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**Headline: Fresh grads earned a median pay of S\$3,500 last year – and full-time unemployment was the lowest since 2016**

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Graduates from law and medicine courses earned the highest median salaries, followed by grads from architecture, dentistry, and IT and digital courses. The Straits Times

Fresh graduates who tossed their mortarboards last year were a fortunate batch, graduating with the highest median monthly salary in three years, new statistics from the Ministry of Education show.

According to the results of the annual joint graduate employment survey published on Tuesday (Feb 26), the median monthly pay for fresh grads in 2018 was S\$3,500 – up from S\$3,400 in 2017, and S\$3,300 in 2016.

The survey included the salaries of graduates from Nanyang Technological University (NTU), the National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University (SMU) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), who were polled six months after their final examinations.

As the Singapore Institute of Technology and the Singapore University of Technology and Design have different academic calendars from the other universities, their results were not yet available, the ministry said.

In addition, employment and salary data for graduates from courses like law, medicine and pharmacy were obtained from a follow-up survey administered after these graduates completed the one-year practical training compulsory for their profession, such as a pupillage, housemanship, or residency.

### **Graduates' full-time employment rate higher in 2018 than 2017, 2016**

According to the data, 81.2 per cent of fresh graduates in 2018 found full-time jobs, higher than 78.4 per cent in 2017 and 89.5 per cent in 2016.

Meanwhile, the percentage of unemployed graduates dropped from 11.1 per cent in 2017 to 9.8 per cent last year, while those doing involuntary part-time work dropped from 3.7 per cent in 2017 to 2.3 per cent in 2018.

According to a report by The Straits Times (ST), most universities said their graduates received job offers thanks to compulsory internships being made part of graduation requirements.

Over a third of accountancy graduates from SUSS, and business and computing graduates from NTU's Nanyang Business School, had been offered jobs from the companies they interned at, ST said.

Half of all SMU graduates also received job offers before finishing school for the same reason, the report added.

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For the first time, the annual survey also included specific data on median salaries and employment rates by university course.

#### **Mean monthly salaries for 2018 increased for most courses**

Median monthly salaries rose for graduates from most courses – with the exception of music – while the figure remained stagnant for graduates of law (S\$5,000) and dentistry (S\$4,050).

Graduates from law and medicine courses earned the highest median salaries of all graduates, at about S\$5,000 per month. The second-highest-paid graduates were from architecture, dentistry, and tech-related courses, which scored a median monthly salary of about S\$4,000.

Median monthly salaries for graduates from music courses saw the most severe decline, from S\$3,250 in 2016 to S\$2,225 in 2017, and then to S\$1,800 in 2018.