

EMPLOYER'S PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES FROM COLLEGES OF TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing awareness in Oman and the Gulf countries of the importance of higher education in general and technical education in specific to the development of a knowledge based economy. Technical colleges are increasingly required to produce highly mobile graduates able to respond to the ever-changing needs of the contemporary market. This paper aims to identify employers' perception concerning the employability skills and knowledge needed in the IT related jobs in the Sultanate of Oman. Different companies and government organizations participated in giving their feedback in a questionnaire designed to obtain the labor market demand of IT skills and technical knowledge. They have also given their feedback of the IT graduates from the Colleges of Technology. It was found that the IT graduates from the Colleges of Technology, to a certain extent, are having a good level of interpersonal skills. Nonetheless, the colleges need to exert extra efforts to enhance the graduates' technical skills. This study has also identified the labor market demand for IT related skills. These results contribute toward the design of higher education institutes to align the IT curriculum with the labor market needs and increase its graduate employability level.

GENERAL TERMS: Computer Science Education, Information Technology, Market Demand and Supply of the Graduates

KEYWORDS: Computer Science Education, Information Technology, Market Demand and Supply of the Graduates, Employability Skills, IT Technical Skills, Soft Skills, Colleges of Technology, Curriculum