

3. University of Waterloo's devalued MBET degree

The main reason for my visit to Canada, on a student visa in September, 2015 was to attend the University of Waterloo's graduate studies program called the Masters of Business, Entrepreneurship, and Technology (MBET). The course was successfully completed in August, 2016. Following this I applied for and obtained an open work visa and a Temporary Resident Permit that was valid for three years.

In early-2018 I found out that the MBET program had been derecognized by the Ontario Ministry of Education as a proper graduate study program that could be used as a basis for obtaining a three year post-graduate work permit. As such I am grieved that my hard earned degree was significantly degraded in value and was delegitimized by Ontario's government.

All of the costs incurred during MBET and subsequent hardships arising from the degree certificate being derecognised are damages owed by the responsible parties to me and other members of MBET. In this particular matter, the responsible parties are:

1. University of Waterloo: For not creating and maintaining an adequate standard of coursework and graduate study program that could be recognized as such by the Canadian government.
2. The Ontario Ministry of Education: For it carelessly derecognized a program that had lasted for more than fifteen years at one of its premier institutes, without appropriate consideration for consequences of its actions on all of the previous and future cohorts of the MBET programme. Some of the more severe consequences of devaluing and degrading the MBET degree by the education ministry are explained as follows:
 - a. All legitimate graduate level study programs from Canadian universities allow students to become eligible for a three year post-graduate work visa upon successful completion of the program, except for MBET, which was relegated to the eligibility of a post-graduate work visa valid only for a single year.
 - b. One of the severely negative consequences of this issue impacting MBET graduates needing a work visa arises when potential employers try to verify the degree's existence as a full fledged masters program during a candidate's background checks. The companies performing background checks note that:
 - i. The degree does not even exist because of a confusion between MBE and MBET acronyms used in accreditation databases to designate the program, or
 - ii. The MBET degree is practically a one year certificate course that the provincial government does not acknowledge as a bonafide graduate degree worthy of a

proper post-graduate work visa. A proper post-graduate work visa would have been valid free of any hassles to the potential employer as well as the employee for three years, instead of only a single year.

- c. This issue also prompts potential employers to pass on hiring an employee who may have to leave after a year due to a lack of a valid work permit, or due to the risk of the company needing to bear the burden of legal costs and other hassles in assisting an extension of the single year work permit.
- d. The above mentioned points highlight a systemic fault that makes the University of Waterloo alumnus appear shady and dubious during background checks resulting in damage to reputation and loss of economic opportunities.
- e. These faults also result in damages to the person's health from the undue stress of not having a proper post-graduate work visa with sufficient duration of time to support the well qualified person's ability to settle in Canada.

The University of Waterloo's — Conrad School of Business and Entrepreneurship, is likely to stay silent on this matter, or present a rebuttal against the claims by using the copout of:

"It's a feature, not a bug!"

They will most likely argue that the ability to avail a one year long masters program that does not count towards a proper post-graduate work visa valid for three years, is somehow ``preferred`` by most students applying for the MBET program. However, one can observe that only Canadian residents and citizens who attend the program remain unaffected by this issue.

If this intrinsic issue with the MBET program's design wasn't a fault and was indeed a feature worthy of providing a genuine advantage to students then shouldn't it be saliently advertised as such, within all marketing materials as well as the university's prospectus of study programs. But, the fact that the graduates of the program will be thrust into a gray area concerning visa requirements, work permits, and labour rights with subsequent immigration hurdles, isn't mentioned anywhere in the advertisements that attract international students to the MBET degree program.

Thus, the choice of policies and design of the MBET program has put international students through undue hardships. And therefore, the University of Waterloo continues to harmfully discriminate against foreign students who are disproportionately and negatively impacted by the faults within the Conrad School's flagship program.

Moreover, is it merely a coincidence that students from the Middle-East are more often than not, given a one year post-graduate work visa by Canadian federal authorities when such students apply

for a work permit using MBET degree, and other international students who graduate with the same degree, sometimes, get a three year post-graduate work visa by doing nothing different in their application for a visa and work permit?

How is it that the Government of Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Education, and the University of Waterloo managed to install and maintain such a booby-trap?

Such a trap is a nested and hidden barrier on the path to achieving regularized work, permanent residency, and citizenship. And it robs only the particular category of students needing a postgraduate work visa in Canada from availing socio-economic opportunities, who are unjustly and unfairly discriminated against.

This severely discriminatory and systemic issue arising from University of Waterloo's inadequate educational standards, faulty policies, and the grossly inconsiderate behaviour of the Ontario Ministry of Education, needs to be taken up as a class action lawsuit against the responsible parties.

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