

Employability *of* Islamic Studies Graduates *in* Malaysia



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EMPLOYABILITY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES GRADUATES IN MALAYSIA

Rising trend in graduate unemployment especially after the deep economic recession experienced by the Malaysian economy precipitated by the East Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 has become a national issue. Policy makers, academic administrators, stakeholders and the public alike are greatly concerned with graduate employability or a lack of it. A lack of employability has a negative impact on the ability of the graduates to obtain employment. One dimension of employability is having the skills and knowledge required to acquire and retain a job (Saterfield and McLarty, 1995). A graduate who is not equipped with the required skills may find it difficult to obtain employment, let alone to retain it. In the Malaysian context, the often cited reasons for graduate unemployment are lack of communication skills, poor command of English and no work experience. This book reports the findings of a research on graduate employability of Islamic studies graduates from local universities viz. UKM, UIAM and UM which offer Islamic studies programs. The sample consisted of graduates who completed their studies at the end of 1999/2000 academic session and received their degrees in 2000. The study sought information on the key skills that have been given or transferred to the graduates during the course of their studies in their respective universities. From the findings, unemployed Islamic studies graduates in the sample chosen were, by their own assessment, lacking in many of the soft skills such as communication skill, English proficiency skill, interviewing and ICT skills. As a comparison, employed Islamic studies graduates in the sample chosen listed in order of importance academic achievement, communication skills, English proficiency skills, self confidence and field of study as the major factors influencing employability.

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