

15-20.4-15. Unlawful to issue, manufacture, or use false academic degrees - Penalty.

1. It is unlawful for a person to knowingly advertise to sell, issue, or manufacture a false academic degree. A person that violates this subsection is guilty of a class C felony. This subsection does not apply to a newspaper, television or radio station, or other commercial medium that is not the source of the advertisement.
2.
 - a. It is unlawful for an individual to knowingly use or claim to have a false academic degree:
 - (1) To obtain employment;
 - (2) To obtain a promotion or higher compensation in employment;
 - (3) To obtain admission to an institution of higher learning; or
 - (4) In connection with any business, trade, profession, or occupation.
 - b. An individual who violates this subsection is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.
3. As used in this section, "false academic degree" means a document such as a degree or certification of completion of a degree, coursework, or degree credit, including a transcript, that provides evidence or demonstrates completion of a course of instruction or coursework that results in the attainment of a rank or level of associate or higher which is issued by a person that is not a duly authorized institution of higher learning.
4. As used in this section, "duly authorized institution of higher learning" means an institution that:
 - a. Has accreditation recognized by the United States secretary of education or has the foreign equivalent of such accreditation;
 - b. Has an authorization to operate under this chapter;
 - c. Operates in this state and is exempt from this chapter under section 15-20.4-02;
 - d. Does not operate in this state and is:
 - (1) Licensed by the appropriate state agency; and

- (2) An active applicant for accreditation by an accrediting body recognized by the United States secretary of education; or
- e. Has been found by the state board for career and technical education to meet standards of academic quality comparable to those of an institution located in the United States that has accreditation recognized by the United States secretary of education to offer degrees of the type and level claimed.