Case Study:
Fake Experience Certificates - a common occurrence!

Read how DataFlow unveiled a 100-bed hospital issuing fake work experience certificates to 330 nurses seeking employment in the GCC

What we observed

An Indian medical professional seeking a health license in a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country, submitted an experience certificate from a small sized hospital in India, to the DataFlow Group for verification as part of the country's licensing procedure in 2019. DataFlow witnessed a spike in verification requests for nurses from the hospital during the same period, i.e. Jan 2019 to Oct 2019. We received a total of 355 requests from medical professionals, of which 330 individuals claimed to be employed as full time staff nurses.

What we did

Since the number of cases was unusually high, DataFlow conducted a thorough research on the hospital, including site visits and validation of regulatory/statutory filings of the hospital and verified the credentials of the medical professionals.

Site visits

The site visits conducted at the address listed in the Applicant's document confirmed that the hospital existed at the said premises. However, what we found during the site visit regarding the bed capacity raised some suspicion. The hospital's website claimed it to be a 150 bedded facility; however, our site visits confirmed an existence of only around 100 beds. With further investigation we found from the official at the hospital that they have removed 50 beds. During the interaction it was revealed that the hospital employed more resources than mentioned on the labour certificate. Perplexing the matter further, during our subsequent site visit, the Managing Director stated that they do not maintain salary records for these nurses as they were working with the hospital to gain some experience only and not as full time paid employees. This was later formally confirmed by the hospital through an email.

Review of regulatory/statutory/licensing documents

The research disclosed that the hospital was registered under Provident Fund Act. As per the act, any organisation employing more than 20 employees is required to deposit a mandatory PF contribution on the employees' behalf to their PF account every month. DataFlow reached out to applicants to provide additional proof of employment such as wage slips, provident fund deduction details etc., some of them responded with confirmation that they were paid in cash and produced copies of wage slips. DataFlow probed further to confirm the mode of payment. The hospital responded stating that they paid salary in cash and employed all these nurses full time - contradicting their previous statement of nurses as trainees/not full time paid employees.

Verification from the Issuing Authority

We verified the certificates submitted by the nurses by reaching out to the Issuing Authority, that is the hospital in this case. The HR department of the hospital verified that the experience certificates by the Indian medical professional and nurses were genuine.

Conclusion

The investigation revealed some puzzling and contradicting facts. Whilst the Issuing Authority had confirmed the work experience certificates of the medical professionals were genuine, DataFlow's decision on the applicants report was driven by the various facts that were revealed during the investigation which indicated many discrepancies. Keeping the discrepancies, our team provided a negative report to all the medical professionals from the Indian hospital who applied to DataFlow for credentials verification and shared the facts of the hospital with our client to make a sound decision on the grant of their license.

The Impact

Employment document provided by the applicant was verified as genuine by the HR department at the Hospital. However, our analytical abilities and thorough research revealed discrepancies and contradictions in establishing the authenticity of applicants employment. Therefore, DataFlow provided a negative report to all applicants, safeguarding the client and community from any potential risk.