

COMPETITION COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

ENQUIRY REPORT

(Under the provisions of Section 37(1) of the Competition Act, 2010)

IN THE MATTER OF UNACCREDITED ENGINEERING INSTITUTES FOR DECEPTIVE MARKETING PRACTICES

BY

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Dated: 18/06/12

1. BACKGROUND:

This enquiry report has been prepared pursuant to Section 37 (1) of the Competition Act, 2010 (the "Act") when a letter by Mr. Firdous Ayub (Advocate) was received by the Commission highlighting the practice of unaccredited engineering institutes offering engineering degrees (hereinafter referred to as the '**Institutes**').

The letter made reference to an article published in the Express Tribune regarding a solemn protest carried out by students against Hajvery University, Lahore before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The letter stated that Hajvery University, Lahore, has awarded BS Honours degrees to the students instead of BS Engineering degrees. As per the letter, the "students said they had learnt that Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) did not accept their degrees since the university did not fulfill its requirements and demanded serious action against the university administration". It was also submitted that the matter was not confined to one university and emphasized that this practice has a multi-pronged effects resulting in wastage of money and time of both students and parents. Copy of the letter along with article in the Express Tribune is attached as Annex-A.

This contention was also raised and highlighted by many newspapers. There are numerous institutions that are advertising and offering unaccredited engineering courses in various disciplines. Students being unaware about the accreditation of the disciplines seek admission in it and after the completion of their course they attain a degree which cannot enable them to reach their desired destinations. These engineering universities purportedly claim to be accredited, mislead students by offering degree programmes with respect to all disciplines and relevant years as advertised in print and electronic media.

On receipt of the letter, the Commission in its 9th meeting dated 29-12-11 decided to initiate an enquiry under Section 37 (1) of the Act into the practice of unaccredited institutions offering engineering degrees. The Competent Authority appointed Mr. Ikram ul Haq, Director (SP), Ms. Mehreen Ibrahim, Deputy Director (Legal) and Ms. Marrayum Pervaiz, Assistant Director (OFT) as enquiry officers into the, *prima facie*, violation of deceptive marketing practices by engineering institutes prohibited under Section 10 of the Act. The enquiry officers were directed to carry out the enquiry in accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR) that are attached as Annex-B.

1.1. Higher Education Commission (HEC):

HEC under the powers provided under Section 10 (1) (o) of the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002 (the "HEC Ordinance") has established the Equivalence & Accreditation Committee. This committee considers recognition of degrees/diplomas of local universities as well as equivalences of degrees/diplomas held from foreign universities vis-à-vis the degrees/diplomas of universities in Pakistan. Therefore, the Equivalence & Accreditation Committee of HEC is responsible for recognizing degrees/diplomas offered by any local or foreign university.

HEC in accordance with the powers available to it under Section 10 of the HEC Ordinance has issued Guidelines for establishment of a new university or an institution of higher education (the "**HEC Guidelines**"). The HEC Guidelines set out the procedure for establishing a new university or institution of higher education. The first step for establishing a new university or institution for higher education is to

fulfill the legal requirements in the case of private universities. Once this has been done, a feasibility report has to be submitted with the Chairman of HEC in accordance with the General Institutional Requirements Proforma (Form PU-01) along with the prescribed fee. HEC will review the feasibility report and may find that further consideration is required by a panel appointed by HEC, which may ask for additional information. However, in the event clearance has been given to the feasibility report, an Inspection Committee will be appointed to conduct a preliminary site visit/ inspection of the institution for physical verification of the infrastructure and facilities of the institution. The institute has to pay HEC the prescribed inspection fee. In case the report submitted by the Inspection Committee to HEC is satisfactory, HEC will review the draft charter and may recommend the case for grant of Charter to the Federal or Provincial Government as the case may be. Therefore, any new university or institution of higher education being established within Pakistan may obtain approval of HEC for obtaining a charter as HEC advises the Federal and Provincial Government in respect of granting of Charters.

1.2. Formation of Councils by HEC:

Section 10 (1) (e) of HEC Ordinance provides HEC the power to set up national or regional evaluation councils or authorize any existing council or similar body for the purpose of accreditation of institutes including their departments, faculties and disciplines. Pursuant to section 10 of the HEC Ordinance, there are 9 independent professional councils while 4 other councils have been established by HEC. Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is one of the 9 existing independent professional councils that have been authorized by HEC to carry out accreditation of institutes.

1.3. PEC Engineering Accreditation and Quality Evaluating Committee:

PEC has been established and functions in accordance with the provisions of the Pakistan Engineering Council Act, 1976 (the "**PEC Act**"). As per section 8 of the PEC Act, PEC's functions include accreditation of engineering qualifications for the purpose of registration of registered engineers and professional engineers; promotion of engineering education and review of courses of studies in consultation with the universities; and ensuring and managing of continued professional development through engineering academies and professional bodies. Therefore, once an institution has obtained approval from HEC and is intending to offer engineering qualifications, it has to obtain accreditation from PEC.

Section 10 and 11 of the PEC Act provides that only those engineering qualifications granted by institutions within and outside Pakistan which have been included in the First and Second Schedule of the PEC Act respectively will be regarded as accredited engineering qualifications. In the event any institution which offers an engineering qualification that has not been included in the First or Second Schedule, may apply for such qualification to be accredited by PEC and the respective Schedule to be amended accordingly.

Section 14 of the PEC Act provides that PEC shall constitute an Accreditation Committee for organizing and carrying out a comprehensive program of accreditation of engineering universities, colleges and institutions etc. according to the criteria approved by the Governing Body in consultation with HEC. Pursuant to Section 14 of the PEC Act, PEC has set up the Engineering Accreditation and Quality Evaluation Committee (EA&QEC) which works independently within the PEC Act and the Bye

laws and is supported financially by PEC. EA&QEC works in harmony with the HEC and functions through site visits to institutions by an expert committee constituted for this purpose.

The Accreditation Committee is responsible for the examination and scrutinization of the curricula of courses of studies in various disciplines of engineering and minimum level and standard of such courses including lectures, laboratory, design, drawing and field work. These examination and scrutinization reports are submitted by the committee to the Governing Body for approval.

On review of the report of the Accreditation Committee if it appears to PEC that the courses of study and examination offered by an engineering institution in Pakistan do not meet the qualifications, knowledge or skill requisite for efficient practice of engineering, PEC shall forward the report to the concerned engineering institute, asking it to submit its explanation within a given time period. On receipt of the explanation or where no explanation is submitted within the given time period, PEC may after making further inquiry as it deems fit, direct that an entry may be made in the First Schedule. EA&QEC has published an Accreditation Manual which lays down the accreditation process, criteria and weightage for accreditation, accreditation Proforma's and guidelines for the accreditors.

1.4. Engineering Program Definition:

An engineering program is an organized educational experience that consists of a cohesive set of courses or other educational modules sequenced so that reasonable depth is obtained in the upper-level courses. A definite engineering system should be obvious in the program and, again, depth should be reached in pursuing courses in engineering stem. Moreover, the program should develop the ability to apply pertinent knowledge to the practice of engineering. An engineering program must also involve the broadening educational objectives expected in modern education¹.

1.5. Accreditation:

Accreditation of undergraduate and advanced engineering education programs is an important aspect of ensuring quality according to the national and international criteria and benchmarks. According to the Accreditation Manual the process of accreditation involves an evaluation of undergraduate and postgraduate programs offered by universities and other educational providers, through a well-defined, peer review process in which endorsements based on three broadly designated parameters and eight criteria are rendered².

Accreditation is a process of quality assurance, through which a program in an approved institution is critically appraised at intervals not exceeding three years to verify that the program meets the norms and standards prescribed by the PEC from time to time. In a given institution, some programs may be accredited for three years, while some others may be accredited for one year and some even denied

¹ <http://www.pec.org.pk/EAQEC.aspx>

² http://www.pec.org.pk/downloadables/accreditation/manual_accreditation.pdf

accreditation. It is pertinent to mention that PEC accords accreditation, not to the institution as a whole, but at the program level. It means that the accreditation given by PEC is campus specific and program specific.

It is clearly mentioned in Chapter3 (Guidelines for the establishment of engineering program in Pakistan) of accreditation manual that 'It is mandatory that the new institutions should request for the initial accreditation visit of the PEC Accreditation Committee at an early stage of its establishment and ensure that all the facilities are in place before the first intake of students'³.

1.6. Accreditation Process:

An institute wishing to offer an engineering program has to submit requisite information through PEC Form AC-1. The AC-1 Form provides details of the essential accreditation requirements of engineering programs/institutions, which includes an executive summary; proof / information of status and acquisition of charter; description of management system; academic and administrative bodies and their hierarchy; financial resources, initial investment and its proof along with assurance for sound sustainable financial position; proof of completion of fulfillment of all legal formalities; separate information on requisite existing infrastructure for each discipline/program in terms of land, buildings, equipments, library, laboratories, hostels, stadium, playgrounds and other facilities; details of additions in the proposed infrastructure and the estimated time frame for completion; details of proposed programs of study / disciplines and areas of specialization; detailed course outlines of the syllabi for all proposed courses of study; clearly publicized admission criteria and all related details including number of students per discipline, admission policy, fee structure and its year wise break-up and scholarships and other financial aid programs available to needy, talented students; details of proposed examination and assessment systems; proposed measures on quality assurance for the students and teachers performance; details of faculty strength, their qualifications and experience in line with the PEC/HEC regulations, pay scales and criteria of selection and promotion of teachers in various cadres; details of any existing or proposed collaboration with national/international Engineering institutions accredited by PEC in the relevant disciplines after fulfilling PEC pre-admission eligibility requirements for seeking admissions in Engineering institution; submission of draft copies of the Act / Charter, statutes, rules and regulations for finance, students including discipline rules and service rules for the teachers; and details of the members of governing body of the proposed institution.

A new institution has to request PEC to carry out a zero visit at least six months before admitting any students to assure that the institution has in place the needed faculty, academic facilities, finances and academic management system and procedures for at least first year of the program.

The draft report of the Site Visiting Team is supposed to be shared with the candidate Institution within 30 days of the visit. The Institution retains the right to provide additional factual information as a rejoinder before the finalization of the report. The main EA&QEC will carefully evaluate the recommendations of visiting teams and may agree / disagree or change the recommendations submitting its own recommendations to the Chairman PEC. The decision of the Chairman on the

³ http://www.pec.org.pk/downloadables/accreditation/manual_accreditation.pdf

recommendations of the EA&QEC shall be final. The Secretary of the EA&QEC shall communicate the accreditation decision to the institution, along with the report of the visitation team including Form AC-2 that determines the accreditation status according to the PEC criteria for an undergraduate engineering program.

PEC will require a two day interim site visit at the end of first year of each new program to ascertain its preparedness for the next phases. During the 3rd year of the program a full accreditation visit is mandatory. The fee structure for the interim site visit and the accreditation visit has been specified by PEC.

According to Accreditation Manual Part 6.1 (v) Each institution is expected to continue to maintain the minimum standards on which accreditation has been initially given to a program. If, at any time, the EA&QEC considers that an accredited program is no longer in conformity with the required criteria, the accreditation given may be suspended or even withdrawn. The reasons for the same, however, will be communicated to the concerned Institution⁴.

1.7. Foreign Collaborations Accreditation:

In respect of foreign collaborations the HEC has issued Guidelines for Collaboration of Institutions of Higher Education in Pakistan with Institutions abroad and Opening of Campuses of Foreign Universities (the "**FC Guidelines**").

The FC Guidelines outline four different collaborative arrangements between foreign and local universities/institutions. There are:

- (a) Foreign university with no local partner, running campus and issuing the same degrees issued to students studying at the principal campus;
- (b) Local campus franchised by foreign institute where students are assessed and evaluated locally but awarded foreign degrees;
- (c) Campus managed by local partners but academic program run under split degree basis or twinning arrangements wherein part of study completed locally and part abroad or entire study completed locally but evaluation and assessment is done under supervision of an authorized agency; and
- (d) External degree programs for which tuition/facilities are provided by local campus while course of study, study materials, question papers and assessment is done by foreign universities under supervision of third party.

The FC Guidelines set out the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for collaborative arrangements between Pakistani institutes and foreign universities. According to the SOP the process of collaboration entails completion of legal formalities, submission of application in the form of collaboration proforma with the HEC along with specified fee, site inspection by HEC and grant of No Objection Certificate (NOC). In order to complete the process of collaboration, the local and foreign institutions have to fulfill certain criteria which among other things includes that the concerned foreign university is accredited/chartered by a body recognized by HEC; franchising university must carry specific provision for its operation overseas and sponsors of local institutions would be required to submit proof of such a legal provision; the application of the foreign university/institution seeking to operate in Pakistan or

⁴ http://www.pec.org.pk/downloadables/accreditation/manual_accreditation.pdf

through local collaboration must submit a no objection certificate from the concerned embassy in Pakistan which will also certify the accredited status of the institution; application should give details of physical, human and financial resources, admission procedure, course curricula, fee, and other terms and conditions of collaboration; and the foreign university will submit a Refundable Performance Guarantee Fee (RPGF) in the name of the Chairman of HEC for the specified amount which shall be refunded after a prescribed period, not less than 3 years and which may be extended in case of any violations of conditions/requirements or non performance by the institution. In addition offshore institutions have to fulfill financial requirements that include maintenance of account of endowment fund, tangible assets & working capital.

HEC shall scrutinize the application submitted by the sponsors of the concerned institution and if it finds that further consideration is required, HEC will appoint a panel to thoroughly scrutinize the feasibility report. The panel may either request for additional information from the applicant or recommend that a preliminary inspection of the institution be carried out. An inspection committee is appointed by HEC to carry out an inspection of the institution for which the institution has to pay the concerned provincial education department or the HEC an inspection fee. Once the Inspection Committee submits a satisfactory report, HEC will require the sponsors to submit a draft of the agreement with the overseas partner(s). If HEC is satisfied with the arrangement between the local and foreign institutions, it may issue a NOC to offer the foreign degree program. This approval will be for an initial period of 3 years with periodic monitoring.

In case of degrees awarded in a professional field require to be accredited/recognized by the relevant professional body in Pakistan.

2. RESEARCH BY ENQUIRY OFFICERS:

Detail in toto of all universities/institutions offering admissions in various engineering disciplines in Pakistan was extracted from six varying daily Newspapers listed as below:

- a. Jang
- b. The News
- c. Dawn
- d. The Nations
- e. Nawa-i-Waqt
- f. Business Recorder

These extracts taken from various newspapers were limited to the months of June to October 2011. The reason for narrowing the period to 5 months is that most of the universities intake students during these months. Advertisements from aforementioned newspapers were sifted manually as well as from different websites along with their respective dates of publication. Upon the disposal of CCP a separate assignment/survey was conducted in the department of mass communications of Lahore University for women in the same context.

For the purpose of comprehensiveness and convenience the complete list of various universities displaying advertisements with their respective dates as mentioned above is enclosed as Annex-C.

The OFT department of CCP has conducted four meetings with the officials of Pakistan Engineering Council regarding accreditation process and current scenario of universities towards getting timely approvals from the councils. After detailed assessment of all the universities advertising engineering disciplines, we congregated, *prima facie*, deceptive marketing practices by institutes advertising various engineering programs with the words 'accredited/ approved/ permitted/ allowed by PEC' during the year 2011. The advertisement conveys an impression that the courses are accredited for the year 2011 also. Whereas the institutes have either obtained accreditation for the previous years or are in process to get the reaccreditation.

3. ISSUES RELATED ENGINEERING INSTITUTES:

INSTITUTES LACKING ACCREDITATION/REACCREDITATION DURING 2011:

There are 27 engineering institutes showing accreditation/approval from PEC in their advertisement during 2011 listed below:

3.1. Center for Advanced Studies in Engineering (CASE):

Center for Advanced Studies in Engineering (CASE) is a project of Engineering Education Trust (EET). CASE is affiliated with University of Engineering and Technology Taxila and offers degrees in various disciplines. They advertised Bsc (Electrical Engineering) with specialization in Telecommunication Engineering and Computer Engineering during 2011 (Copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D1).

PEC has granted accreditation in First schedule vide SRO: 237(I)/2012 to Bsc Electrical engineering (Computer or Telecommunication) for intake of batch 2004 up to 2007.

3.2. Bahria University:

Bahria University was established by the Pakistan Navy in 2000. Bahria is a Federally Chartered Public Sector multi-campus university, which has its headquarters and a campus at Islamabad, while another campus and constituent units are located in Karachi. They advertised BEE (Electronics/Telecom), BSE (Software engineering) and BCE (Computer Engineering) courses during the year 2011 (Copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D2). Their advertisement clearly affirmed that all engineering programs are accredited by PEC.

Whereas, PEC in its First schedule vide SRO: 237(I)/2012 has granted accreditation to BEE (Electronic & Telecom) for intake of batch 2005 up to 2007, BCE for intake of batch Fall-2001 up to 2007 and BSE up to intake of batch 2007. No further reaccreditation has been granted to Bahria University up till now.

3.3. National University of Computer & Emerging Sciences (FAST):

The National University of Computer & Emerging Sciences is multi-campus private sector university. The sponsoring body of the University, the Foundation for Advancement of Science and Technology (FAST) was established in 1980. University has advertised BS (Electrical Engineering) specialization in Electronics and Telecom program during the year 2011 (Copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D3). The

advertisement was for Islamabad and Peshawar campus and it states that 'The engineering programs are accredited by PEC'.

According to PEC Act's First Schedule SRO 237(I)/2012, National University of Computer & Emerging Sciences (Islamabad Campus) has been accredited for Bachelor of Science (BS) in Telecommunication Engineering for intake of Batch of 2002 – only graduates that have completed remedial education verified by the university and intake of batch 2003 to 2007. In respect of the Peshawar Campus, it is accredited for Bachelor of Science (BS) in Telecommunication Engineering for intake of batch of fall 2003 to 2007.

As per the list of universities and programs in process for accreditation provided by PEC via email, BS (Electrical Engineering) program with specialization in Electronic and Telecommunication is in the process of getting reaccreditation from PEC.

3.4. Isra University:

The University is owned by Isra Islamic Foundation. The main campus is situated in the historical city of Hyderabad with additional campuses in Karachi and Islamabad. Isra University has advertised BE (Electrical) course for Hyderabad campus only during 2011 (Copy of advertisements attached as Annex-D4).

Currently university has applied for the accreditation of BE-Electrical course, which is in continuation. There is no record of the said course in the First Schedule of PEC Act.

3.5. Wah Engineering College (University of Wah):

Wah Engineering College, a constituent of University of Wah has offered various engineering programs. The college has advertised Bsc in Mechanical, Electrical, Mechatronics, Chemical and Civil Engineering programs during 2011 (Copy of advertisements attached as Annex-D5).

According to the First schedule of PEC Act, Wah University is accredited for following courses:

Bsc Mechanical Engineering for intake batch 2004 up to 2008
Bsc Electronic Engineering for intake of batch 2004 to 2007
Bsc Mechatronics Engineering for intake of batch 2005 to 2007

Whereas, courses of Chemical, Civil and Electrical engineering are in the list of under process engineering programs to get accreditation from PEC. The nomenclature of Bsc Electronic Engineering has been changed to Electrical Engineering.

3.6. The University of Lahore:

The University of Lahore (Lahore & Islamabad Campus) has advertised BS-Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering (only for Lahore) and Civil Engineering courses during the year 2011 with the stance 'Approved by PEC' (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D6). Whereas, Bsc Electrical Engineering of Lahore campus is accredited in the First Schedule for intake of batch of fall 2003 to fall 2008. Currently the university has applied for the accreditation of all the engineering courses. The university is in the process to get the accreditation from PEC for both Islamabad and Lahore campus.

3.7. NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology (Multan):

The degree program of NFC is affiliated with Bahauddin Zakariya University. The first undergraduate engineering program was first introduced in 1994 when a batch of 40 students was admitted in Chemical Engineering discipline. The institute has advertised BS-Electrical Engineering with specialization in Electronic Engineering, Computer System Engineering and Power Engineering. It has also advertised Bs Chemical Engineering program for the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D7).

The institute is accredited for Bsc Computer System Engineering for intake of batch 2001 to 2007, Bsc Electronic Engineering for intake of batch 2001 to 2007 and Bsc chemical engineering up to intake of batch 2007. The institute has changed the nomenclature of electronic engineering and computer system engineering. University is advertising them as specialization course of electrical engineering program. Whereas, Bsc Electrical Engineering with specialization in power is only in the list of under process programs by PEC.

3.8. Institute of Business Management:

Institute of Business Management (IBM) Karachi has advertised Bs Industrial Engineering & Management program and BE in Electrical with specialization in Telecommunication during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D8). PEC accreditation is shown for both the courses individually in the advertisement.

Bs Industrial Engineering & Management is accredited in the First Schedule for intake of batch 2004 up to 2005. No further reaccreditation has been found. Whereas, the program of Bs Telecom Engineering is in process to obtain accreditation from PEC. The university has changed the nomenclature of Telecom Engineering to Electrical Engineering with specialization in Telecom.

3.9. Pakistan Airforce- Karachi Institute of Economics and Technology:

PAF-KIET has advertised BE Electronics with specialization in Electronics, Industrial Electronics, Mechatronics, Telecommunication and Avionics during 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D9). The advertisement clearly shows that the said programs are accredited by PEC. PEC has granted accreditation for BE Electronics program for intake of batch of fall 2003 to fall 2007 in the First Schedule.

3.10. Sukkur Institute of Business Administration:

Sukkur IBA has advertised BS Electrical (Telecom) engineering course during 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D10). The advertisement affirmed that PEC has approved and recognized BS Electrical (Telecom) engineering program. The said course is accredited by PEC in its First Schedule as BE in Telecommunication for intake of batch 2007 only.

3.11. Hamdard University:

Hakim Mohammed Said founded Hamdard University in 1991. Hamdard University Karachi main campus has advertised BE (Electronic Engineering, Telecom

Engineering, Computer System Engineering, Energy Engineering, Bio Medical Engineering) courses during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D11). As per the First Schedule of the PEC Act, Hamdard University's Karachi campus has accreditation for BE-Electronic engineering and BE Telecom engineering courses for intake of batch 2004 up to 2007. Whereas, Computer System Engineering course is accredited for intake of batch of fall 2000 up to 2004. Energy Engineering and Bio Medical Engineering are in the process to get the accreditation. It is pertinent to mention that the advertisement of Hamdard University has shown the accreditation by PEC as a whole for all the courses.

3.12. Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar:

Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar was established in 2001 through an Ordinance of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It has advertised BE-Electrical with specialization in Electrical, Power & Telecom, BE Civil & Mechanical courses during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D12). Currently Civil and Mechanical engineering programs are in the process to get the accreditation from PEC. However, PEC in its First Schedule has awarded accreditation to Bs-Electrical Engineering program for intake of batch 2005 up to 2006 and Bsc Civil Engineering program for intake of batch 2007 only.

3.13. Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology:

Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology Karachi has advertised BS Electronic engineering, Computer engineering, Bio medical engineering, Telecom engineering and Civil engineering courses during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D13). University took accreditation for certain period in following disciplines:

Bs telecommunication Engineering intake of batch 2008 only
Bs Computer Engineering up to intake of batch 2007
Bs Civil Engineering up to intake of batch 2008
Bs Electronic Engineering up to intake of batch 2008
Bs Bio medical Engineering up to intake of batch 2008

3.14. CECOS University:

CECOS University Peshawar has advertised Bsc (Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering) programs during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D14). PEC accreditation in the advertisement has been shown for Electrical Engineering and Civil engineering program only. According to the First Schedule, the program of Civil Engineering is accredited for intake of batch 2002 up to 2007 and Electrical engineering is accredited for intake of batch 2002 up to 2006. The university has advertised the launching of Mechanical Engineering program which is not even in the list of under process engineering programs by PEC.

3.15. Abasyn University:

Abasyn Educational System started working in 1998 in affiliation with Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan (Pakistan). The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad approved the establishment of Abasyn University and the Provincial

Government granted charter to the University in December, 2007 to function as a full-fledged University.

Abasyn University Peshawar has advertised Bsc Electrical Engineering program during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D15). The advertisement highlights that the said engineering program is permitted by PEC. There is no mention of Abasyn University in the First Schedule. This engineering program is in the list of under process engineering programs.

3.16. Foundation University:

The Foundation University Islamabad (FUI) has been established as a private sector university. It is sponsored by the Fauji Foundation. The university has advertised Bsc Telecom Engineering and Software Engineering program during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D16). The advertisement shows the accreditation of both the disciplines from PEC. PEC has granted accreditation to Bsc Telecom Engineering for intake of batch 2003 up to 2007 and Software Engineering from intake of batch 2001 up to 2007 as per the First Schedule of PEC Act.

3.17. University of Central Punjab:

The Punjab Group has its roots in a Commerce College set up in Lahore in 1985. The Group owns and operates two Universities; one of them is the University of Central Punjab chartered by the Government of the Punjab in 2002 which became operative in 2010.

University of Central Punjab Lahore has advertised Bsc Electrical Engineering program during the year 2011 (Copy of advertisements attached as Annex-D17). The advertisement shows that the program is accredited by PEC. However according to the First Schedule of PEC the university took accreditation for Bsc Electrical Engineering program for intake of batch of fall 2003 up to fall 2008.

3.18. Swedish College of Engineering and Technology:

Swedish College of Engineering and Technology Rahimyar Khan has advertised Bsc Mechanical & Electrical Engineering programs during the year 2011 (Copy of advertisements attached as Annex-D18). Bsc Mechanical engineering program is affiliated with UET Lahore whereas Electrical engineering program is affiliated with Islamia University Bahawalpur. The advertisement shows that the said programs are allowed by PEC. No mention has been made of the Swedish College of Engineering and Technology in the First Schedule of the PEC Act. Both the programs are in process to get the accreditation by PEC.

3.19. University of South Asia:

National Group of Colleges has established a chartered degree awarding higher education institution by the name of 'Institute of South Asia' in April 2003. This institute was upgraded to the status of a university on May 29, 2004. University of South Asia has advertised BE Electrical and Bachelors in Civil Engineering courses during 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D19). The advertisement clearly shows the claim of accreditation by PEC. The university has applied to get the accreditation for Civil Engineering course whereas BEE appeared in the First Schedule

for the year 2005 only by PEC. No further reaccreditation has been granted by PEC after that.

3.20. Usman Institute of Technology:

Usman Institute of Technology Karachi is affiliated with Hamdard University. It has advertised BE-Electrical with specialization in Electronic Engineering, Telecommunication Engineering and Computer Engineering courses during 2011 (Copy of advertisements attached as Annex-D20). The accreditation of courses till specific years as granted by PEC in its First Schedule is as under:

BE Computer System for intake of batch 1995 up to 2007
BE Electronics for intake of batch 1995 up to 2007
BE Telecommunication for intake of batch 2004 up to 2007

The university has also applied for the accreditation of BE electrical course. The said course is in the list of under process programs by PEC.

3.21. Synthetic Fiber Development and Application Centre (SFDAC) College of Textile Engineering:

Synthetic Fiber Development and Application Centre (SFDAC) College of Textile Engineering Karachi was established in March 1994 by the Federal Government in collaboration with UNDP/UNIDO at Korangi Industrial Area, Karachi. Institute has advertised BE Textile Engineering course during 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D21). The college is affiliated with Hamdard University. The College had obtained accreditation of BE Textile course for the batch of 2005 only. No record has been found about the reaccreditation for further years.

3.22. University of Management and technology (UMT):

University of Management and technology (UMT) has advertised BS (Electrical Engineering with specialization in Electronics & Telecom, BS (Textile Engineering, Industrial Engineering), BS (Aerospace & Avionics Engineering) courses in Institute of Textile & Industrial Science & School of Science and Technology during the year 2011 (Copy of advertisements attached as Annex-D22). However, PEC accreditation in the advertisement is mentioned for Electrical Engineering course only.

Accreditation has been granted by PEC in its First Schedule to Electrical engineering program for intake of batch 2005 up to the year 2007. Ipso facto no record has been found in any list for accreditation of BS (Textile Engineering, Industrial Engineering) and BS (Aerospace & Avionics Engineering) courses. The university has not made any claim regarding the accreditation of these courses.

3.23. Baluchistan University of Engineering & Technology Khuzdar:

Federal Government announced the establishment of Balochistan Engineering College at Khuzdar in 1973-74. After passing through different phases of construction, the college was in a position to start its academic activities in 1987-88 in various engineering disciplines. The institute was subsequently raised to the level of University just after seven years of its successful performance in the year 1994.

Baluchistan University of Engineering & Technology Khuzdar has advertised BE (Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Computer System) courses during 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D23). In the First Schedule PEC has granted the accreditation for all the courses up to the intake of batch 2007. Whereas the advertisement of 2011 shows that all the courses are accredited from PEC.

3.24. Ziauddin University:

Ziauddin University Karachi has advertised BS- Bio Medical Engineering course during 2011 with the expression 'approved by PEC' (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D24). Ziauddin University has not been listed in the First Schedule. The university has applied for the accreditation from PEC and its name appears in the list of under process engineering programs by PEC.

3.25. Institute of Industrial Electronics Engineering:

Institute of Industrial Electronics Engineering Karachi (IIEE) comes under the jurisdiction of Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (PSCIR) and Ministry of Science & Technology. However, the Institute itself is affiliated with NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi for its 4 year BE program in Industrial Electronic Engineering. The institute has advertised BE-Industrial Electronic Engineering during 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D25). PEC in its First Schedule has granted accreditation to the said course up to the intake of batch 2006-07.

3.26. Iqra University:

Iqra University Karachi is chartered by the Government of Sindh having Campuses in all the 4 Provinces. The university has advertised BE Electronic Engineering and telecom engineering courses during the year 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D26). The advertisement clearly inscribes that the said disciplines are accredited by PEC. PEC, however, in its First Schedule has given accreditation to BE telecom for intake of batch 2004 up to 2007 and BE Electronic for intake of batch 2002 up to 2006.

3.27. The University of Faisalabad:

The University of Faisalabad was established in the year 2002 under the auspices of Madina Foundation. It has four Campuses. The university has advertised Bachelor of Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Textile Engineering courses during 2011 (copy of advertisement attached as Annex-D27). The university has claimed in the advertisement that all the engineering programs are duly accredited and approved by PEC. PEC in its First Schedule has granted accreditation to BEE (telecom or electronics) for intake of batch of fall 2002 up to spring 2005, BEE (electronics) for intake of batch 2006 up to 2008 and BE in Textile for intake of batch 2005 up to 2007. Whereas, BE Electrical (Power), Bachelors of Chemical Engineering, Bachelors of Electrical Engineering (Computer System) and Bachelors of Electrical Engineering (Electronics) are in process to obtain accreditation from PEC.

4. ANALYSIS:

In order to obtain the authentic and credible data from PEC, a letter was written to PEC on March 20, 2012 in which they were asked to provide the updated copy of the

First and Second Schedule of the PEC Act along with some information in tabular form regarding above mentioned 27 institutes. Requisite information for each institute is as follows:

1. Whether institute is accredited by PEC to offer engineering programs mentioned in their advertisements during 2011?
2. Engineering courses for which accreditation has been granted & year for which accreditation is valid (please provide the period/ date of accreditation if any).
3. Courses for which institute has applied for accreditation/ reaccreditation and status of application.
4. Current year (2012) accreditation status of Institute/ University.
5. Any other relevant information/ Remarks.

A reminder was also sent on April 05, 2012 to PEC. On the very next day a letter was received from PEC. In the reply PEC submitted that the required information is available on PEC official web site i.e. www.pec.org.pk under the link of accreditation in First Schedule (Annex-E). Only those program are accredited which are included in the list of First and Second Schedule of PEC Act. Further they asserted that the detail of engineering program under process for accreditation has already been sent through email to CCP (Annex-F). It has been noticed that the web site containing First and Second Schedule has been updated by them in March 2012. The Commission on April 12, 2012 wrote a letter to PEC acknowledging their last reply.

4.1. FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

4.1.1. Accreditation/Reaccreditation Fee:

Fee structure for accreditation/reaccreditation and other visitation of PEC team for each undergraduate/post graduate engineering program per campus is as follows⁵:

Visit Type	Fee (Rs)
Accreditation/Reaccreditation	100,000
Confirmatory Visits	50,000
Interim Visits	50,000
Zero Visits	50,000
Appeals	50,000

The total cost of getting the accreditation without appeal for a specific discipline and campus is Rs: 250,000/- (Two hundred fifty thousand only). This amount is payable at the time of each visit in breakups.

4.1.2. Fee Charged By Institutes in Engineering Disciplines:

The table below shows the engineering courses advertised by the universities mentioned above in the year 2011 in comparison with the courses for which PEC has granted accreditation up to a certain year in the First or Second Schedule. The table also includes an approximate figure of the total fee being charged by each of these universities for an undergraduate degree in one of the disciplines of engineering advertised by them. The discipline in respect of which the fee relates has also been

⁵ The fee structure has been obtained from the website of PEC: http://www.pec.org.pk/fee_accr.aspx

mentioned in the table in cases where it has been specified on the websites of the universities. The figures are generally based on current information available on websites of these universities.

Institute/ University	Total Fee of 4 year Program (Rs) Approx	Courses Advertised during 2011	Courses & Years Of Accreditation
Centre for Advanced Studies in Engineering	457,000 (BE)	Bsc (Electrical Engineering) specialization in Telecom & Computer Engineering	Bsc (Electrical Engineering) Specialization in Telecom & Computer Engineering- Batch 2004 up to 2007
Bahria University	562,500 (BEE)	BEE (Electronics/Telecom), BSE (Software Engineering), BCE (Computer Engineering)	BEE(Electronics/Tel) Batch 2005 up to 2007, BSE (Software Engineering) Up to the intake of Batch 2007, BCE (Computer Engineering)- Batch fall 2001 up to 2007
National University of Computer & Emerging Sciences (FAST)	560,000	BS (Electrical Engineering)	BS(Electrical Engineering)- In process for Accreditation
ISRA University	695,000 BE(E)	BE(Electrical)	BE(Electrical)- In process for Accreditation
Wah Engineering College	498,800	Bsc Mechanical, Mechatronics, Chemical, Civil & Electrical Engineering	Bsc Mechanical Engineering- Batch 2004 up to 2008 Bsc Electronic Engineering - Batch 2004 to 2007 Bsc Mechatronics Engineering- Batch 2005 to 2007. Bsc. Chemical, Civil & Electrical Engineering - In process for accreditation

University of Lahore	553,300 (BSEE)	BS Electrical & Mechanical Engineering (only for lhr) & Civil Engineering)	BS Electrical Engineering Lhr- Intake of batch fall 2003 to fall 2008 BS Electrical & Civil Engineering (Isb)- Bsc Mechanical & Civil Engineering (Lhr)- In process for accreditation
NFC Institute of Engineering & Technology Training	336,000	BSEE with specialization in (Electronic, Computer System & Power Engineering), BS-Chemical Engineering	Bsc Computer System Engineering- Batch 2001 to 2007, Bsc Electronic Engineering- Batch 2001 to 2007 BS-Chemical Engineering- Batch 2007 Bsc EE (Power)- In process for accreditation
Institute of Business Management	522,000	BS (Industrial Engineering & Management), BE(Electrical) specialization in Telecom	BS(Industrial Engineering & Management) - Batch 2004 up to 2005 BS Telecom Engineering- In process for accreditation
PAF- KIET	434,000	BE Electronics specialization (Electronics, Industrial Electronics, Mechatronics, Telecommunication & Avionics)	BE-Electronics Batch fall 2003 to 2007
Sukkur IBA	400,000	BS-Electrical (Telecom) Engineering	BE Telecom- Batch 2007 only
Hamdard University	442,116	BE (Electronic Engineering, Telecom Engineering, Computer System Engineering, Energy Engineering, Bio Medical Engineering)	BE-Electronics & Telecom- Batch 2004 up to 2007, Computer System Engineering- Batch fall 2000 up to 2004 Energy & Bio Medical Engineering- In process for accreditation

Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology	740,852 BE Electrical, Civil & Mechanical	BE-Electrical with specialization (Electrical, Power & Telecom), BE-Civil & Mechanical	Bs Electrical Engineering- Batch 2005 to 2006 Bsc Civil Engineering- Batch 2007 only BE- Civil & Mechanical- In process for accreditation
Sir Syed University of Engineering & Technology	336,000 (BS)	BS Electronic Engineering, Computer Engineering, Bio Medical Engineering, Telecom Engineering and Civil Engineering	Bs Telecommunication Engineering- Batch 2008 only Bs Computer Engineering- Up to Batch 2007 Bs Civil Engineering- Up to Batch 2008 Bs Electronic Engineering- Up to Batch 2008 Bs Bio Medical Engineering- Up to Batch 2008
CECOS University	641,000 Bsc Engineering	Bsc (Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering)	Bsc(Electrical Engineering Batch 2002 up to 2006 Civil Engineering- Batch 2002 to 2007
Abasyn University	619,000	Bsc Electrical Engineering	Bsc Electrical Engineering- In process for accreditation
Foundation University	448,800 BS(TE)	BS Telecom & Software Engineering	BS Telecom Engineering- Batch 2003 up to 2007 BS Software Engineering Batch 2001 up to 2007
University of Central Punjab	920,000	Bsc Electrical Engineering	Bsc Electrical Engineering Batch fall 2003 up to fall 2008
Swedish College of Engineering & Technology	619,000	Bsc Mechanical & Electrical Engineering	Bsc Mechanical & Electrical Engineering- In process for accreditation

University of South Asia	768,000	BE Electrical & Civil Engineering	BE Electrical-Batch 2005 only BE Civil Engineering-In process for accreditation
Usman Institute of Technology	428,000 BE(E)	BE-Electrical specialization in Electronic Engineering, Telecommunication Engineering and Computer Engineering	BE Computer System-Batch 1995 up to 2007 BE Electronics-Batch 1995 up to 2007 BE Telecom-Batch 2004 up to 2007 BE Electrical-In process for accreditation
SFDAC College of Textile Engineering	384,000	BE Textile Engineering	BE Textile Engineering-Batch 2005 only
University of Management Technology	1,000,000 BS(E)	BS (Electrical Engineering with specialization in (Electronics & Telecom)	BS Electrical Engineering-Batch 2005 to 2007
Balochistan University of Engineering & Technology	119,600	BE-Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Computer System	BE-Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Computer System-Up to intake of Batch 2007
Ziauddin University	440,000	BS- Bio Medical Engineering	BS- Bio Medical Engineering-In process for accreditation
Institute of Industrial Electronics Engineering	280,000	BE-Industrial Electronics	BE-Industrial Electronics Batch 2006-07
Iqra University	290,992	BE-Electronics & Telecom	BE-Electronics Batch 2002 to 2006 BE-Telecom Batch 2004 to 2007
University of Faisalabad	579,900	BE Electrical, Chemical & Textile Engineering	BEE (Telecom & Electronics)- Batch fall 2002 up to 2004 BEE (Electronics)- Batch 2006 up to 2008 BE Textile-Batch 2005 up to 2007 BE-Electrical (Power), BCE, BEE(Computer System) & BEE(Electronics)- In process for accreditation

It is evident that the fee of one engineering graduate is very high ranging to Rs.1,000,000/-. Whereas, the cost of accreditation as compared to the fee for the whole discipline is very nominal. Further it is payable in 3 years. The institutes are taking huge finances from their students. With the payment of this insignificant amount an institute can assure the standard of quality education to its students instead of giving ambiguous information about accreditation.

4.1.3 Financial Losses Suffered By the Students:

Financial losses suffered by students are categorized as follow:

- Financial losses suffered by students already registered in unaccredited institutes.
- Financial losses to be suffered by students after passing out from unaccredited institutes.

4.1.3. (a) Financial losses suffered by students already registered in unaccredited institutes:

The financial loss that can be suffered by the students over the period of 4 years is approximately Rs: 1.98 billion which is derived by using the following underlying assumptions.

S.no	Description	Assumption	Source
1	Total no of unaccredited Institutes	27	Checked from research
2	Total no students in each discipline	50	Average no of students using data of different institutes
3	No of semesters during the year	2	Checked from advertisements/web sites
4	No of Disciplines	2	Average no of disciplines using data of different institutes
5	Tuition fee per semester	62,000	Average fee calculated using websites/ Advertisements of different institutes
6	Other costs per semester- books, traveling, hostel & mess expenditure (Rs 5,000/ month)	30,000	Average personal expense of students studying in these institutes

The figure of Rs 1.98 billion is derived by multiplying total no of students (50) with the following:

- No of disciplines(2)
- No of enrollments during the year (2)
- No of years (4 years)
- No of Institutes (27)
- and with the total expenditure (Rs: 92,000)

4.1.3. (b) Financial loss to be suffered by students after passing out from unaccredited institutes:

Since most of these students will be underemployed throughout their career, this would result in huge financial losses for these students and their families throughout their working life.

4.2. NECESSITY OF ACCREDITATION:

The overwhelming objective of the accreditation process is to recognize and acknowledge the value addition in transforming students admitted to the program into capable technical professionals, having sound knowledge of fundamentals and an acceptable level of professional skills and personal competence for ready employability in responsible technical assignments. Accreditation from PEC is not only important to get a better place in Pakistan but also in the international market. There is an international agreement signed between different countries for the mutual recognition of accredited engineering programs. This agreement of Washington Accord further necessitates the timely accreditation of engineering disciplines by institutes.

4.3. WASHINGTON ACCORD:

The Washington Accord, signed in 1989, is an international agreement among bodies responsible for accrediting engineering degree programs. It recognizes the substantial equivalency of programs accredited by those bodies and recommends that graduates of programs accredited by any of the signatory bodies be recognized by the other bodies as having met the academic requirements for entry to the practice of engineering.

At present Washington Accord signatories are Australia, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong China, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States. The signatories have full rights of participation in the Accord. The membership of the Washington Accord is recognition of the quality of engineering education offered in a country and an avenue to bring it into world class category.

Organizations holding provisional status have been identified as having qualification accreditation or recognition procedures that are potentially suitable for the purposes of the Accord; those organizations are further developing those procedures with the goal of achieving signatory status in due course. Bangladesh, Germany, India, Pakistan, Russia and Sri Lanka are the provisional members.

Membership of PEC will facilitate the mobility of engineering graduates and professionals from Pakistan in the international market. PEC's accreditation system will get an international recognition after full compliance. The graduates from PEC accredited programs will be facilitated for education and employment purposes in member countries on completion of the membership process.

Full membership of the Washington Accord for Pakistan is likely after two years, which would bring its academic programs, curriculum and syllabus, examination and evaluation system at par with international standards and revise its accreditation system to fully make it result oriented.

4.4. ECONOMIC IMPACT:

PEC has to improve the standards of professional engineering education in order to obtain the membership of Washington Accord. Membership of PEC will open ways for the engineering graduates registered with PEC whereas the unregistered engineers of Pakistan won't be able to recognize themselves in the local or international market. Foreign countries are investing huge amount on new investments. Professionals from different fields are often required for new projects. Countries in order to assure the competency of hired work force are considering only the members of Washington Accord for engineering related jobs. The economy of Pakistan highly depends on the income earned by the residents of Pakistan working abroad. If the situation continues it will result in the decline of foreign exchange remittances as the unregistered graduates won't be able to find appropriate place with in and outside Pakistan. They may also be exploited by being hired at lower wages.

Unemployment of professional graduates carries substantial economic and social cost. The parents and students are the innocent investors suffering huge financial losses due to the negligence of institutes. In order to capture the global market and to compete with the current scenario it is important to have a professional degree that has been recognized at national and international level.

5. CONCLUSION:

Accreditation of any course is mandatory as envisaged and enshrined in the respective law upon the subject. It is basically the process that ensures the quality of the program and further verifies and affirms that the said program fulfill the basic criteria, norms and standards as prescribed and specified by the PEC. All the above mentioned universities are using the stance 'Accredited by PEC' or 'Approved by PEC' in their advertisements. They are actually disbursing and transforming ambiguous, chaotic and misleading information to the students to the detriment of their entire career and subterfuge of their financial and material resources.

The advertisement displaying the assurance that the University has met the required mandatory criteria of accreditation serves as falsification to the students who have opted for a specific course. They come up with an astounding vision yet an insight into the real plight serves only to their disappointment and the rights of these students arbitrarily and unilaterally are infringed by their own alma maters. It is indeed pivotal to state here that if any university is not serving in the educational sphere to the set standard prescribed by PEC the accreditation can be denied or withdrawn to the detriment of the future of the student who has come up to the said

university with faith that he will turn all his dreams into a reality after obtaining the said degree. The simpleton or a layman who reads this false advertisement may captivate this image that the course is accredited for the year of advertisement.

These students are investing a colossal amount on receiving the said professional degrees. This deceptive practice is not only causing the monetary loss but also devastating the youth by abusing their time, personal resources, and psychological state and is going deep into the very core of entire engineering education standards in Pakistan. It is pertinent to mention here that improving the literacy and providing quality education is internationally considered as the responsibility of the State and in Pakistan infrastructure is also created to improve quality of education to help alter the dilemma of nation. However the procedural lacunas are serving to the interests of those who take education as a mere source of generating finances and improving their business. No matter what cost an ordinary man has to pay for the dream that his child should be a literate serving his country in a more effective manner.

Engineering courses have been initiated with a massive number of students and the universities are generating enormous finances playing with the future of Pakistan every year.

6. RECOMMENDATION:

It is obvious and clear that out of 27 not a single institute is accredited from PEC for the year 2011. They are either accredited in the previous years or are in process to obtain accreditation or reaccreditation from PEC. The advertisements for the admission in various disciplines of engineering are published in a way that they capture the attention of the reader. The stance 'approved/ permitted/ allowed or accredited by PEC' gives a firm impression that the course is accredited for the year in which the advertisement is published.

All of the aforementioned undertakings have, *prima facie*, entered into deceptive marketing practices in terms of Section 10 (1) of the Act. Furthermore, these universities have distributed false and misleading information that is capable of harming the business interest of other undertakings in terms of Section 10 (2) (a) and have distributed information to consumers that lacks reasonable basis about the character and suitability of use of the course/degree being offered to the students in terms of Section 10 (2) (b) of the Act.

The deceptive marketing practices have a direct impact on public at large. It is in the interest of the general public that all the institutes should disclose correct information regarding their accreditation status. If the program is under process by PEC or accredited for previous years same should be communicated in the advertisements clearly. It is recommended that show cause notices be issued to each of the universities for, *prima facie*, violation of Section 10 (1) and Section 10 (2) (a) and (b) of the Act whereby they be given an opportunity to represent their case.

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