

Fewer uni grads in 2024 found full-time work, though more had higher pay: Survey



PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 24, 2025 4:06 PM
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SINGAPORE — Graduates fresh out of university found it harder to find full-time permanent jobs, with the proportion dropping below 80 per cent, according to the latest graduate employment survey.

Results from the survey, which were released on Feb 24, showed that 79.5 per cent of graduates secured full-time positions in 2024, down from 84.1 per cent in 2023.

But those who did find full-time jobs saw higher earnings with the median gross monthly salary at \$4,500 in 2024, up from \$4,317 in 2023.

More fresh graduates were unemployed — 12.9 per cent in 2024, up from 10.4 per cent in 2023. This group refers to those who are unemployed and looking for a job or about to start work or business ventures.

More of them are also in part-time or temporary work — six per cent, up from four per cent in 2023 — or doing freelance work (1.6 per cent, up from 1.5 per cent in 2023). Most graduates in this group were in such roles voluntarily, the survey noted.

Some 12,500 graduates from full-time programmes at National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) took part in this survey, representing a response rate of 73.3 per cent.

They were surveyed by the five universities on their employment status as at Nov 1, 2024, about six months after the completion of their final examinations.

Due to different academic calendars, the surveys for the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) are ongoing and will be released at a later date.

Employment status of fresh graduates of full-time degree programmes

	2022	2023	2024
Proportion of graduates who were employed	93.8%	89.6%	87.1%
a. In full-time permanent employment	87.5%	84.1%	79.5%
b. Doing freelance work	1.8%	1.5%	1.6%
c. In part-time/temporary employment	4.4%	4%	6%
i. Voluntary	3.6%	2.9%	3.8%
ii. Involuntary	0.8%	1.1%	2.2%
Proportion of graduates who were unemployed	6.2%	10.4%	12.9%
a. Unemployed but starting work soon or starting a business venture	2.5%	3.6%	4.4%
b. Unemployed and still looking for a job	3.7%	6.8%	8.5%
Median gross monthly salary (full-time permanent employment)	\$4,221	\$4,317	\$4,500

NOTES:

- Figures may not add up due to rounding off.
- Some figures may be different as compared with previous years, as responses from SUTD's graduates have been included.

Table: STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS • Source: JOINT AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITIES GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT SURVEY 2024

PHOTO: The Straits Times

About 11,100 respondents were in the labour force. Of this group, 87.1 per cent found permanent, freelance, or part-time jobs within six months of graduating, down from 89.6 per cent in 2023.

Graduates in the labour force refer to those who are either working or unemployed but actively looking for a job.

Health sciences, business, and information and digital technologies were the three course clusters that continued to record the highest full-time permanent employment rates for graduates in 2024, from about 83 per cent to 88 per cent.

Graduates of information and digital technologies courses continued to take home the highest monthly pay at \$5,600, up from \$5,500 in 2023.

Employment status and salaries of fresh graduates by course clusters

Course cluster	Proportion of graduates who were						Median gross monthly salary (full-time permanent employment)		
	Employed			In full-time permanent employment			2022	2023	2024
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024			
Arts, design and media	90.3%	84%	82.4%	72.2%	67.8%	60.9%	\$3,500	\$3,740	\$3,800
Built environment	95.1%	91.6%	88.3%	89.1%	87.2%	80.4%	\$3,750	\$4,000	\$4,100
Business	95.9%	93.2%	90.8%	91%	88.3%	84.4%	\$4,044	\$4,150	\$4,400
Engineering	94.4%	86.2%	83.7%	91.6%	82.9%	79.3%	\$4,536	\$4,500	\$4,650
Health sciences	96.9%	97.6%	91.2%	94.2%	95.9%	88.3%	\$3,700	\$3,910	\$4,000
Humanities and social sciences	91.4%	87.7%	86.2%	80.3%	78.3%	72.1%	\$3,800	\$4,015	\$4,250
Information and digital technologies	94.8%	90.5%	87.3%	92.8%	88.7%	83.5%	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,600
Sciences	90.4%	86.9%	83.1%	80.5%	79%	72.3%	\$3,900	\$4,000	\$4,125
Overall	93.8%	89.6%	87.1%	87.5%	84.1%	79.5%	\$4,221	\$4,317	\$4,500

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All other clusters also recorded higher median gross monthly salaries for graduates in full-time permanent employment.

In 2024, Singapore's economy grew 4.4 per cent, compared with an earlier estimate of four per cent, the Ministry of Trade and Industry on Feb 14 said in its economic survey for the year.

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<https://www.asiaone.com/singapore/fewer-uni-grads-2024-found-full-time-work-though-more-had-higher-pay-survey>