

Undergrads' top priority: Work-life balance

Job security takes second spot in survey of 6,000 on nine career goals

By **AMELIA TAN**

EVEN before entering the workforce, university students here are sure of one thing they want from their careers: a work-life balance.

It came out as the top motivating factor in a survey of 6,000 undergraduates, beating job security into second place and dedication to a cause in third.

To be challenged competitively or intellectually was only fourth on the list while being a leader or manager was fifth.

Employer branding consultancy Universum got university students to pick their most important career goals out of a list of nine.

In sixth was to have an international career, in seventh was to be entrepreneurial and creative, in eighth was to be autonomous or independent and last was to be a technical or functional expert.

Most students who took part in the online survey were from the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University and the Singapore Institute of Management.

The survey was carried out between last December and May.

Human resource experts interviewed said the survey's results explain why many young people have no qualms about taking un-

paid leave or "job hopping".

Mr David Ang, associate director of human resource consultancy Remuneration Data Specialists, said: "Younger workers do not want to compromise their private life for work. If they cannot find that, they will leave."

University students and fresh graduates interviewed said personal interests come first for them as they do not have to worry about supporting their parents - most of whom are financially independent.

Human resource experts said companies need to do more to design staff retention policies that fit the interests of young workers.

Mr Josh Goh, assistant director for corporate services for recruitment company The GMP Group, suggested that more firms should look at allowing staff members to go on unpaid leave to travel or pursue their own goals and fund courses to further their studies.

Fresh graduate Alice Zhao, 23, said employers should promote a culture of "working with friends" - as is the case with her employer, a technology company.

"We are trusted to work from home. We also socialise over the meals which are provided. It doesn't feel like we are working because we are enjoying ourselves," she said.

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