

Grads still expect higher pay

BY REICO WONG

RECENT university graduates and undergraduates here continue to have higher expectations when it comes to salaries and promotions.

This is as the Singapore economy is forecast to turn in a relatively steady economic growth of between 1.5 per cent and 2.5 per cent this year and as the labour market remains tight.

A recent survey found that about two thirds, or 64 per cent, of recent graduates expect a monthly salary of at least \$3,000 for their first job.

This is up from the 55 per cent of **respondents** who indicated so in the same poll conducted last year.

Results of the latest survey released by recruitment firm JobsCentral yesterday also showed that three out of four top students – those with first and second-class honours – expect more than \$3,000 a month.

The survey polled a total of

2,213 respondents from Nanyang Technological University, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University, from the graduating classes of 2010 to 2017.

Mr Lim Der Shing, chief executive of JobsCentral Group, said that the high inflation rate has also contributed to graduates' demand for higher starting salaries, as they attempt to cope with the higher cost of living.

"Higher wage expectations are (occurring) across the country, so it's not surprising that the fresh-graduate market has followed this **trend**," he said.

"It's a demand-and-supply equation, with employers competing for a limited pool of local entry-level graduates."

Computing and information-technology majors were found to have the highest salary expectations, with 78 per cent of them indicating their expectations of over \$3,000 a month. Meanwhile, only about 47 per cent of Arts-degree holders and undergraduates expect to earn

above \$3,000 per month.

"It's because the two industries have different salary benchmarks. The technology industry also has stronger growth prospects, and staff have more specialised skills," said Ms Khoo Xi Ying, 21, a final-year Communications student at NUS.

The survey also found that 75.5 per cent of respondents expected to attain their first promotion within the first two years of their career. Some 22.6 per cent believe that they may be promoted by the first year of work.

Some 51 per cent also said that they expect to be in a managerial position with staff under them, within the first three years of their career.

Human-resource experts said that such expectations – particularly of becoming a manager within the first three years – are not **realistic**.

Mr Josh Goh, assistant director of corporate services at The GMP Group, pointed out that employees are likely to spend

their first year learning the ropes.

After that, they still have to show progression in their work, build credentials, and wait for opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills, he said.

Mr Lim said that firms should look into creating clearer and more **segmented** career paths, so that promotions can be earned quickly.

"This allows managers to give near-term goals and KPIs for entry-level staff, so that employees have a promotion to aim for that is within their expected time frame," he said.

reicow@sph.com.sg