

MEDIA RELEASE

23 July 2009

CASE REVEALS FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATION INTO BROOKES BUSINESS SCHOOL

CASE has conducted an internal investigation into Brookes Business School which was previously an accredited private education organisation (PEO) with CaseTrust. These are the key findings which CASE has given to the Police:

- a) The school had withheld the insurance certificates from the enrolled students. As a result, students may not be aware that they are under-insured or not insured under the Student Protection Scheme (SPS). For instance, from the receipts some students showed us, they have paid between \$20,000 and \$30,000 to the school but the school only insured \$1,000 for them.
- b) Local students told CASE that the school did not offer the insurance option to them although the school should have done so.
- c) The majority of the students who came to CASE to seek assistance also revealed that they were not given the Standard Student Contract (SSC).

The above are serious breaches of the CaseTrust criteria. By withholding the insurance certificates from the enrolled students, we are of the view that Brookes Business School

has misled the students. We believe that this has a direct bearing on the Police investigation and we have submitted our findings to the Police.

We have expelled the school from CaseTrust on 15 July 2009. We will also be stepping up checks on the other PEOs.

We would like to remind all students enrolled in private schools to obtain a certificate of insurance from the school they are enrolled in and make sure that the full tuition fees are covered under the insurance when they sign up for the course. Alternatively, if the students' tuition fees are covered under an Escrow arrangement, they should make sure that the full fees are deposited into the Escrow account. In all cases, students should also be given a copy of the signed SSC. A sample copy of the Certificate of Insurance and SSC can be found on our website at www.case.org.sg.

CaseTrust was appointed by the Economic Development Board (EDB) in 2004 to administer the CaseTrust for Education Scheme, which was primarily designed to protect students' tuition fees in event of school closures. Arising from the scheme, the SPS was also introduced whereby fees paid by students to the PEOs are protected through deposits with an approved bank or by an insurance scheme. The SPS is a compulsory component for PEOs in order to obtain accreditation under CaseTrust for Education, which in turn allows them to enroll foreign students. The protection offered in the scheme was critically important in light of the high profile school failures in 2003 and 2004. In fact, through the scheme, about 160 students managed to have their fees protected and were compensated when AIT Academy and Unicampus closed down in 2005.

Mr Benny Yap has reportedly told the media that he may file for bankruptcy (The Straits Times, 21 July 2009). This being the case, affected students are advised to seek legal advice on recovery of any claims against Brookes Business School, which may include filing their claims with the Small Claims Tribunal (SCT) or commencing legal proceedings against Brookes Business School. Students who require further assistance can also come to CASE. We have provided 241 affected students with free advice and assisted most of them to file claims with SCT.

We like to urge all students, be they local or foreign students, to go to our website to find out the protection measures available to them and ensure that they have the relevant documents.

Yeo Guat Kwang
CASE President