53% of ITE grads choose further studies: Survey

IT TOOK former Institute of Technical Education (ITE) student Li Lizhen five years longer than her peers, but she made it to university.

The 25-year-old was accepted into an accountancy course at the Singapore Management University two years ago and is now thinking of post-graduate studies.

"To climb up in the working world, experience is not enough. You need qualifications as well," she said. Miss Li is one of the many students who have gone on to upgrade their academic credentials after graduating from the ITE.

A survey released yesterday by the Education and Manpower ministries showed that 53 per cent of ITE students had upgraded or were upgrading their qualifications within five to 10 years of graduation - with almost two-thirds receiving a diploma.

The survey, done by the two ministries last year, is the first of its kind on educational upgrading trends among former ITE students.

About 9,340 students who graduated from ITE between 1997 and 2001 responded to the survey.

They were asked about the academic upgrading they had done, their plans for the future, their current jobs and the benefits of the further studies.

Upgraders include ITE students who went on to get higher ITE certificates and diplomas.

Students who have upgraded said their new qualifications have helped enhance their career progression and job prospects, and improved their skills, productivity and salaries.

National ITE Certificates (Nitec) and Higher Nitec upgraders enjoyed wage increases of 11.6 per cent and 12.8 per cent respectively, compared to their peers.

Of those who upgrading to a Higher Nitec or diploma qualification, the main reason for upgrading was to secure a better-paying job.

Those who chose not to upgrade cited work or family commitments as reasons.

JANE NG