

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Chairman,

I have been active in the educational services sector for over twenty years. I have worked with TAFE delivering content to Chinese colleges, so my experience is in developing IT content. I would like to raise a concern about how the curriculum is being now adjusted by overseas companies. As a service, Australian education is exported as it is of high value. It is my worry that Australian IT degrees are being replaced with international content and is still being called Australian. Students need to easily compare IT degrees for their future employability.

It mainly concerns the following area, ICT training. *Based on more than 30 years of technical accumulation and talent cultivation practices, Huawei ICT Academy has developed innovative university-enterprise cooperation solutions for 927 universities worldwide, covering course development, teacher training, and internships. The solutions cover three phases: talent cultivation, certification, and transfer. Huawei has worked with universities to build a talent ecosystem that provides momentum for the ICT industry. By the end of 2019, Huawei ICT Academy had been deployed in China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the Southern Pacific, covering 72 countries. The universities that cooperate include some of the most highly rated in China, such as Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Fudan University, as well as world-renowned universities, including Bauman Moscow State Technical University, University of Malaya, and the University of New South Wales.*

<https://e.huawei.com/au/case-studies/leading-new-ict/2020/ict-talent-ecosystem-huawei-ict-academy-ict-competition>

The idea is that Huawei and others provides their curriculum for free which is very attractive to cash-poor universities. These universities adopt this material and form units which map to Huawei certification. The idea is to attract more Chinese students and to have an industry partner. I can see this as a good business decision. Cisco (a US company which supplies 90% of the Australian market) has also free training. The Cisco networking and cybersecurity certification is loved by employers. The IT degree graduate often has to undertake separate later certification. TAFE also provide degrees based on Cisco such as Bachelor of Information Technology (Network Security) degree. This makes a graduate degree more attractive to industry.

The problem I have is with the label for industry certification. Education (especially university level) was not tied with a particular certification. I worry that if the universities have the badge of Australian education with certification with Huawei or Cisco it would be better to market it as Huawei/Cisco curriculum delivered in Australia so that students would know that their future employment would be limited to this certification.

I have no problem with using overseas content as there are reciprocal obligations in any contract, however there are differences between the relationships. The relationship between say NSW TAFE and Cisco is transparent, TAFE students can study and sit for certifications after their Diploma while often Huawei connections are not always seen. Is it a general degree or a degree tied to certification?

My point is that if you promote your courses you should clearly indicate to students that you are running vendor specific courseware.

Regards,

Bruce Williams B. Eng M. Eng Sc (Sydney University)

