

# IT grads get highest starting pay: Survey

## They also beat peers at four local universities in full-time permanent employment rate

Cheryl Tan

Students who graduated from four local universities last year earned a higher median starting salary, a survey showed, with those in the information and digital technologies sector posting the highest rates for full-time permanent jobs, as well as the highest median gross monthly salary.

Fresh grads took home a median gross monthly salary of \$3,600 last year, compared with \$3,500 in 2018, according to a joint graduate employment survey released yesterday.

Those in courses such as computer science, information security and software engineering had the highest median gross monthly pay of \$4,400.

The annual survey, conducted

last November, polled 11,400 fresh graduates from full-time programmes at the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS).

The joint exercise was conducted around six months after the graduates had finished their final exams.

The survey showed that 81.7 per cent of new graduates were in full-time permanent work, slightly higher than the 81.2 per cent in 2018.

Overall, 90.7 per cent of them were employed within six months of completing their final examinations, up from 90.2 per cent in 2018.

This refers to graduates in full-time, part-time, temporary or freelance work.

The proportion of graduates do-

ing freelance work was 2 per cent last year, an increase from the 1.8 per cent in 2018. Meanwhile, 2.4 per cent of graduates were unable to secure full-time employment and are employed temporarily, a 0.1 percentage point increase from 2018.

Graduates from the information and digital technologies, business, health sciences and built environment courses had the highest full-time permanent employment rates.

As the surveys for Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) are ongoing, their results will be released at a later date.

Universities here have been helping students increase their preparedness for the working world.

For instance, two-thirds of SUSS graduates said they found their school's career services useful in helping them prepare for the job market.

NUS graduate Nicholas Foo found his business analytics degree to be useful for his job, as it gave him a specialised skill set that helped him carve out a niche for himself.

The 26-year-old is currently working as a data analyst in the financial crime department of fintech company Revolut.

"I was always interested in finance and business, and I found that this degree is a nice marriage of my interests and the added technical knowledge really sets me apart from the rest," he said.

SMU graduate Nur Syakirah, 25, who completed her degree in information systems, is now working as a supply chain IT analyst at Johnson & Johnson, as part of a two-year-long graduate programme.

Aside from finding her degree relevant to her job, she said that school workshops prepared students with mock interviews, and equipped them well with useful soft skills.

SMU provost Timothy Clark said that the university's academic curriculum, in addition to co-curricular programmes, has helped its students develop a range of critical skills through global exposure, community service, campus life and internships.

## Which field of study has better job prospects?

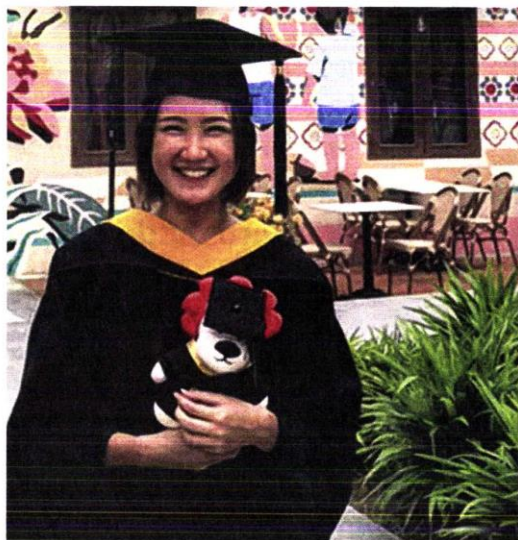
New university graduates took home a higher median monthly pay of \$3,600 last year, up from \$3,500 in 2018, according to an annual survey. Here's a closer look at the numbers.

Course clusters	Full-time permanent employment rate		Median gross monthly salary	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Information and digital technologies	91.7%	92.7%	\$4,100	\$4,400
Engineering	84.1%	83.3%	\$3,600	\$3,750
Health sciences	83.8%	88.4%	\$3,489	\$3,500
Business	89.7%	88.8%	\$3,450	\$3,500
Built environment	87.3%	87.3%	\$3,400	\$3,500
Humanities and social sciences	71.2%	74.5%	\$3,400	\$3,500
Sciences	68.7%	71.5%	\$3,390	\$3,500
Arts, design and media	69.8%	62.4%	\$3,000	\$3,200
<b>Overall</b>	81.2%	81.7%	\$3,500	\$3,600

NOTE: Data from NTU, NUS, SMU and SUSS

Source: JOINT GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT SURVEY 2019 STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

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SMU graduate Nur Syakirah, who has a degree in information systems, works as a supply chain IT analyst at Johnson & Johnson. PHOTO: COURTESY OF NUR SYAKIRAH



NUS graduate Nicholas Foo, who has a business analytics degree, is now a data analyst at fintech firm Revolut. PHOTO: COURTESY OF NICHOLAS FOO