

Preston Uni denies report, says it is genuine
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Dismissing allegations reported in a Aug 23 *Star* report that it is a degree mill, Preston University Chancellor Dr Jerry P Haensch said that the article contained many "factual errors" about the status and reputation of the institution in the USA and the world.

He added that the research about Preston was very "superficial" and "limited to blindly repeating an erroneous assumptions and carelessly associating Preston with a less reputable school".

Echoing his view, Master of Business Administration lecturer Rudy Chiu said that the reporters who wrote the article had no real understanding of the situation.

Stressing that Preston has never sold a degree, Chiu said that the university demands that students attend all training series.

"We conduct a viva on their submitted assignments," he said.

Responding also to the allegations, its administrator Nicole Yow (*left*) said that the university is a properly run institution and remained unaccredited by choice as it has 40 academic partners throughout the world.

"If it became accredited, it would have to close all its overseas centres as accredited institutions need to follow highly stringent rules which usually prevent them from franchising its programmes overseas," she said.

Concurring with this, Haensch said in a statement that because Preston is not accredited, it is able to offer academic programmes in many countries at affordable costs with flexible teaching schedules.

The US Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation says that "Accreditation is not appropriate for every school. A school may have very legitimate reasons for not seeking accreditation. A school's accreditation status should never be the sole criteria for assessing the quality or validity of an institution."

On Aug 23, the *Star* ran an opinion article entitled "Dodgy Degrees" claiming how "bogus" universities evade authorities.

Does not fit the bill as bogus

Among the pointers to look for in a 'bogus' college are:

- 1) Conducting online courses to avoid setting up a base in any country and meeting their accreditation requirements
- 2) Obtaining testimonies from leading academics without their knowledge for validation
- 3) Signing up with dubious accreditation bodies to validate itself, and if that fails, set up own accreditation body

Responding to these allegations, Preston University affirmed that:

- 1) Courses are fully assessed and no one has ever 'passed' without going through the formal assessment.
- 2) Coursework is graded by the facilitators who all have industrial experience and are qualified academically.
- 4) Assignments are moderated.
- 5) Programmes come with good text, training notes and e library support.
- 6) No one has been conferred an Honorary Degree from Preston USA to date.

Based in Petaling Jaya, the college is currently supported by a group of 20 teaching staff and has over 200 students in its MBA programme.

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