

Who is that doctor you are considering employing?



In a recent article, there was much controversy about a politician who had been writing Doctor before his name for many years. On further investigation, he was a “doctor in the ministry of counselling” from Trinity International University, Ghana’s campus in South Africa in 2008.

“Trinity is not accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority, the National Qualifications Framework, or the Council on Higher Education for Higher Education Qualifications. Trinity is also not accredited by the Ghana Tertiary Education Committee, although the ‘university’ operates out of Ghana.” Due to the institutions’ lack of accreditation or importance outside of a church, South Africans thought that this “Doctorate” should not count. Nor should this politician refer to himself as a doctor.

This poses the question, how relevant is a qualification if it does not bring the required skill set to the party?

On this topic, Jenny Reid, Founder of iFacts, said that she most definitely would not be treated medically by a doctor who did not have a medical qualification, and she questioned why a company would employ a “doctor” without verifying what doctorate had been obtained.

The concern here is that, if doctorates are so easily obtained, when they used to be a symbol of higher learning and one could trust that the Doctor in question had been beholden to severe rules to receive said doctorate, can you trust any doctor at all?

Further investigation revealed that the university’s qualifications are accredited nowhere else but by the Association of Independent Christian Colleges and Seminaries. Trinity International Bible University is

believed to have confirmed that it is not registered in South Africa as a private higher education institution but claims that it is registered and active as a Christian university in Africa.

Reid said that the pinnacle achievement in education is a doctoral degree. These degrees also open the doors to exclusive jobs and bigger salaries, making this case, a simple opportunist taking advantage of a trusted system.

Globally, business PhD holders earn 9% more over their lifetimes than those with only master's degrees. In education, that number rises to 24%. The reason is simple.

The doctorate identifies that a student has mastered either the knowledge of a subject or the applied theory of one. Achieving the relevant degree firmly establishes one as an authority in her field or discipline. Those are qualities that employers are looking for when filling leadership or top positions within their company.

There is a further complication in that people have honorary doctorates. This degree is often conferred as a way of honouring a distinguished visitor's contributions to a specific field or society in general, however, they should not be considered as being even close to the real thing.

Honorary doctorates are purely titular degrees in that they confer no rights on the recipient and carry with them no formal academic qualification. Recently Rassie Erasmus, the current Springbok rugby coach, received an honorary doctorate in coaching science. This is a relevant qualification Reid believes, but this was given to Erasmus based on his lifelong rugby career which began in 1997 and then coaching career which began in 2017. In this case, the degree has no bearing on his current career or job title.

When hiring a person with a doctorate do not be fooled by the title. Often academics are assumed to be trustworthy based on their credentials, but international research shows that whether it is a bachelor's, master or doctor's degree there is a similar amount of fake evidence presented in job applications.

Reid said that of the qualifications assessed in 2023/2024 through iFacts 6% of matric certificates and 4% of tertiary qualifications were fraudulent.

Reid stressed that regardless of the level of qualification of a job candidate, a thorough background check should be done and besides the verification of information presented, skill assessments, social media risk assessments and integrity tests should be considered.

Hire with confidence, hire with iFacts.