



Singapore Ranked 2nd in the World for Turning Degrees into Career Success â?? Henley Opportunity Index 2026

Description

Editorâ??s note: Imagery on this post is being updated to match Little Big Red Dotâ??s editorial standards. Photographs sourced from the originating organisation will replace any temporary placeholders shortly.

Singapore has once again proven itself to be one of the worldâ??s best places to study and build a career. The newly released **Henley Opportunity Index 2026** ranks Singapore **second globally** for turning university degrees into strong career success â?? a result that will come as no surprise to anyone who has seen the countryâ??s workforce evolve over the past decade.

But what exactly does this mean for students, fresh graduates, and mid-career workers here? Letâ??s break down what the index says, why Singapore scored so highly, and what it means for you.

What Is the Henley Opportunity Index?

The Henley Opportunity Index is published by academic research firm Henley Business School in partnership with global mobility consultants. It ranks countries based on how effectively they convert educational qualifications into real-world career outcomes. The index weighs factors such as earning potential, employment prospects for graduates, the strength of local industries, quality of higher education, and social mobility.

This yearâ??s index evaluated 50 countries. Switzerland topped the list with a score of 86 out of 100, driven by its world-class universities and dominant finance and pharmaceutical sectors. **Singapore came in second with a score of 81**, scoring particularly high for *earning potential* and *top-tier employment prospects*. Australia came in third.

Why Singapore Scored So Well

Several interconnected factors helped Singapore land in second place.

World-Class Universities

The National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) continue to dominate global employer surveys. In the 2026 Global University Employability Ranking by Times Higher Education, NUS climbed to **8th place worldwide**, while NTU came in at 23rd. Both institutions are consistently cited by employers across 42 countries as producing graduates who are adaptable, technically strong, and ready to work from day one.

Excellent Graduate Employment Rates

The Joint Graduate Employment Survey (GES) 2025, released by the Ministry of Education in early 2026, found that **92.2% of fresh graduates entered the labour force**, with 88.9% securing employment within six months of graduation. These numbers held up despite global economic headwinds, reflecting strong domestic demand for skilled talent.

Competitive Salaries

Singapore's median gross monthly salary for fresh graduates from local universities rose to approximately **\$4,200 to \$5,100** depending on discipline, according to the GES. Engineering, computing, and finance graduates continue to command the highest starting pay, while arts and social sciences graduates also saw meaningful wage growth year-on-year.

Government Commitment to Upskilling

Singapore's long-term investment in workforce development through **SkillsFuture** and other programmes has helped create a culture of continuous learning that keeps the workforce competitive. The upcoming merger of SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore into a new statutory board — Workforce and Skills Singapore (WSSG) — signals even greater integration between training and employment outcomes.

What This Means for Singaporeans

For Students

If you are currently studying at a local polytechnic, ITE, or university, the data confirms that your qualification carries real weight in the global job market. Singapore's academic institutions are internationally recognised, and employers — both local and multinational — actively seek Singaporean graduates.

That said, the index also highlights the importance of going beyond just a degree. Employers increasingly value internship experience, digital skills, and the ability to work across cultures. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the overseas exchange programmes, industry attachment schemes, and SkillsFuture microcredentials available through their institutions.

For Fresh Graduates

The strong employment figures are encouraging, but competition remains fierce in sectors like finance, law, and consulting. Fresh graduates should use platforms like **MyCareersFuture.gov.sg** to find roles and access career coaching resources. The government's Professional Conversion Programmes (PCPs) also remain available for those looking to pivot into growth sectors such as cybersecurity, data analytics, and sustainability.

For Mid-Career Workers

Singapore's second-place ranking is not just about new graduates – it reflects a system that supports workers throughout their careers. The enhanced SkillsFuture credits introduced from April 2026 make it easier to fund courses without taking on significant personal expense. If you have been thinking about upskilling or switching industries, now is a genuinely good time to act.

Singapore vs the Rest of the World

It is worth putting the ranking in context. The countries that scored highest on the Henley Opportunity Index tend to share a few things in common: strong rule of law, political stability, well-funded universities, and active government investment in workforce development. Singapore checks all of these boxes.

What distinguishes Singapore from other high-ranked countries is its compact size and the density of opportunity within it. Unlike larger countries where job markets can be fragmented across regions, Singapore's workforce is concentrated in a single city-state. This means graduates here face less geographic friction when looking for work, and employers benefit from a talent pool that is highly accessible.

The index also noted that Singapore's multilingual workforce – with English as the working language – makes it particularly attractive to multinational corporations setting up regional headquarters in Asia. This in turn creates more high-quality employment for Singaporeans, feeding back into the very outcomes the index measures.

Looking Ahead: The Jobs Landscape in 2026 and Beyond

Singapore's Committee of Supply 2026 (COS) outlined several priorities for career growth in the coming years, including continued investment in AI and digital skills, expansion of the Skills Recognition Framework, and new support for Singaporeans working in emerging industries like green technology and advanced manufacturing.

The WSG-SSG merger, expected to be completed in Q3 2026, is designed to create a more joined-up system where job placement and skills training happen under the same roof. For workers, this should mean less bureaucracy and more coordinated support when navigating career transitions.

Singapore's second-place finish in the Henley Opportunity Index 2026 is not just a pat on the back – it is a reflection of a deliberate, decades-long investment in human capital. For those studying or working here, it is a reminder that the environment around you is genuinely built to help you succeed.

If you want to explore courses, career resources, or employment opportunities, visit MyCareersFuture.gov.sg and SkillsFuture.gov.sg.

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