

**Time: 3 HOURS**

**PART A: READING COMPREHENSION (20 MARKS)**

**Read the following articles and answer ALL the questions that follow.**

Article 1

**Be More Prepared**

- I PROPER preparation is the key to employability. **This** can be done through getting a tertiary educational qualification or through self development. The question is: how far do universities need to go in order to prepare future graduates for the specific demands of industries?
- II According to Higher Education Management Department director-general, Prof. Datuk Dr Hassan Said, the term 'mismatch' has been used to describe our local graduates. Some parties blame our local universities suggesting that they produce graduates who are not ready for the industry, or do not meet the industry's requirements. There is a need to study the role of the universities. 5
- III "is it their responsibility to produce the workforce for the market, or is it the responsibility of the industry to provide specific and extra training to graduates so that they meet the industry's needs?" 10
- IV He shared that during the drafting of the *National Higher Education Strategic Plan*, two different schools of thought had arisen among the higher education' community regarding the real philosophy behind universities. The first school of thought states that education plays a functional or utilitarian role (that is, providing the workforce), while the second stresses that education aims to ensure the full development of human beings. The **polemics** between these two different mindsets have become more obvious with the current high number of unemployed graduates in our country. 15  
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- V According to the findings of the ministry's Graduate Tracer Study 2006, 30.7% of graduates remained unemployed six months after convocation, while 5.7% were still awaiting job placement. The study involved 132,900 graduates from 18 public universities, 18 polytechnics, 34 community colleges and 13 private institutions of higher learning from all over Malaysia. 25
- VI Prof. Hassan stated that while the basic philosophy of universities is to educate and to give knowledge to prepare students for their future, universities must also be sensitive to the market economy. One way to do this would be for universities to train their students in entrepreneurship and help them develop personality and communication skills. 30
- VII He added that industries must also play their part by accepting students for internships as relevant industrial placements go a long way in helping students complete the "final mile" of their education
- VIII In addition, Prof. Hassan wanted universities and colleges to offer students relevant and up-to-date career advice. They need to give students effective experience of the world of work and to guide them on options for learning and 35

career progression. This will help students make informed choices and build steadily towards achieving learning outcomes that will equip them with a broad base of skills and knowledge. Provision of career guidance is currently patchy.

- IX For Royal Prof Ungku Aziz Ungku Abdul Hamid, it is the simple individual preparation during the search for employment that counts. He cited the example of how students pursuing the Master in Business Administration (MBA) programme at the National University of Singapore were taught to write a good curriculum vitae or letter of application. It is very simple, but very important in creating a good impression and marketing oneself. 40 45
- X In stressing further the importance of first impressions, Prof Ungku Aziz shared his experience of interviewing candidates for positions at the National Co operative Organisation of Malaysia (Angkasa), of which he is the president. When he interviewed them, he just asked one question: 'What is Angkasa?' Some of them could not even answer him. In addition, he mentioned that we would know some people were not suitable, the minute they started to speak. 50
- XI "What is the point of coming for the interview then?" he said.
- XII Furthermore, in relation to soft skills, Prof Ungku Aziz said that the most important soft skill is learning how to develop one's mind. Every teacher in school needs to impart this skill to students. If this is successfully done, students will not have problems in finding jobs. Thinking is a critical skill which needs to be taught, and imparting this skill is probably the best gift teachers can give to future graduates. 55

By TAN SHIOW CHIN  
Adapted from The Sunday Star  
November 25, 2007

1 What does "This" in line 1 refer to?

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(1/2 mark)

2 Why is the term "mismatch" used in describing the local graduates?

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(1 mark)

- 3 What are the two schools of the thought behind the real philosophy of universities?

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(1 mark)

- 4 What does the word "polemics" in line 18 mean?

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(1 mark)

- 5 Based on the findings of the Graduate Tracer Study 2006, how can the universities help their students?

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(1 mark)

- 6 Read the following statements carefully. Write (F) if the statement is a **FACT** and (O) if the statement is an **OPINION**.

- a. 30.7% of graduates remained unemployed six months after convocation \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Provision of career guidance is currently patchy. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. In addition, he mentioned that we would know some people were not suitable, the minute they started to speak. \_\_\_\_\_

(1 ½ mark)

7 Based on the comments by Prof Ungku Aziz, how does a graduate create a favourable first impression when seeking a job?

a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(2 marks)

8 According to Prof Ungku Aziz, thinking is a critical skill which needs to be taught, and imparting this skill is probably the best gift teachers can give to future graduates (lines 56-58). What can you infer from this statement?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(2 marks)

## Article 2

**Graduates should not be too choosy about jobs**

- I GIANT retailers have started recruiting graduates and diploma holders as management trainees under a programme brokered by the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry. This scheme is not solely aimed at providing employment opportunities for fresh graduates but also to open their minds to other fields in the private sector. Almost all those involved, studied various courses and have a university degree or college diploma not connected with retailing. Though the number involved is not big, it has one very important difference. Hitherto, many of them would always apply for jobs connected with their tertiary studies and would not look for work outside of their respective fields. If they should fail to secure employment, they would prefer to stay at home. The longer they do this, the more difficult it will be for them to get jobs, and it will be a waste of manpower so long as they remain idle. Few of them, if any, would have considered work in retailing or the service industry. 5 10
- II In any case, many of the giant supermarkets would not be taking in graduates and diploma holders in technology or science. **This mindset** has to be changed, and credit must be given to the minister, Datuk Shafie Apdal, for convincing the retailers to provide training for such graduates. He also had to persuade unemployed graduates to take up such offers, Initially, 500 of them would be in the programme and another few thousand more would be given the same training over the months. The hands-on experience will expose trainees to all aspects of the retail business, and after six months they would have a thorough grounding in the workings of a supermarket. They can continue to work for their companies, and those who are not inclined to this business can opt out. 15 20
- III The advantage of this training is that the good ones would be able to climb the corporate ladder. Or they can start their own business ventures in a related field with the experience acquired with their present company. They will definitely have the confidence and the know-how to strike out on their own. As for capital, **this** can always be arranged with the financial institutions; and there are many such organisations, and even the Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development Ministry, to help such budding businessmen. 25 30
- IV With more graduates coming out of public and private universities, employment will be a big concern. Many of them are applying for government jobs requiring only SPM qualifications because of better pay due to the recent pay increase and security. With unemployment staring at them, they have become more realistic, and to start at the bottom as police constables, fire fighters or prison guards -jobs not meant for those with tertiary education. 35
- Many of them, however, are still reluctant to work in the private sector and do so only as a last resort or have been given the impression that, as graduates, they should be given management positions. It is believed that training agencies approved by the Human Resources Ministry to provide soft skills to unemployed graduates were told that the graduate trainees should not be doing sales when on attachment, it seems that they should be given only administrative duties, 40

probably in keeping with their academic qualifications without having to soil their hands. It is such restrictions that could have given them the wrong impression that they were made for bigger things.

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By V.K.CHIN, The Star, August 28,2007

- 1 What do the following words refer to?  
a) 'This mindset' (line 15)

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- b) 'this' (line 28)

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(1 mark)

- 2 What are the objectives of the training scheme provided by the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry?

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(2 marks)

- 3 What happens when graduates stay at home for a long time without looking for jobs?

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(1 mark)

- 4 In your opinion, why do you think giant supermarkets are reluctant to take in graduates and diploma holders of technology or science?

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(2 marks)

5 State the advantages of joining the training programme provided by giant supermarkets.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

(2 marks)

6 What is the topic sentence of paragraph 4?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(1 mark)

7 Why are many graduates not keen to join the private sector after graduation?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(1 mark)

PART B: WRITING (20 MARKS)

You are doing research on graduate employment problems in Malaysia. You have located two articles: "Be More Prepared" and "Graduates Should Not Be Too Choosy About Jobs". Based on your reading of these two articles, write an article of about 300 words for your college newsletter on **what creates the problem of unemployed graduates and how it can be overcome.**

Include at least two main ideas with supporting details for each of the two aspects of your article. (You should use information that you have gathered from reading the two articles but marks will be deducted if you copy whole sentences from the articles) In-text citation and proper acknowledgement of references used should also be included.

Graduate Unemployment and Its Solution

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