

Home Higher pay for fresh uni grads B1



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B1

B1 HOME



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IT grads had highest starting pay last year

81.2% of new grads found full-time permanent work in 2018, up from 78.4% in 2017: Poll

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Fresh university graduates earned a higher starting pay last year, with those in the information technology (IT) sector posting the highest rates for full-time permanent jobs.

Fresh grads took home a median monthly salary of \$3,500, up from \$3,400 in 2017, according to results of a joint graduate employment survey released yesterday.

Those in courses such as computing, business analytics and information security had the highest median gross monthly pay of \$4,100.

The annual survey, conducted last November, also found that 81.2 per cent of new graduates were in full-time permanent work, higher than the 78.4 per cent in 2017.

Overall, 90.2 per cent of them were employed, up from 88.9 per cent in 2017. This refers to graduates in full-time, part-time, temporary or freelance work.

The proportion of graduates doing freelance work fell from 2.4 per cent in 2017 to 1.8 per cent last year, while those who have still not been able to find a full-time job dropped by 2.1 percentage points.

For the first time, the survey also released employment outcomes by course clusters, to help students make decisions on course choices.

Graduates from the information and digital technologies, business

and built environment courses had the highest full-time permanent employment rates.

The survey polled 11,200 fresh graduates from full-time programmes at four universities – the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS).

The joint exercise is conducted by the six autonomous universities six months after their graduates' final exams. Due to differences in calendars, the Singapore University of Technology and Design and the Singapore Institute of Technology poll their graduates separately.

The universities said many of their graduates managed to find full-time jobs through internships. For instance, more than a third of SUSS' first batch of full-time accountancy graduates were offered jobs through work attachments, while half of the graduates from SMU who had job offers before finishing school received them through internships.

SMU graduate Tay Jing Ying, 24, is now a technology analyst at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, where she had done an internship during her third year of university.

The information systems graduate said: "I tell my friends that we're quite lucky to graduate at the right time, when a lot of companies are



SUSS graduate Nurul Amira Azhar, 24, started work last July as an analyst with media intelligence firm Meltwater. PHOTO: SUSS

Which field of study has better job prospects?

New university graduates took home a higher median monthly pay of \$3,500 last year, up from \$3,400 in 2017, according to an annual survey released yesterday. For the first time, it also released job outcomes by disciplines to help students make decisions on course choices. Here's a look at last year's numbers.

Course clusters	Full-time permanent employment rate (%)	Median gross monthly salary
Information and digital technologies	91.7	\$4,100
Engineering	84.1	\$3,600
Health sciences	83.8	\$3,489
Business	89.7	\$3,450
Built environment	87.3	\$3,400
Humanities and social sciences	71.2	\$3,400
Sciences	68.7	\$3,390
Arts, design and media	69.8	\$3,000
Overall	81.2	\$3,500

Source: JOINT GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT SURVEY 2018
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using technology to improve systems and work processes, and they need IT graduates."

SUSS graduate Nurul Amira Azhar, 24, who started work last July as an analyst with media intelligence firm Meltwater, said she decided to study marketing as it involves a mix of creative and business skills.

"There is a lot of data coming in on different platforms, from both mainstream media and social media, so there is growing demand for analysts in this field," she said.

NUS computer science graduate Leonard Hio, 25, now a software engineer at Facebook in California, feels lucky to be at the forefront of advances in the tech industry.

On why he chose to work overseas, he said: "I wanted the opportunity to work with and learn from the best and brightest engineers in the field. Also, the total compensation package for jobs in the Bay area is typically very attractive for new graduates in the tech industry."

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