

Employers unable to meet fresh grads' high salary expectations

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NATION

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PETALING JAYA: Most fresh graduates are tech savvy but they have high salary expectations and demands that may be difficult for companies to match, says the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

“Fresh graduates should be prepared to adjust their expected starting salary and review their own priorities and goals before beginning their career journey,” its president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said.

Highest paying areas for new graduates



Based on monthly salary



Source: Indeed

*TheStar*graphics

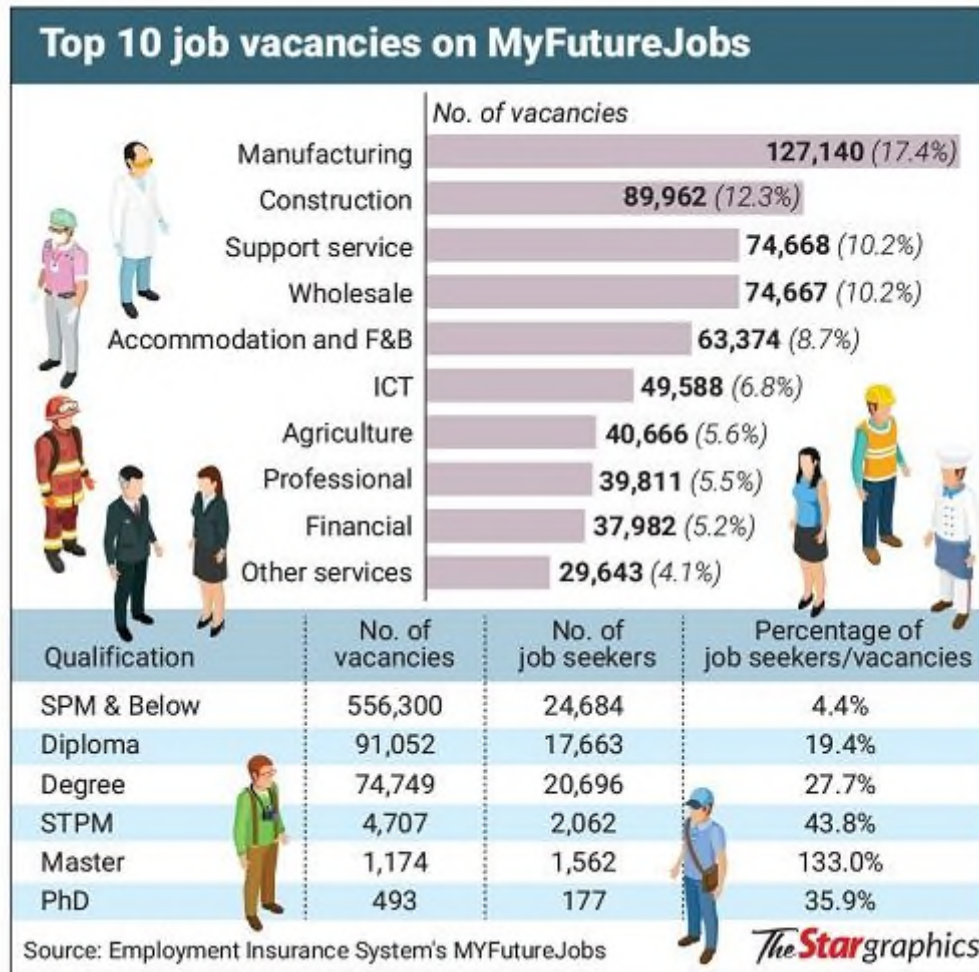
He added that the average starting salary for graduates with an honours degree was about RM2,700.

“If their salary expectation is too high, employers may not have the capacity to pay and hence they will not be selected for employment,” he said.

According to the national employment services portal MYFutureJobs, there were 729,314 vacancies between Jan 1 and April 14, 2023.

Some 60% of the vacancies offered a salary of between RM1,500 and RM1,999, while 11.4% offered below RM1,500, with 15% offering between RM2,000 and RM2,999, and 4.8% between RM3,000 and RM3,999.

In terms of qualifications, 76.4% were for those with SPM or below, 23.5% for diploma holders and 10.3% for degree holders.



Most jobseekers on the portal were aged between 20 and 25 (37%), and degree holders (31%).

Syed Hussain said that most fresh graduates were willing to learn and ready to prove themselves, while bringing in new perspectives and ideas.

“However, they require training because they lack skills and experience,” he said.

He said fresh graduates had to be aware and understand the realities of today’s competitive job market.

“They should consider whether the skills they possess match industry requirements, such as soft and digital skills,” he said.

Syed Hussain said new graduates should make it a priority to secure any form of employment – full or part time – to gain the necessary experience and skills.

“Fresh graduates could also gain work experience through a mentorship programme, volunteering and freelancing,” he said.

JobStreet Malaysia managing director Vic Sithasanan said new graduates seeking jobs might face intense competition due to their lack of experience and skills.

“Fresh graduates are often affordable, flexible and motivated, but it may cost more time and money to train them,” he said.

However, he said that fresh graduates had up-to-date skills that bring new knowledge to the hiring company.

“Another advantage is that employees with little to no experience won’t have pre-developed habits so companies can guide them according to their methods of working,” he added.

Sithasanan advised graduates not to have high and unrealistic expectations when trying to secure a job.

“Optimism is one thing, but having too lofty and unrealistic aspirations won’t do any good while applying for the first job.

“Consider that there are base salaries for entry-level jobs and that rankings depend on tenure.

“These details will typically dictate how much pay they can expect to get.

Sithasanan said a graduate’s personality must also be a good fit. According to Jobstreet’s 2022-2023 Outlook on Hiring, Compensation and Benefits report, companies focus more on fresh graduates’ interview performance, field of study and attitude shown during assessments to select candidates for hire.