SINGAPORE: The government is looking at the employment data of graduates when reviewing the salaries of civil servants.

Minister-in-Charge of Civil Service Teo Chee Hean said public sector pay will be adjusted after studying graduate employment surveys, such as the one just released by Singapore Management University (SMU).

That survey showed that the average starting salary of SMU graduates was 13 percent higher than their predecessors.

Civil servants’ pay was last reviewed in 2000.

A tightening labour market had prompted a relook, as announced in parliament recently by Mr Teo.

But the upcoming adjustments are more than just attempts to keep public sector pay competitive.

It is also a move to lower resignation rates of civil servants, especially those at entry level, where one in four quit in 2006.

If the government decides to match public sector salary with the findings from SMU’s survey, it will have to pay entry-level civil servants at least $2,850 a month.

That is the average starting pay of SMU graduates in 2006, which is 13 percent more than their 2005 counterparts.

The top 20 percent earners take home an average of $4,630.

"You can see the job market has indeed become very competitive. So we're looking at some of these data as well and see what kind of adjustments we need to make. I understand as well from the polytechnics, the graduates have been finding good employment. So that's at the entry level," said Minister Teo.

"At the mid-career level, we've seen the job market become much more competitive. So we're looking at the data from various sources, and looking at how that impacts upon the civil service."

The details are expected to be announced in April.

Mr Teo was speaking to reporters at the Republic Polytechnic's graduation ceremony. - CNA /Is