

From: [Thomson.MT](#)
To: [O'Connor.D](#)
Subject: RE: Identifying Fake Graduation Documents
Date: 16 July 2019 16:00:36

Thanks for the super fast response!

From: O'Connor,D
Sent: 16 July 2019 15:58
To: Thomson,MT <M.T.Thomson@lse.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: Identifying Fake Graduation Documents

Hi Mark, no problem:

“Thank you for your email. We have checked our records and both the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of London confirm that Tsai Ing-Wen was correctly awarded a PhD in Law 1984.

All PhDs from that period were awarded via the University of London and would have been sent first to their Senate House Library. It is clear from Senate House Library records that a copy was received. Senate House have confirmed they sent their copy of the thesis to the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies (IALS).

We have corresponded with the University of London about the thesis and extensive checks have been made but neither Senate House nor IALS are able to locate a copy of the thesis.

However, President Tsai Ing-wen recently provided the LSE Library with a facsimile copy of the thesis, *Unfair trade practices and safeguard actions*. This will be available to view in the library's reading room shortly.

Questions regarding the physical degree certificate should be directed to the University of London.”

/END

Best wishes,

Danny

From: Thomson,MT
Sent: 16 July 2019 15:54
To: O'Connor,D <D.O'Connor@lse.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: Identifying Fake Graduation Documents

Thanks Danny – really sorry, could I trouble you to send me the agreed wording?

From: O'Connor,D
Sent: 15 July 2019 10:02
To: Thomson,MT <[M.T.Thomson@lse.ac.uk](#)>; GLPD.Info.Rights <[GLPD.Info.Rights@lse.ac.uk](#)>;

Sahrle,M <M.Sahrle@lse.ac.uk>

Cc: Annis,M <M.Annis@lse.ac.uk>

Subject: RE: Identifying Fake Graduation Documents

Many thanks, Mark and Rachael.

Additional background information from Clive Wilson is attached. Tsai's office claim she re-applied for a certificate in 2015, hence the 'new' version with the current VC signature (see attached).

Nonetheless, I do not think this is for LSE to go into. This is for the UoL to answer/ not answer.

Therefore, yes, we should reply with the standard line. However, it makes sense to address the key point of the email – so it would be worth adding something at the end, such as:

“Questions relating to the physical degree certificate should be directed to the University of London.”

Best wishes,

Danny

From: Thomson,MT

Sent: 15 July 2019 09:28

To: GLPD.Info.Rights <GLPD.Info.Rights@lse.ac.uk>; Sahrle,M <M.Sahrle@lse.ac.uk>

Cc: O'Connor,D <D.O'Connor@lse.ac.uk>; Annis,M <M.Annis@lse.ac.uk>

Subject: RE: Identifying Fake Graduation Documents

Thanks Rachael, very helpful.

In which case, Danny, I suggest that I respond with the standard line. What do you think?

MTT

From: GLPD.Info.Rights

Sent: 15 July 2019 09:12

To: Thomson,MT <M.T.Thomson@lse.ac.uk>; Sahrle,M <M.Sahrle@lse.ac.uk>

Cc: O'Connor,D <D.O'Connor@lse.ac.uk>; Annis,M <M.Annis@lse.ac.uk>

Subject: RE: Identifying Fake Graduation Documents

Hello all,

Yes this is personal data, however we have a legitimate interest in confirming degrees held. It is also in the student/alum's legitimate interest that we confirm that we have granted them a degree. If someone is claiming a degree that we have not granted, this is fraud. Technically we do not hold that personal data, so we can confirm we have not granted that individual a degree.

Treating this as a FoI request, Section 40(2) comes into play. Personal data can be

released/confirmed if such a release is in line with the data protection principles, particularly the first, which is processing lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner. The main question is would it be fair to the data subject to release the personal data. In this case, yes, it would be fair. There is also the public interest argument in this case in confirming that the degree was granted.

Hope this helps,
Rachael

From: Thomson,MT

Sent: 15 July 2019 08:04

To: Sahrle,M <M.Sahrle@lse.ac.uk>

Cc: O'Connor,D <D.O'Connor@lse.ac.uk>; Annis,M <M.Annis@lse.ac.uk>; GLPD.Info.Rights <GLPD.Info.Rights@lse.ac.uk>

Subject: FW: Identifying Fake Graduation Documents

Michele, greetings

By way of background, the student listed on the certificate is the current president of Taiwan. She is a graduate of the School, having completed her PhD in 1984. As part of the current election campaign, certain factions are trying to suggest that her doctorate is either a fake, or was never awarded.

This argument has gained some traction because the whereabouts of her thesis are unknown. At the time, all LSE degrees were conferred by the University of London. Our records show that she satisfied all of the requirements necessary for the award of the degree (e.g. she passed her viva). They also show that a copy of the thesis was sent to Senate House, whose own records show that they then sent it on to the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. It is here where the trail goes cold.

Danny and his colleagues in the press office have developed a standard form of words that we are all using to deal with the many inquiries we are getting about this matter.

The one below, however, is the first that I have received that asks for confirmation that the attached certificate is real. Given that it is a UoL award, I'm not sure it is for us to confirm its veracity one way or another, and am minded to simply reply with Danny's standard response.

Before I do, however, I wanted to check with you what we would do in any other case where someone approached us, asking us to verify an award. I know that this happens when potential employers are seeking to verify a candidate's award. But this is usually accompanied by authorisation from the graduate.

Is this personal information, and so requires the graduate's authority? Or do we have a duty to defend the integrity of LSE degrees by confirming (or otherwise) any queries where the legitimacy of an award is in question? Have also copied in Rachael for a view.

Grateful for your views.

All best,

MTT

