Varsities help new grads to nail jobs

They offer slew of job-matching services in face of stiff competition

By Yeo Ghim Lay

THE days are gone when students strolled out of university assured of employment. Now, the competition is so stiff that Singapore's three universities offer a slew of services designed to help graduating students land a job.

All three offer career counseling, job-matching services, and even grooming classes to prepare students for interviews.

At Singapore Management University, about 300 bound copies of resumes have been sent to employers this year. Students invited to interviews can even borrow formal suits and shirts if they cannot afford their own.

At Nanyang Technological University, resumes are compiled experience can request a tailor-made collection of resumes.

To help students prepare for the often formidable job hunt, the universities have equipped themselves with comprehensive resources, from courses that teach resume writing to books on how to deal with office politics.

All three have also set up online portals that serve as resume banks, where employers can post job openings and view the resumes of interested students online.

"In the past, all you had to do was wave your degree and you'd get a job. But if no longer works that way these days, when there are more university graduates," said Ms Wong Sing Chee, head of the career centre at the National University of Singapore.

Since 2003, career centres have sprung up on the campuses of NTU and NUS, while SMU has had one since the university opened in 2000.

Besides offering books and videos on how to nail a job, the career centres also stock company reports to help students get up to speed on prospective employers.

There are also rooms at the centres for companies to conduct on-campus interviews with students when hiring season arrives. This year, both SMU and NUS had visits from about 10 companies looking for recruits.

"I was pleasantly surprised by the response and about 10 of my friends also found jobs the same way," said the 24-year-old accountant.

She added that searching for a job on the portal was also easier than on recruitment websites, which are open to everyone.

"At least you know these companies are interested in you and you aren't left passively waiting for a response."