

# Faking it for medicine - Nation | The Star Online

A UNIVERSITY in a neighbouring country is accepting unqualified students for its medical and dentistry programmes, a student who only wanted to be known as Jade, 21, claims.

There's a lot of hanky-panky going on, she suspects, alleging that a college in the Klang Valley sends students with Es and Ds in their science subjects to study there.

"The college – an agent for the university – told my friend with poor SPM results not to worry as it could easily be taken care of. Even the Higher Education Ministry's (MOHE) Non-Objection Certificate (NOC) can be bought, although most Malaysian students there don't have it. Arts students are also allowed to take up medicine and dentistry there," she claims, sounding shocked.

She says many of her friends are struggling there because the syllabus and exams are not in English, despite being told otherwise.

Thina, 23, who paid a "large sum" to the college, backs the claims. He says he did not verify with the authorities claims that the university is recognised. At the time, all he could think of was the excitement of leaving to study abroad.

"Some aren't even science stream students and they don't have the NOC. I won't be surprised if the number of qualified students are one out of 50. The college lures these unqualified students by assuring them that poor SPM results don't matter and that the NOC can be bought for less than RM20,000."

Although qualified to study medicine, he's surprised that he "somehow got in" despite being unprepared for the university's entrance exam. The Penangite, currently studying in another higher institution, left the university in his third semester.

The university's system is extremely bad and students have to put up with rude and unprofessional lecturers, he complains, lamenting how even basic classroom facilities like fans, are non-existent. Alleging that fees were increased without notice or explanation, he says the college had promised to sort the matter out but later washed its hands.

"There's no time limit to graduate – you can take up to nine years even, especially in the dental faculty. They assured me that I'd be able to complete my studies within 5½ years but I realised many were stuck up to seven or eight years. I'd rather not take my chances graduating from a university like that," he shrugs.

Since 2012, there have been many complaints against the college and university on [complaintsboard.com](http://complaintsboard.com).

"Malaysians must be warned. I'm sure students studying there won't come forward because they themselves aren't qualified and wouldn't want the Government to know."

Urging the Government to act on the errant education providers, Jade worries about the quality of future healthcare professionals. She thinks it's pointless for smart, hardworking students to pursue medicine or dentistry as "anyone can get in now".

Brushing off the "baseless accusations" as the work of jealous competitors, a spokesperson for the college says

it no longer recruits students for the “world-class university”, preferring to focus on its own courses and other local institutions.

“We don’t recruit students any more but because of our long-standing relationship, we help book examination halls for the university’s prospective candidates – that’s all. The university selects the students and handles all the paperwork. We’re not involved,” he clarifies, stressing that “such an established university wouldn’t accept fake or forged SPM certificates”.

“The university has a website. Everything is on the Internet. Do you think it’s so easy to fool people nowadays?”

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip wants the Health Ministry to consider a Clinical Aptitude Test for prospective medical and dentistry students. The law, he says, must be amended to ensure that anyone circumventing this requirement would not be employed by the Health Ministry.

Students must have the minimum qualification to read medicine whether locally or abroad, or there may be consequences particularly in employment opportunities later on, Health director-general and Malaysian Medical Council president Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah warns.

The MOHE cautions: Parents must be vigilant when choosing which university to send their child to. Do thorough research. There are many options out there that suit your child’s interests and qualification.