Grads’ starting pay back to pre-crisis levels

STARTING salaries for university and polytechnic graduates have returned to pre-recession levels, according to the Manpower Ministry’s latest annual report on wages.

A university graduate who entered the job market last year drew a starting salary that was, on average, higher than his counterpart a year earlier – and those who graduated in 2008 just before the recession hit.

These higher trends in starting salaries are the result of the improved economic climate here, say the universities and polytechnics.

Their data on starting salaries – from their own surveys – was compiled by the ministry and included in its report released yesterday.

The data in the report showed that Institute of Technical Education (ITE) graduates last year also earned more than their seniors who graduated in 2009.

But their salaries were marginally lower, on average, than the cohort who entered the workforce in 2008.

The ministry’s report found that among those in four-year degree programmes, information systems management graduates from the Singapore Management University (SMU) commanded the highest average starting salary of $3,474 last year.

They were followed by SMU economics graduates at $3,430; and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) computer science graduates at $3,385.

At the other end of the scale were National University of Singapore engineering science graduates ($2,571); NTU fine arts graduates ($2,631); and NTU English graduates ($2,615).

Data for courses requiring pupillage or housemanship such as law and medicine was not included in the report.

For polytechnic graduates, the average starting salaries ranged from $1,446 for graduates with a diploma in baking and culinary science, to $2,646 for males with a diploma in business and who had completed national service (NS).

For ITE graduates, the highest average starting salary was $1,963 for male Integrated Logistics Management Higher Nitec certificate holders who had completed national service.

Poly graduates had the highest employment rates last year. It was 95.4 per cent for males who did their NS after graduating; and 91.5 per cent for fresh graduates, including females and a minority of males who had completed NS before undergoing their courses.

CAI HAOXIANG