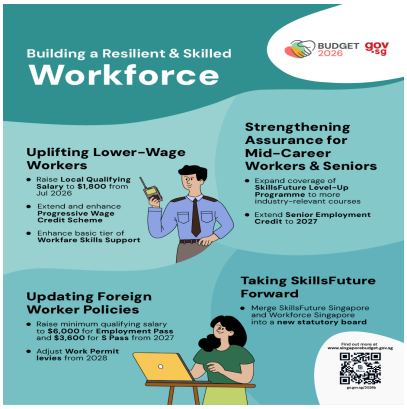


Private University Graduate Employment Survey 2026: Only 46.9% Land Full-Time Jobs, but Health Sciences Grads Earn the Most

Description

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The latest Private Education Institution Graduate Employment Survey (PEI GES) results are in, and they paint a mixed picture for graduates of private universities in Singapore. While overall employment rates remain stable, the proportion of fresh graduates securing **full-time employment within six months of graduating sits at just 46.9%** â?? a figure that will give pause to students and parents weighing their higher education options.

Key Findings at a Glance



The survey, conducted by SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) between October 2025 and January 2026, collected responses from approximately **3,800 graduates across 26 private institutions** who completed their studies between May 2024 and April 2025. Here are the headline numbers:

- **46.9%** of fresh graduates found full-time permanent employment within six months of graduating â?? a slight increase from the previous year
- **78.9%** secured employment of any kind (including part-time and freelance work) within six months
- The **median gross monthly salary** for those in full-time jobs held steady at **S$3,500**, unchanged from 2024

Which Fields of Study Pay the Most?



The data reveals significant variation in salary outcomes depending on the field of study. Here is how the different disciplines stack up:

- **Health Sciences:** S$3,935 â?? the highest median salary among all fields
- **Engineering:** S$3,900
- **Information and Digital Technologies:** S$3,900
- **Business and Management:** Around S$3,400 (the most popular field of study)
- **Arts and Social Sciences:** Among the lower median salaries

The strong showing by Health Sciences graduates reflects Singaporeâ??s growing demand for healthcare professionals, a trend that is only set to intensify as the population ages. Engineering and IT graduates also command premium salaries, driven by the ongoing digital transformation and AI adoption across industries.

Which Institutions Performed Best?



Among private institutions, graduates from **James Cook University (JCU)** recorded the highest median gross salary at **S$3,700**, followed by the **Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS)** at **S$3,580**. These figures place the top-performing private institution graduates within striking distance of some autonomous university programmes.

The Full-Time Employment Challenge

The 46.9% full-time employment rate is the headline that will concern many prospective students. While it is a slight improvement on the previous year, it remains significantly lower than the rates achieved by graduates of Singaporeâ??s autonomous universities (NUS, NTU, SMU, SUTD, SIT, SUSS), where full-time employment rates typically exceed 80%.

However, context matters. The survey period coincided with a period of **overall lower hiring demand** across Singaporeâ??s economy, with many employers adopting a more cautious approach to permanent hires. The 78.9% overall employment rate (including part-time and contract work) suggests that most graduates are finding work â?? just not always in permanent full-time positions immediately after graduation.

Big Changes Ahead: SSG and WSG to Merge

In a related development that will reshape Singaporeâ??s skills and employment landscape, **SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and Workforce Singapore (WSG) will merge into a new statutory**

board called **Workforce and Skills Singapore (WSSG)**. The merger, expected to be completed in the **third quarter of 2026**, will bring together skills training and employment support under a single agency, jointly overseen by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and the Ministry of Education (MOE).

The new WSSG is expected to streamline services for both job seekers and employers, making it easier to access career guidance, skills training, and job matching from a single point of contact.

ITE Work-Study Diploma Gets a Boost

In another positive development for the education sector, the government has **increased employer incentives for the ITE Work-Study Diploma** from **S$15,000 to S$20,000 per trainee** for new cohorts from April 2026 onwards. The Work-Study Diploma programme allows ITE graduates to earn a higher qualification while working, and the enhanced incentive aims to encourage more employers to participate.

Most In-Demand Jobs in 2026

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For graduates entering the job market, the most in-demand roles in Singapore for 2026 include:

- **Teaching professionals** â?? consistently the most sought-after category
- **Marketing executives** â?? driven by digital marketing expansion
- **Software developers** â?? fuelled by AI and digital transformation initiatives
- **Healthcare professionals** â?? reflecting the ageing population
- **Data analysts and AI specialists** â?? the fastest-growing demand segment

What This Means for Students

The survey results underscore the importance of choosing fields of study that align with market demand. Health sciences, engineering, and IT consistently deliver the strongest employment and salary outcomes. Students considering private university education should also research specific institution outcomes, as the data shows meaningful differences between providers.

The upcoming merger of SSG and WSG into WSSG should also make it easier for graduates to access career support services, so keep an eye on announcements from the new agency later this year.

For more education and career news, visit our Education & Career section. You may also be interested in our article on Singaporeâ??s expanded shared parental leave, which took effect from 1 April 2026.

Advice for Prospective Students

For students considering enrolling in a private university programme in Singapore, the Graduate Employment Survey results offer valuable insights that can inform course selection decisions. The strong outcomes for Health Sciences graduates suggest that programmes aligned with Singaporeâ??s growing healthcare sector may offer better employment prospects upon graduation. Similarly, Information Technology and Business programmes continue to produce graduates who are in demand

across multiple industries.

However, students should consider multiple factors beyond just salary data when choosing a programme. Job satisfaction, career growth potential, personal interests, and the reputation of the institution all play important roles in long-term career success. Prospective students are also encouraged to attend open houses, speak with current students and alumni, and research the specific industry partnerships and internship opportunities that each institution offers.

The Ministry of Education publishes the full Graduate Employment Survey data annually on its website, allowing prospective students to compare outcomes across institutions and programmes over multiple years. This longitudinal data provides a more comprehensive picture than any single yearâ??s results and can help students make more informed decisions about their educational investment. The complete 2026 survey data is available at moe.gov.sg for public reference.

Whether you are a fresh school leaver weighing your options or a working adult considering a career switch, the 2026 Graduate Employment Survey results underscore the growing importance of choosing programmes that align with Singaporeâ??s strategic economic priorities and workforce demands.

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