

ENSURING YOU ARE HIRING QUALIFIED RESEARCH STAFF: GUARDING AGAINST CV PADDING

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There are indications of CV padding being a significant problem, including for positions requiring graduate degrees. Although statistically reliable evidence is absent, a few examples of documented misrepresentation suggest its breadth.

- A survey conducted by CareerBuilder.com, a position–candidate matching firm, found almost 60 percent of nearly 2,200 hiring managers had caught a job candidate applicant fabricating some part of his or her resume.²
- In 2015 the *New York Times* stated that more than 50,000 PhD degrees are awarded annually from “degree mills” (described below).³
- In 2013 a journalist reported the results of an experiment in which a fictitious, purposely flawed research article was accepted by 157 of 304 open–access journals to which it was submitted; acceptance was contingent upon payment of author fees.⁴
- One estimate of the number of predatory (defined below) open–access journals as of 2016 was about 10,000. If each of them publishes only 100 articles a year, 1 million articles of dubious quality were published.⁵

The objective of this post is to sketch good practices in credential verification for think tanks based on reviewing the literature and learning from the current practices in credential verification at four well–regarded think tanks: NORC at the University of Chicago, the Urban Institute, Results for Development Institute, and the Institute for Urban Economics. The first three are in the U.S. and last in Russia. The text is our distillation of material from these resources.

The post will discuss verification in four credential areas:

- Highest university degree received and the department in which it was earned
- Publications—confirmation of publications’ existence and accuracy of the candidate’s role in books published and articles in journals; identification of publications in “predatory journals,” i.e., open access, non–peer reviewed, pay–to–play publications
- Gray literature—confirmation of papers’ existence and of roles claimed in authoring reports and other publications
- Prior positions held, both the organizations at which the candidate has worked and her position at the time of separation.

While other areas of CV padding such as research fund raising success, membership on journal editorial boards, and teaching awards are also problematic,⁶ the four listed above appear to be the most important for think tanks.

Our sense is that many think tanks do not get a high rate of return on the resources used to check academic degrees and publications claimed as well as past positions claimed. In some instances weak procedures are followed. Others clearly do too little checking.

1. The authors thank the following people for participating in interviews and otherwise helping with the development of this post: Alexander Puzanov, Ryan Noll, Missy Nachbar, Celeste Chapman, and Dawn Dangel. Errors are solely the responsibility of the author.

2. Cited in National Student Clearinghouse, *Your Organization’s Reputation on the Line: The Real Cost of Academic Fraud*. <https://nscverifications.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CostOfAcademicFraud.pdf>

3. “A Rising Tide of Bogus Degrees,” May 20, 2015.

4. J. Bohannon, “Who’s Afraid of Peer Review?” *Science*, no. 342, 2013, pp.60–5.

5. K. Pisanski, “Predatory Journals Recruit Fake Editor,” *Nature*, vol.543, March 23, 2017.

6. For a listing of types of padding of importance for academic appointments, see M. Cleary, G. Walter, and D. Jackson, “Editorial: ‘Is that for Real?’: Curriculum Vitae Padding,” *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, vol.22, 2013, pp.2363–5.

Does it really matter? Why should a think tank consider devoting greater energy to verification for at least some research staff candidates? Three related reasons come immediately to mind: (a) misrepresentation is a willful violation of the explicit pledge to provide accurate information on one's application and therefore should disqualify candidates who engage in it; (b) candidates who inflate their credentials are likely to perform at a level lower than expected, and impose costs on the think tank as others must compensate for such colleagues low productivity; and, (c) the willingness to be dishonest on an application may signal a propensity to cut corners elsewhere, for example, "adjusting" statistical results to support a hypothesis or inflating expense reports, to name just two. The costs of hiring multiple staff with such attributes could have a formidable impact on a think tank's productivity and reputation.

An obviously important point, one addressed as an integral part of the discussion, is the difficulty for your HR department and senior researchers in the department assessing a candidate to obtain essential information. In other words, in addition to what is being done, is it possible to do much more at a reasonable cost? Countries have widely different traditions, and in some cases laws, governing information that former employers can provide to third parties, for instance. The majority of examples we present are for the U.S. and Russia because these are the cases we know best and for which we could find relevant literature. Readers may have to adjust some statements for the situation in their own countries.

Lastly, third-party vendors exist in many countries that specialize in checking applicants' claimed educational accomplishments and employment histories. These appear to be widely used. Our presentation focuses on the steps that think tanks doing their own verifications can take.

This post first discusses verification for each of the four areas listed above. Then some points on administering the verification process are offered. The post closed with ideas on how to efficiently allocate resources devoted to verification.

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Is the diploma authentic?

This is the most important of the three areas of potential misrepresentation discussed in this article.⁷ Here misrepresentation takes two primary forms: claiming a degree that was never awarded and degrees awarded by a “degree mill” essentially simply in exchange for a fee. An additional false claim is for the degree being in a discipline, e.g., economics, when another field was the major, e.g., sociology. We first look at identifying illegitimate degrees and then turn to how to obtain confirmation of a specific degree being rewarded.

If the university from which the candidate claims a degree is unfamiliar, check to see if it is likely a degree mill. Many HR officers will not be familiar with even well-known universities outside their home country. Common sense suggests checking degrees from these universities should be a priority task.

“Universities” that are actually screens for degree mills often have impressive websites that list the fields in which degrees are offered and contain success stories about graduates. These firms are housed in numerous countries and operate internationally. They provide documents in various languages and impressive formats. Hence, one must look on their websites for telltale signs of their actual status. These include:⁸

- The offer to confer a degree without any work.
- The offer of a degree granted based primarily or exclusively on one’s prior work or life experience.
- Flat fee. Fees are assessed based only on the number of diplomas requested.
- Possibility of no waiting. Degrees can be provided in a few weeks or even a few days.
- The degree awarded is officially an honorary degree but the diploma will not show this.

Any of these features or modest variations on them should give a think tank pause and encourage staff to inquire further.

Many countries have accessible databases of all colleges and universities that have been accredited after a thorough investigation. In the U.S. these include the Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs and the Council of Higher Education Accreditation database.

If the awarding university is known to be “real,” then the question is how to ensure that a candidate indeed graduated from it. Many countries have clearinghouses that can provide information on graduation year, field of study, years of study, and, sometimes, even transcripts. In the U.S. the National Student Clearinghouse (<https://nsverifications.org>) provides this service on a fee basis for about 90 percent of the degrees awarded annually.

In Russia information about both universities’ accreditation and the degrees (B.A., M.A., other) they have awarded since 2010 are available on the web-site of the Federal Service for Supervision of Education and

7. A few studies of this kind of misrepresentation on CVs exist. For example, P. Attewell and T. Domina, “Educational Imposters and Fake Degrees,” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol. 29, 2011, pp.57-69; and G.M. Brown, “Degrees of Doubt: Legitimate, Real and Fake Qualifications in a Global Market,” *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, vol.28, no.1, 2006, pp.71-9.

8. List from U.S. Federal Trade Commission, College Degree Scams. <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0206-college-degree-scams>.

Science (Rosobrnadzor)⁹. A second website permits one to check the actual awarding of academic degrees (e.g., Ph.D., PhD in Science.) and academic titles (professor, associate professor etc.) to individuals beginning in 2011.¹⁰

Often a university will confirm or deny that a person is one of its graduates and give the year and field of study in response to a potential employer's inquiry via mail or email. Some universities post on-line lists of graduates organized by year of graduation which can be accessed for a quick check. Sometimes, however, these are not searchable, being simply a PDF of graduation programs. Additionally, a single annual graduation program lists all graduates since the spring when the last program was printed, e.g., degrees awarded in the fall or winter. Searching the program can require significant thoroughness to be certain a degree was not rewarded because where in the program degrees awarded at different times over the year varies.¹¹

In some countries employers rely on job candidates presenting their *original* physical diploma to the HR officer before the employment contract is signed. (Copies give much greater possibilities for modifications to be introduced that are hard to detect.¹²) Since diploma formats vary among universities, it may be hard for the HR office to be certain that the diploma's format is actually for the university it claims to be. In countries where candidates come from a small number of universities, HR officers may quickly recognize false diplomas. Many HR offices make copies of the originals for their records. Thus, they would have a stock of university formats against which to compare those offered by candidates supposedly coming from the same schools. That said, two of those interviewed for this post expressed concern about using diplomas because of the ease with which phony documents can be purchased on line.¹³

Sometimes the candidate lacking the actual diploma will assert that it will take an inordinate amount of time to obtain the original—an assertion more likely made if the degree was not actually earned. Struyk knows from personal experience that obtaining an additional original diploma is not terribly time consuming in the U.S.¹⁴ It may be more difficult in other countries, however, especially in nations undergoing political turmoil.

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9. <http://isga.obrnadzor.gov.ru/accredreestr/> - list of universities accredited; <http://frdocheck.obrnadzor.gov.ru/> - database of university diplomas. Until recently in Russia academic degrees were awarded only by the Ministry of Education and Science (not by universities), namely Visshaya Attestacionnaya Komissiya (State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles). Implementation of the reform is beginning (May, 11, 2017 Prime Minister signed decree on criteria which universities should meet to have a right of awarding academic degrees). Presently about 60 universities are directly awarded degrees.
10. Additionally, the Verification of Apostilles, issued in the Russian Federation and Applied on Documents Approving Education (Qualification) of a Person (<http://apostille.obrnadzor.gov.ru/>) provides the information about all documents in the education sphere and academic degrees awarded after 2011.
11. Struyk had this experience in searching for my highest degree which was awarded in August but was listed in the commencement program the following June.
12. A thorough discussion of possible changes that can be made to diplomas and related scams is in, Susan Byram, “Detecting Fraudulent Academic Credentials,” paper presented at the NAFSA Regional III Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, October 25, 2011. https://www.nafsa.org/uploadedFiles/NAFSA_Home/NAFSA_Regions/Region_III/Conference/SusanByram%20Detecting%20Fraudulent%20Academic%20Credentials%20Handouts%202011.pdf
13. One think tank, not among the four listed in the introduction, reported in a separate conversation mailing the submitted diploma (and a return, postage-prepaid envelope) to the university's office of the registrar for verification—a time consuming process.
14. When Struyk was resident in Russia in the early 1990s, he was tasked with getting the Urban Institute registered to do business in the country. One required document was the original diploma for the highest degree earned by the office director. His original was in a warehouse with his household goods. The Institute obtained a replacement within 3-4 of weeks from Washington University in St. Louis.

Padding publications

Several techniques are employed to expand the number of publications listed in a CV or to overstate the candidate's role in a publication. Most egregious is to list a publication that simply does not exist or to claim to be the author of an edited collection when one is the only author of one of the included papers. Lesser faults include a candidate claiming to be the first author when she is not or being the only author when there were several. Another dodge is to list papers as "forthcoming," implying that the journal has firmly accepted the paper for publication when this is not the case. (I am leaving out plagiarism and cases of senior scholars not giving less senior researchers co-authorship when they deserve it because these are so difficult to document.)

The following gives some practical methods for checking the accuracy of publication citations in a candidate's CV. The simplest way to confirm actual publication and to be certain that the candidate's role in a journal article is accurately indicated in the CV is to go a journal's home page and then to the table of contents of the journal issue in which a claimed article was to have appeared. If the claimed article is not present, one could do a general search on the candidate's name on the journal's website, just in case an error was made in the citation. If the article is still not found, the entry is very likely fraudulent.

If the article is found, check that the candidate's role is as indicated on her CV in terms of the order in which authors are listed.

In the case of articles "accepted for publication," ask the candidate to submit the email or letter in which editor states the article has been accepted for publication. Check the name of the sender against the list of editors and editorial board members shown on the journal's home page. Letters not being available warrants serious concern about the candidate's veracity. If the letter appears to be invalid, contact the journal editor.

A second kind of issue to confront in reviewing claimed publications is that a paper could be published in a so-called "predatory journal." These are open-access publications, although not all open access journals are predatory.¹⁵

Predatory journals can differ from traditional, reputable journals in several ways; and a review of the journal's home page, particularly the parts dealing with the publication process and fees, typically provides the information needed to identify them.¹⁶ More specifically, look for the following practices being prominently listed: extremely fast publication times, e.g., four weeks, from submission to the publication; the absence of a peer-review process; substantial fees for "editing" or "layout;" exclusively on-line publication; and the absence of the journal being included in the major journal directories. Each of these conditions points to a pay-for-play situation. Be aware that predatory journals often have titles that are very similar to those of legitimate journals.

An important supplementary source of information on a journal's quality is directories of reputable journals. Prominent among these are Scopus, Journal Citation Reports (CPR), and the Directory of Open Access Journals

15. Major, reputable journal publishers are beginning to publish refereed open access journals. SAGE Journals is one example. See <http://journals.sagepub.com/page/sgo/about-us>.

16. A useful description of the workings of such journals is in K. Pisanski, "Predatory Journals Recruit Fake Editor," *Nature*, vol.543, March 23, 2017.

(DOAJ). Scopus has the largest coverage with over 22,000 titles (20,000 being peer-reviewed) from 5,000 publishers. All directories have certain quality standards for a journal's inclusion. One needs to look at the commentary on a journal included in a directory, not just not that it is included.

In Russia, for example, there is a national system on academic citations (Russian Science Citation Index)¹⁷ which includes more than 12 million publications (academic papers as well as books) from more than 6,000 Russian journals. Also, the Ministry of Education and Science approves the list of the most respected journals.¹⁸

The procedures for verifying book publications are broadly similar but overall somewhat less complex. An English-language book's publication can usually be confirmed by search for it on Google-Scholar. The accuracy of the citation in terms of authors and their appearance in the candidate's CV can be checked. Of course, the book should be included on the publisher's website; if a think tank is associated with a book, it should also be listed on its site.

If the publisher is not known to those at the recruiting think tank, its website can be visited to learn if it is a pay-for-play site. One needs to distinguish between the publisher and the firm that printed the book. Publishers are often institutions, including think tanks, who contract with a printer for the book's actual printing and, in some case, marketing. Your concern should be on who reviewed and sponsored the publication, not the actual printer.

Articles in edited volumes can be harder to verify. Checking the existence of the book and confirming the claim of being a collection's editor follow the same procedure as just outlined. One may find an article included in a collection on Google Scholar, but its listings are not exhaustive. Our experience is that think tank websites for collections do not always list all authors and the titles of their contributions, especially if they were published more than a couple of years previously. Publishers are more likely to provide more complete information on their websites. For example, Struyk has an article in the collection, *Global Urbanisation Experiences*, edited by Rumi Aijaz at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. The listing on the Foundation's site does not list the papers. However, the authors and article names are listed by the publisher, the Academic Foundation, on its website.

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17. <https://elibrary.ru>

18. These journals are the only journals in which Ph.D. students should make place their publications. They also include the journals registered in Scopus and Web of Science.

Gray literature

Documents included in this group commonly consist of (a) reports prepared for clients, ranging from international aid agencies to domestic ministries and local governments; and (b) more polished documents for a wider audience, possibly based on client reports. Those in the second group often have customized covers and are displayed on the think tank's website.

To document the existence of the reports and the candidate's role in producing them, ask for links to the website postings for each that you are checking if they are not included in the CV. Many public organizations, particularly in the donor community, routinely publish consultants' reports on their websites; unfortunately, these often only provide the report's title and the firm that produced the report, not the actual authors.

If few links are made available and her CV indicates the client for whom a report was prepared, you could independently check the client's website, particularly if it is a government agency or donor. If none of these actions are successful, ask for a copy of the report—it may well be worth looking at to ensure it is actually on the topic claimed and seems to be by the author. One check to make as an example: authors often cite their own prior work; check to see who is the most cited author in the references.

A standard question is how many of the candidate's journal publications one should check. There is no golden rule but it is sensible for a candidate with 10 or fewer published articles to check a couple of those in major journals and to sample more, perhaps two or three, in less familiar journals. Three or four gray journal publications could reasonably be added. For candidates with larger, perhaps much larger, numbers of publications, sample more, perhaps 10 journal articles, drawing the additional ones from earlier points in the candidate's career. For a candidate with numerous publications extending for 15 years or more, false entries would seem likely to be in the early and mid-career years; more recent entries may be of greater substantive interest to those checking publications. Of course, these are simply our rules of thumb; the final section gives some ideas about how these could be adjusted for certain types of positions.

If in any of these cases a seemingly made up publication is identified, ask the candidate immediately to clarify if indeed the finding is correct. Be suspicious of complicated stories for why the article was removed from a journal's table of contents after publication or other excuses for variance between the CV entry and the information on the journal's website.

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Work experience

We need to make the distinction at the outset between reference and employment checks. They are related but inquiries serve different purposes. References: usually candidates are requested to provide 4-5 references, several former supervisors and then others, such as colleague or former professors. These are discussions with those who know the candidate well and can comment on her strengths, weakness, potential, why the candidate left the position, and other factors.

Employment checks focus narrowly on confirming that the candidate worked at an organization, the years in service, and the job title at the time of departure. (In the U.S. this is all the information that can be obtained from an HR office under applicable law.) Different think tanks have different rules for determining how many work checks are required. Some base it on a number of years, e.g., for all positions held in the seven years previous to application submission; others define a number of prior positions, e.g., the last three full-time jobs.

In many countries the HR department at former work places will simply confirm that a candidate worked there or not. Further information will not be given out. In a few countries, including Germany, when someone leaves a firm or university, she is provided with a reference letter that is then routinely submitted with future applications. These provide the basic information sought in an employment check and some additional points on performance. In most countries, however, such “departure references” are not prepared.

For someone who has worked 15 or more years and held multiple positions it clearly makes sense to use judgement in selecting for which organizations to do employment checks. Good jobs to check are those where the candidate had management responsibility, which is often indicated by the job title but which could be asked about in any case. Exaggerating such responsibilities is a common feature in business applications.

Lastly, investigate the reasons for unexplained gaps in work experience. Typically, these are explained by personal reasons—time off following child birth or accompanying a spouse on an overseas assignment. If the gap is ended in the past few years, it is often wise to check with the reference for the employer before the gap began.

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Administration

Two topics are addressed here: **(a)** what is a good division of labor between the HR staff and the research team that is recruiting the new staffer? and, **(b)** how can the head of the organization or other senior person responsible for authoring the contract to be signed be assured that due diligence was undertaken for the candidate?

Because the verifications discussed above can be expensive, they are done *after* a position has been offered and accepted. Employment is contingent on the various checks being consistent with the candidate's application. This applies not just to initial employment but applies during the person's time at the think tank, i.e., if false information on the application comes to light two years later, it is still grounds for voiding the contract.

Who does what?

The universal practice is that HR checks the authenticity of claims made by a candidate of academic degrees earned, assuming they are checked. (Two of the think tanks interviewed for this post did not check on degrees claimed at the time of the interview.)

An important issue here is the inability to make the verification in a timely way. This can particularly be the case where the candidate earned her highest degree in another country and on-line access to credible information is not available. As noted earlier, one can ask to see the physical original diploma. This transaction could take a few weeks if it is not possessed by the candidate, and the hiring office may need the new hire sooner. One option would be an appointment conditional on the missing information being provided within a specific time period and that the information be consistent with that the candidate provided earlier. Realistically, problems can arise when the documentation is not provided in a timely way, the hiring office has invested in training the individual and is reluctant to let them go.

On the other hand, the task of reviewing publications claimed rests exclusively with the office hiring the researcher. A good question is who within the office should do the actual work. My sense is that the person heading the search often feels that this is part of her assignment. This is a clear mistake. The discussion above on what is actually involved in checking out publications claimed clearly shows that this a quite routine task once someone has been shown how to do it. A research assistant could do the great majority of this work. Presumably, the willingness of those responsible to ensure that checks were made would be much greater if senior staff were relieved of doing the actual work. They should, however, decide which publications are to be targeted. Reviewing publications for technical quality, however, is a task for senior analysts.

Checking references and the employment history given by the candidate is appropriately done by HR. If the reference checks raise serious concerns, the recruiting manager may want to follow-up. Realistically, it has become quite difficult to get much information from references on topics like these because of fear that the candidate will learn of the negative statements and seek restitution in some form from the reference.

Lastly, it is worth noting that statements of the recruiting policies from several U.S. universities reviewed on-line for this post were clear that several additional checks beyond those discussed here should be made on a candidates' employment suitability. These include checks of criminal records, credit history, and, sometimes, social media activity. These are tasks assigned to HR, which is the same for think tanks.

Ensuring due diligence

Clearly the presence of thoughtful and realistic statements of an institution's hiring policy for researchers and corresponding procedures (P&Ps) are the foundation of proper vetting. If these are not in place or are weak, creation or revision is essential. In developing them, management needs to consult closely with research team leaders who will typically have a good deal of experience in hiring staff and are critical for the implementation of the P&Ps adopted. HR obviously has an essential role as well.

A key element in ensuring vetting is fully done before the contract is signed is for the form sent to the person who authorizes a contract to be signed, usually the institution's leader, to include confirmation that various checks were done or explaining why they could not be carried out. Hence, there are

- check offs for degrees being confirmed or not;
- information on prior employment were checked and which items were items were verified as consistent with the candidate's CV;
- how many journal articles or books were confirmed to exist, to be written by the candidate, and the candidate's role being consistent with that portrayed on the CV; and
- the number of gray literature items similarly checked.

The last two items could be reported simply by attaching the relevant parts of the CV with notations for items checked.

Where issues with the checks were identified, these are reported and their resolution briefly described. Note that at none of the four think tanks that provided information on practices does the hiring office provide a summary of due diligence on publications to HR as input to the hiring decision. The presumption is that prudent checks were made. On the one hand, this seems reasonable. After all individual analysts can have strong reputations and impressive lists of publications. Nevertheless, a quick check by a research assistant of a few of the candidate's earlier writings is always in order and the results of these screens can easily be included in the information provided to permit the employment contract to be signed.

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Value for money

The overall view from the four think tanks with whom Struyk met for this post as well as the leaders of others he asked about their practices over the years consistently report very low rates of CV padding for research positions. This makes sense on an overall basis. Most research hires are for relatively junior positions, both because a lot of research assistants and associates are needed for contemporary research production and because their turnover rate is high with many departing after a few years for more education. Their CVs are easy to check; they often have none or very few publications; education accomplishments are limited. Extremely few cases of padding are identified.

The likelihood of CV padding should be greater among those with longer work histories. Consider a bogus advanced degree in a discipline only tangentially related to the position on offer, earned 10 years earlier by an applicant; if a question arose, it could be reported as earned on line. Possession of the degree illustrates a high level of intelligence and energy but does not create unrealistic expectations for performance in the new job. Those screening the candidate are unlikely to be interested in verifying this degree.

Similarly, a candidate can pad his publications list with a couple of articles, say published 8 and 10 years ago, in predatory journals with titles probably uninteresting to those verifying his relevant knowledge for the position. These are unlikely to attract the attention of the senior staffer reviewing the CV. They are focused on how this fellow can help their program as reflected in recent work. On the other hand, the publications add some “heft” to the CV.

A factor tending to reduce the intensity of publication review deemed warranted is the advertized position’s degree of research specialization: the greater the specialization, the lower the requirement to check older publications and degrees. The researcher community for a narrow topic will be corresponding small and informal information on candidates fairly easily available because many of those in the field know each other reasonably well and can easily make informal inquiries.

We can view the likely variation in the incidence of successful CV padding more systematically. Logically, there appear to be four conditions that are associated with systematic variation among organizations where

1. In countries where the difficulty and cost of verification are high. Think of countries with no or few third-party vendors or their fees are prohibitive for small organizations and where access to information from universities and/or prior employers is restricted by tradition or law.
2. At think tanks where HR operations are not very professional. This is common at small think tanks that have only one or two administrative staff each covering a range of tasks and the person handling HR has little or no formal training. The need for credential verification may be under appreciated or the tools for doing so unknown.
3. The complexity of the review required for a thorough investigation is large because of the years of experience, the number of institutions involved, or their location, i.e., graduate degrees earned in foreign countries or a significant share of publications in uncommon foreign languages such as Bahasa or Urdu.

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4. The cost of the applicant being caught padding is CV is low. This is probably the common case. The candidate who is identified as cheating does not get the job but it is unlikely that other think tanks will know about the fabrication. Costs to the candidate will be higher, possibly much higher, if the misrepresentation occurs for a mid- or higher-level position in a specialized field and one of the persons involved in the hiring decision informs colleagues in the field outside the recruiting organization about the matter.

To raise the effectiveness and efficiency of candidate screening it follows that small think tanks need to find a way to professionalize their verification activities, say through engaging an individual consultant with relevant HR experience. Generally CV review resources can be relatively focused on candidates with degrees from other countries and on more senior positions where the research focus is not very tight and on candidates with longer work histories. Relying heavily on a review of a candidate's recent activities seems misguided. As suggested earlier, to encourage the senior researchers in the hiring office to consider a candidate's full record and not just the elements most relevant to the current position, it is probably wise for the person authorizing the job offer to ask for a simple check list of publications and references reviewed by the hiring office and HR, respectively.

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