



MEDIA RELEASE

SMU's 2020 fresh graduates see healthy employment and starting salaries in latest employment survey

93.9 per cent of fresh graduates from the 2020 cohort who were in the labour force were employed within six months of completing their final examinations

Singapore, 19 February 2021 (Friday) – Fresh graduates from Singapore Management University's (SMU) 17th cohort have registered healthy and stable overall employment, with 93.9%¹ of them employed and commanding good starting salaries across all six of the university's degree programmes.

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

78.4% or 1,476 of the 1,883 SMU alumni who graduated in 2020 took part in the survey.

The survey showed that 93.9% of SMU fresh graduates in the labour force gained employment within six months of completing their final examinations. 57.0% were offered full-time permanent jobs before graduation. Among those who were on full-time permanent employment, 51.9% were offered employment through internships, which are compulsory for SMU undergraduates. 29.9% of those who were on full-time permanent employment accepted the offers from their internship employers.

Both the mean and median gross monthly salaries are at an all-time high. The mean gross monthly salary of SMU graduates in full-time permanent jobs is **\$4,196** in 2020, an increase over the previous year's salary of \$4,121. The median gross monthly salary of graduates in full-time permanent employment is **\$3,900** in 2020, up from \$3,800 in 2019.

The top three industries of employment for SMU graduates were "Financial and Insurance", "Information & Communication", and "Public Administration and Defence", with "Financial and Insurance" maintaining its position as the highest paid industry with an average gross monthly salary of \$5,187.

SMU Provost, Professor Timothy Clark said, "Despite the current economic conditions, we are delighted to see that SMU graduates are in much demand and have once again been very successful in finding employment. This affirms the recognition by employers of our holistic and multi-disciplinary academic curriculum, as well as a co-curricular programme that enables our students to nurture the values and critical skills desired at the workplace.

¹ This refers to the number of graduates working in full-time permanent, part-time, temporary employment or freelancing, 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 2020.

In addition, SMU's Internship Programme where each graduate completes an average of 2.6 internships during their time of study, contributes rigour and work place relevance to students' applied learning. About half of the internships actually translated into job offers and we are proud to be the first university in Singapore to make internships a compulsory graduation requirement."

98% of 2020 graduates said they had experienced personal growth during their time at SMU. Having experienced our flexible broad-based programmes, 96% felt they had developed the ability to persevere and adapt in the face of challenges. Another 96% said they developed a greater ownership of their personal development while 92% felt that they had developed a keener sense of responsibility for individual and collective actions.

"These are skills and attributes that are critical given the evolving economy and very much valued in any workplace today," added Prof Clark.

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

The DKHMCC offers a range of comprehensive services, programmes, and resources for SMU students to chart their career directions, and also empowers them with the necessary skills to realise their potential and goals. 85.6% of the 2020 graduates surveyed who had used the services of the Centre were satisfied with the services rendered.

Each student is assigned a [career coach](#) upon matriculation to support him/her in career planning through his/her 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 offers career services workshops from the freshman year as part of SMU's pioneering [Finishing Touch \(FT\) programme](#). The compulsory foundational FT programme delivered online equips SMU undergraduates with career management skills and gears them towards employability and career readiness, while the advanced modular FT modules which blend both classroom and online sessions help them develop and focus on their career goals progressively throughout their four-year course of study. Every year, DKHMCC organises more than 200 events which include career and industry talks, employability clinics, career fairs, as well as networking events, for our 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. Students are provided opportunities via DKHMCC, which works closely with industry to ensure successful placements 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 two years 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 2020 Graduates who have benefited from the SMU educational experience

Brendan Tan Junwei, a graduate of the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, was given multiple opportunities to work and study overseas through his SMU journey. His first experience living overseas was an internship in Shanghai. This was followed by an exchange programme with HEC School of Management in Paris. Outside of school, he

would travel annually to Lesbos Island in Greece to volunteer with search and rescue operations in support of refugees. He said, “These experiences helped me to develop a global mindset and fueled my desire to meld my knowledge in finance and volunteerism to create a meaningful impact.” This led him to pursue a career in the field of development finance and consulting through two internships. One was with Ernst & Young, where he is now an Associate in the Infrastructure Advisory team. He said, “I am grateful for my mentors and career coach I met at SMU, who have taken the time and effort to guide me as a young junior. These experiences led me to my ideal career path, where I work in support of the development of countries across developing Asia.”

Kimberley Sarah Ambrose, a graduate from the School of Economics, did four internships as she felt it was a rewarding and fun use of her summer breaks where she had opportunities to meet many new people. She enjoyed venturing into different sectors to understand a bit more about each, before coming to a decision on what she wanted to pursue. The companies she interned at ranged from start-ups like Kashmi, to SMCs like Tripzilla and MNCs like Nestle Singapore and The Walt Disney Company SEA where she eventually landed a position in Digital Marketing. She also embarked on two study missions – one to Scandinavia and one to Bangkok, to gain exposure on the culture and business practices there. She said, “The many opportunities received during my time in SMU is what I am most grateful for. There was never a time where I felt that the resources accessible to me were inadequate, and you never needed to look far to find help. Needless to say, the courses that are offered in SMU equip many of us with the fundamental and critical skills that are necessary in today’s world.”

Sherman Koa, a graduate of the School of Computing and Information Systems, did four internships ranging from start-ups to big tech firms, including stints at Amazon Web Services and Visa. Through those internships, he was able to hone skills that go beyond the classroom, working with modern technologies and frameworks like React and Python. Through his internships, he picked up skills in managing data warehouses and Extract, Transform, Load (ETL) pipelines built on the industry-leading Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud, as well as Continuous Integration and Deployment strategies on highly-available, globally-distributed cloud servers. He eventually took up an offer from a leading large tech multi-national corporation prior to graduation, and works with the global team there. He adds, “SMU provides opportunities to pick up both soft and hard skills that helped me succeed at the workplace. As an example, encouraging individuals to speak up and participate in seminars might sound insignificant, but it helped me get comfortable with framing ideas and perceptions and voice them out concisely. An idea is only as good as how you present it!”

SMU’s 2020 graduates across all six Schools enjoyed competitive monthly salaries

Information Systems graduates earned the highest salary with a mean monthly salary of \$4,683, as compared to the 2019 cohort’s \$4,549. The median gross monthly salary is \$4,542, up from \$4,300 in 2019. Those with *Cum Laude* or better earned a mean gross monthly salary of \$5,064 and a median gross salary of \$5,000.

Business Management graduates' mean gross monthly salary of \$4,293, as compared to last year’s \$4,181. The median gross monthly salary was \$3,850, up from \$3,750 in 2019. Those with *Cum Laude* or better earned a higher mean gross monthly salary of \$4,688, while the median gross monthly salary was \$4,000.

Economics graduates earned a mean monthly salary of \$4,290, up from \$4,159 in 2019. The median gross monthly salary was \$3,800, as compared to \$3,900 in 2019. Those with *Cum Laude* or better earned a mean gross monthly salary of \$4,749, while the median gross monthly salary was \$4,000.

Accountancy graduates earned a mean monthly salary of \$3,694 as compared to \$3,802 in 2019. The median gross monthly salary is \$3,100, similar to that of \$3,050 in 2019. Those with *Cum Laude* or better earned a mean gross monthly salary of \$4,057 while the median gross monthly salary was \$3,744.

Social Sciences graduates earned a mean monthly salary of \$3,626 as compared to \$3,629 in 2019. The median gross monthly salary is \$3,500, same as last year. Those with *Cum Laude* or better earned a mean gross monthly salary of \$3,784 while the median gross monthly salary was \$3,510.

Please refer to Annex for the detailed figures.

The follow-up survey² on SMU **Law** graduates showed that 95.5% 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 \$4,804 and \$4,588 respectively. Those who attained a *Cum Laude* and above had a mean gross monthly salary of \$5,141 and median gross salary of \$5,000.

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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² SMU's **Law** graduates in 2019 were excluded from the 2019 survey results as they were undergoing pupillage in the first six months of their graduation. They have since started employment and are therefore included in the follow-up survey of JAUGES 2020.

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 to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 11,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and post-graduate research programmes, SMU, is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors, masters and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg