

SIT grads better paid, but more working part-time

Survey shows that one in 10 is a part-timer, similar trend seen for other local universities

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While Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) graduates continued to do well in the job market, a rising number are taking on part-time, freelance or contract work.

In a press release this morning on the results of its latest graduate employment survey, SIT said close to 90 per cent of the class of 2016 secured jobs, with an average monthly salary of \$3,200, up from \$3,055 from the year before.

But the number of graduates

working part-time has also climbed to 12 per cent, compared with 7.6 per cent a year ago.

SIT asked if they had opted for part-time positions over full-time jobs and found that only 5.5 per cent of them had chosen to do so.

Other universities are showing this trend as well.

In a joint graduate employment survey released in February by Nanyang Technological University, National University of Singapore and Singapore Management University, 9.5 per cent of their graduates were working part-time last year, compared with 6.4 per cent in 2015.

Like SIT, nearly 90 per cent of the

graduates of the three universities found work within six months of finishing their examinations.

Some SIT grads had opted for part-time work, including over 17 per cent of the food business management graduates with degrees from The Culinary Institute of America.

The survey also found a higher number of part-timers among graduates from SIT's communications design and interior design course.

Associate Professor Ivan Lee, SIT's vice-president for industry and community, said the rising number of part-timers is partly due to the gig economy.

It was a term coined during the 2009 financial crisis when the unemployed worked on "gigs" or part-time jobs to make ends meet.

Recruitment experts such as Mr David Leong from PeopleWorld-

wide Consulting expect the gig economy trend to continue. Mr Leong said the trend is now also fuelled by young workers who want more flexibility and work-life balance.

He said a fresh graphic design graduate would make about \$2,500 a month for full-time work, but a freelancer can take home about \$5,000 a month. "People can thrive quite well and earn lucrative salaries."

SIT said it will be tracking some of the graduates over the next few years to look at their long-term job outcomes.

Prof Lee said SIT is already offering a four-day entrepreneurship immersion programme for students that will teach them the basics of running a business, and will be looking at offering the courses to more students to equip them with the skills needed to thrive in the gig economy.



SIT graduate Raphael Sim worked part-time as a waiter so he could have time to start a food stall business in Bedok North. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say said in March that there were about 200,000 freelancers here last year – about 9 per cent of resident employment. Of these, about 167,000 workers were "primary" freelancers, such as insurance agents and private-hire car drivers, who freelance as their main job.

SIT food business management graduate Raphael Sim, 26, chose to work part-time for up to five days a

week as a waiter and taught culinary classes in secondary schools, as he and two of his classmates were busy setting up a Japanese-inspired food stall in Bedok North.

He said: "I needed the time to plan... My stint as a waiter helped me understand the service side of the business and also the trends in the food scene."

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