



MEDIA RELEASE

SMU's 2017 fresh graduates see increase in employment rate and all-time high for mean starting salaries in latest employment survey

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Singapore, 26 February 2018 (Monday) – Graduates from Singapore Management University's (SMU) 14th cohort have again registered a high and stable overall employment rate¹ of 93.9% and higher starting salaries across all six of the university's degree programmes.

The results were revealed in an annual Joint Graduate Employment Survey (GES) conducted by SMU and the other Autonomous Universities.

77.6% or 1,380 of the 1,779 SMU alumni who graduated in 2017 took part in the survey.

The survey showed that 93.9% of SMU graduates in the labour force gained employment within six months after completing their final examinations. 65.4% were offered jobs before graduation, an 11.3 percentage point increase as compared to the 2016 cohort. Of those who received job offers, 31.9% landed full-time employment through internships, which are compulsory for SMU undergraduates.

The mean gross monthly salary of SMU graduates in full-time permanent jobs is **\$3,910** in 2017. This is an all-time high and a 5.1% increase over the previous year's salary of **\$3,722**. The median gross monthly salary of graduates in full-time permanent employment is \$3,500 in 2017, same as in 2016.

Similar to the previous year, the top three industries of employment for SMU graduates were "Financial and Insurance", "Information & Communication", and "Legal, Accounting and Auditing", with 'Financial and Insurance' maintaining its position as the highest paid industry with an average gross monthly salary of \$4,649.

SMU Provost, Professor Lily Kong said, "We are delighted that, year after year, SMU graduates have performed well and have a high market value in the workforce upon graduation. This affirms our efforts in delivering a holistic and multidisciplinary approach towards education, where both in and out-of-classroom learning make a meaningful impact on our students. Apart from the academic curriculum, we prepare our students well for the workforce by equipping them with the knowledge, experience, and skills sought after by employers. SMU students have various opportunities for global exposure, community service, and internships, and these prepare them to become well-rounded individuals and leaders."

¹ The overall employment rate refers to the number of graduates working in full-time permanent, part-time or temporary employment, as a proportion of graduates in the labour force (i.e. those who are working, and those who are not working but are actively looking and available for work) as at 1 November 2017.

“96% of 2017 graduates felt that SMU’s curriculum made a positive impact on them while nearly 99% said they had experienced growth during their time with us. For some, they felt they went through a complete transformation as a result of their overall SMU experience. 90% of students indicated that SMU has prepared them well in the areas of oral communications and presentation skills, while 96% said they learnt how to learn independently, as well as develop in the areas of interpersonal effectiveness which makes them better at teamwork and networking. These critical skills are necessary and very much valued in any workplace today,” said the University’s chief academic officer.

Career Services offered by Dato’ Kho Hui Meng Career Centre (DKHMCC)

The [Centre](#) offers a range of comprehensive services, programmes, and resources for SMU students to chart their career directions and empower them with the necessary skills to realise their potential and goals. 89% of the 2017 graduates said that they had benefited from SMU’s career services.

Every student is assigned a [career coach](#) upon matriculation to support them in their career planning through the four-year journey at SMU. These certified coaches from DKHMCC come from diverse backgrounds and are in tune with industry developments and trends. They administer personality/career profiling tools, critique cover letters and resumes, facilitate job searches, and hone students’ interview skills.

In addition, DKHMCC also offers career services workshops from the freshman year as part of SMU’s pioneering [Finishing Touch \(FT\) programme](#). The compulsory programme prepares SMU undergraduates in career management skills and gears them towards employability and career readiness by helping students develop and focus on their career goals progressively throughout their four-year course of study. Every year, DKHMCC organises more than 200 events such as career and industry talks, employability clinics, career fairs, as well as networking events, for our graduating students.

Recognising the importance and value of having real-world and career-relevant work experience for its students, SMU is the first university in Singapore to make internships compulsory for all students across the entire university, regardless of course of study. Students are provided opportunities via DKHMCC, which works closely with industry to ensure successful placement of students in internships and jobs. The DKHMCC’s close and regular contact with employers is vital in helping SMU students be market-relevant and career-ready. Students also have access to a 24/7 web based portal (OnTRAC) to search for internships and career opportunities.

DKHMCC also continues to support graduates up to one year after their graduation with continued access to the jobs portal, employability clinics, and personalised assistance by individual career coaches, should they require further guidance.

Examples of 2017 Graduates who have benefited from the SMU educational experience

Edna Chua, a graduate of the Lee Kong Chian School of Business who is now working at the National Healthcare Group as a Management Associate, completed two internships as she wanted to deepen her understanding and knowledge of both her majors – Marketing and Human Resources – beyond the classroom. She chose internships in two vastly different sectors to experience different working environments and gain meaningful exposure in the industries. She said, “My SMU experience was transformational – the four years I spent at SMU, with its emphasis on applied learning and real-world exposure through internships and

community service, have equipped me with both hard and soft skills. This has prepared me well in transitioning to working life. Over the course of my internships, I had the opportunity to challenge and develop myself in areas such as project management, communication, and analytical thinking. The skills acquired have proven to be very useful for the projects I am currently working on.”

Alex Ng, who graduated from the School of Information Systems, also did two internships, to explore which industry piqued his interest and broaden his exposure. His first internship was with GovTech, where he is currently employed doing software engineering. The internship allowed him to prove that he could learn and deal with real-world problems in the software engineering realm. He said: “I was able to rediscover my passion for technology and work with many like-minded and talented people. Through the internship, my teammates understood my character and recognised my ability to contribute, and this has helped in my application for this role when I graduated”. He added that his SMU experience was filled with opportunities that helped build his resilience and learning agility – be it through course projects, internships, community service projects, study missions, or exchange. Not only did he participate in activities that required him to step out of his comfort zone, he also took up leadership roles, which helped him learn more about himself and allowed him to accelerate his learning.

SMU’s 2017 graduates across all six Schools showed improvement in their mean monthly salaries

The most significant increase in salary was recorded for SMU’s **Economics** graduates. The survey showed that 2017 Economics graduates achieved a 6.1 per cent increase in their mean gross monthly salary over the 2016 cohort, earning \$4,143. The median gross monthly salary is \$3,700, same as in 2016. Those with *Cum Laude* or better also saw a higher mean gross monthly salary of \$4,737, compared to last year’s \$4,425.

Accountancy graduates earned a mean monthly salary of \$3,646, a 5.5% increase over last year’s \$3,455. The median gross monthly salary remains at \$3,000. Those with *Cum Laude* or better earned a mean gross monthly salary of \$4,089, as compared to last year’s \$3,943.

Social Sciences graduates earned a mean monthly salary of \$3,493, a 5.5% increase over last year’s \$3,311. The median gross monthly salary also increased from \$3,145 to \$3,300 this year. Those with *Cum Laude* or better earned a mean gross monthly salary of \$3,938, as compared to last year’s \$3,548.

Business Management graduates’ mean gross monthly salary of \$3,995 increased by 4.3 per cent from last year’s \$3,831. The median gross monthly salary is unchanged at \$3,500. Those with *Cum Laude* or better were paid a higher mean gross monthly salary of \$4,504, compared to last year’s \$4,234.

Information Systems (IS) graduates earned a mean monthly salary of \$4,014, a 3 per cent increase over the 2016 cohort (\$3,897). The median gross monthly salary is \$4,000, an 11 percent increase from 2016’s \$3,600. Those with *Cum Laude* or better saw a mean gross monthly salary of \$4,305, compared to last year’s \$4,603.

Please refer to Annex for the detailed figures.

The follow-up survey² on SMU **Law** graduates showed that 97.6% per cent of the respondents who were in the labour force were employed. The mean and median gross monthly salaries of Law graduates in full-time permanent employment were \$4,941 and \$5,000 respectively. Those who attained a *Cum Laude* and above had a mean gross monthly salary of \$5,287.

Explanatory Note: *Cum Laude* and Merit Awards

SMU uses the cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) criteria to identify degree candidates with academic excellence in the following award categories: *Summa Cum Laude*, *Magna Cum Laude* and *Cum Laude*. These are Latin awards adopted from the American system, and can be translated as with Highest Distinction, with High Distinction and with Distinction, respectively.

They do not equate to the various classes of degree honours conferred by universities that follow the British system of academic honours. A graduate needs a GPA of at least 3.40 out of 4.00 to be awarded *Cum Laude*. All SMU bachelor degrees are four-year full-time programmes.

Cumulative GPA	Awards
≥ 3.80	Summa Cum Laude
3.60 to 3.79	Magna Cum Laude
3.40 to 3.59	Cum Laude
3.20 to 3.39	High Merit
3.00 to 3.19	Merit

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About Singapore Management University (SMU)

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. It is known for its interactive and technologically-enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 10,000 undergraduates and postgraduates, SMU comprises six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range

² SMU's **Law** graduates in 2016 were excluded from the 2016 survey as they were undergoing pupillage in the first six months of their graduation. They have since started employment and have been included in the follow-up survey of GES 2017.

of bachelor's, master's and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, SMU faculty collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India as well as with partners in the business community and public sector, through its research institutes, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg