All SMU grads have landed jobs

And 11 of the 288 who responded to survey get between $5,000 and $10,000 a month

By LAW WY-CIN & MARIA ALMENDAR

SINGAPORE Management University's (SMU) second batch of graduates have kept up their school's 100 per cent employment rate and — riding on the booming economy — their business graduates have raised the average starting salary by $120, or about 5 per cent.

SMU told The Straits Times that 13 of its 288 business and accountancy graduates who responded to a survey are even top earners, pulling in between $5,000 and $10,000 a month in finance, banking and investment.

The six-year-old university yesterday released its second graduate employment survey done last year. It said three quarters of its graduates found jobs within a month of graduation. The same proportion had more than one job offer.

About 85 per cent of the 337 graduates from the class of 2005 responded to the SMU survey. Among these, 279 said they landed jobs before or within six months of graduation.

The other nine said they were pursuing further studies.

Of the 279 already working, 90 per cent were in full-time, permanent jobs and earning an average of $2,500. The remaining 10 per cent were on contract or part-time employment.

The average monthly starting salary for its business management graduates increased from $2,480 in its first survey — done in 2004 and released last year — to about $2,600 in the latest one. Business students who graduated with distinction, high distinction or highest distinction earned a bit more, starting on average at $3,000.

SMU puts all its students on four-year courses. It does not follow the honours system used by the other two local universities. But its figures are not much different from those put out by the National University of Singapore (NUS), which released its results last week.

NUS said its business graduates with honours degrees earned an average monthly starting salary of $2,900; those without honours degrees earned $2,550. Its class of 2005 also registered the highest employment rate of 94 per cent for the university in a decade.

Nanyang Technological University is releasing its graduate employment survey today.

The Straits Times spoke to some SMU graduates who were quick off the mark in the race for jobs. Ms Melissa Ong, 25, now a Citibank management associate in consumer banking, snagged her job four months before graduation. It was one of three offers she received. The double-degree graduate in business management and accountancy started her job search seven months before graduation.

Ms May-Anne Tham, 24, started even earlier — a year before graduation. Said the accountancy graduate, who makes about $3,000: "The school puts heavy emphasis on early career planning and encourages us to start job hunting early."

For top business graduate and high-flier Ng Chee Chye, 25, a graduate trainee in foreign exchange distribution for UBS Investment Bank, it was the school's support of activities outside of school that helped him.

"I had to interact with a lot of people, plan activities and programmes and make a lot of decisions on my own in my co-curricular activities. This helped me develop people and administrative skills," said Mr Ng, who got the job one month after graduation.