesses - a graphic design company, a consulting agency, and a care package delivery service - that serve the students and community.

Students must be connected to entrepreneurs living in the surrounding area, who can come to campus to motivate the students unaware of the value of entrepreneurship. This effort is particularly appropriate for non-business students. There are a huge number of students that still do not think of entrepreneurship as a viable career alternative for them.

Institutional support is invaluable for a venture like this. Students can be restrained about having entrepreneurship club and entrepreneurial related activities, but as long as the University provide endless support to fundraising, to connecting students to alumni, and to making sure things are sustained, the students who cannot find a job, can always create one.

#### 8.5.7 Providing Impermanent Employment Opportunity

Recruit our fresh graduates to fill up part-time and temporary jobs on campus including requesting commercial banks operating on campus. This conveys high expectations about being employed and familiarises them with workplace norms. Students need model attention to quality, thoroughness and a positive attitude. By monitoring and supporting students' working performance as a consultant and worker, in return may produce intelligent, promising employees.

### 8.6 Conclusion

There are several aspects worth to be elaborated so that subsequently further improvements can be developed. Among the most significant ones are:

#### 8.6.1 Graduates' Responses to the MOE Survey

This report is based on the responses of the graduates (Class of 2013). Of 4039 graduates, 3526 (88.7%) responded to the questionnaire, whilst 513 (11.3%) did not do so. Ideally, it was compulsory for all graduates to respond to this

questionnaire. The mechanism was to monitor their participation by controlling their attendance to the graduation ceremony. The University feels that majority of the students are much awaited to celebrate their graduation ceremony. Without filling the questionnaire, the graduating students will not be able to take/hire the graduation robe. Eventually, they will never be able to participate in the graduation event. In relation to this, there are several justifications for not receiving (100.0%) responses among the graduates (Class of 2013).

Firstly, they are numbers of graduates, particularly the international (non-Malaysian) ones who are either not interested or not able to participate in the ceremony due to distance limitation and other personal reasons. Under this circumstances, they are most certain will not answer the questionnaire.

Secondly, there are also cases whereby graduating students wrongly filled in the questionnaire. Upon investigating, the graduating students were found either confused or ignored the filtered questions. Due to their inability to categorise themselves in the right category, there are cases of missing or misleading data. The case is very clear in Part E (Current Job Status); Part F (Employment); and Part G (Unemployment/Not Working/Others). The graduating students are assumed to be unmindful in answering the questions as instructed. They were not careful enough to comprehend thoroughly the operational definition.

### 8.6.2 Graduates' Employability Status

To recapitulate this section, particularly on employment and employment issues, it is pertinent to feature employed, unemployed and others status of IIUM graduates. Based on the questionnaire designed by MOE, the current employed – both full time and part time – is (53.1%), unemployed (24.9%) and others status (22.0%).

There is a distinct justification for the rate representation. This report represents the number of graduates who were employed within three months after their convocation ceremony. The three-month data collection duration is a directive from MOE, which IIUM has honestly adhered to. The data was cleaned and analysed immediately once the three-month data collection duration had ended. Therefore, the short given duration may influence the data output. Nevertheless, the existing rate significantly represents the employability situation of IIUM graduates. This is to say that half of the graduates manage

to secure a job in a short period of time. This fact provides a noteworthy employability indicator for the university.

### 8.6.3 MOE Questionnaire Design

Year by year, the Ministry of Education (and the Ministry of Higher Education) had improved the design of the items in the questionnaire. It is done so that it may better suit the interests and needs of graduates of various universities in Malaysia while still maintain its standardisation for all universities.

However, additional inputs must be emphasised on Part E (Current Job Status), that is, item 40, and Part G (Unemployed/Not working/Others), that is item 54 of the questionnaire. It is assumed that most graduates find confusion to answer these items due to the filtering questions in nature. This contributes to the technical problem in analysing the data. It is suggested that MOE amend item 40 in Part E and item 54 in Part G properly. The filtering questions must accurately point the graduates in the right part of the questionnaire to avoid them from being confused in answering the question effectively.

It is suggested that the categories in Part G must be amended so that it does not combine the 'Not working' and 'Others'. Based on the operational definition set by MOE, 'Others' are those graduates who were 'further study'; 'chambering'; 'waiting for teaching placements'; 'currently in SL1M/SLSM/SLG/SUTKS/INSEP'; 'waiting for placements (medical/pharmacy/dentistry)'; 'waiting for work placements'; and 'waiting for place to further study'. Technically, this group of the graduates is not unemployed. Their employability situation is different from the graduates who were 'still seeking for a job'; 'job offered was not suitable'; family responsibility; lack of self-confidence to face the working world'; 'choose not to work'; not interested to work'; attending short course'; 'have a rest'; and 'health problem'. For this group, they definitely were not working (or unemployed) graduates. Insofar, the current arrangement of the questionnaire may bring to misleading findings about employment and unemployment issues among IIUM graduates (batch of 2013).

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