

# Impact of #FeesMustFall protests on the future of students

Recent student protests across South Africa begs the question of whether students will perform well enough in their exams to pass the year.



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Ina van der Merwe, Director and CEO of Managed Integrity Evaluation (MIE), notes that the disruption to and suspension of lectures over this time means that students have missed out on crucial time needed to prepare themselves for upcoming examinations, this in turn may have a negative impact on the already elevated rate of qualification fraud in South Africa.

"Although many universities have revised examination dates to allow students time to study, these dates are likely to be closer together, placing students under immense pressure to study as much as they can over a shorter period of time," says van der Merwe.

"An additional concern in this regard is the likelihood of those who fail their respective courses turning to qualification fraud to secure employment next year.

Statistics South Africa recently announced that South Africa's unemployment rate has increased to 25.5% in the third quarter of 2015.

With this context of unemployment, the job market is increasingly competitive. "Even those who graduate from tertiary institutions struggle to find employment.

"With this in mind, one needs to consider the level of desperation among job-seekers, especially those who have not obtained their qualification but who wish to enter the workforce. They may find themselves taking extreme measures to secure an opportunity. One such measure would be lying about or altering their results or even purchasing a fraudulent qualification from a degree mill."

Through its background screening efforts, the company has noted a massive increase in cases of qualification fraud, witnessing growth of 200% in the past five years (2009 - 2014). In these instances, candidates were never awarded the qualification they claimed to have. Confirmed as non-authentic, these qualifications were found to be forged, altered or obtained from a degree mill.

"More and more businesses are screening potential employees before formally hiring them. Students are urged not to lie about their performance or qualifications as this can seriously damage their reputation and hinder their chances of finding a job and furthering their career in future," she concludes.

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