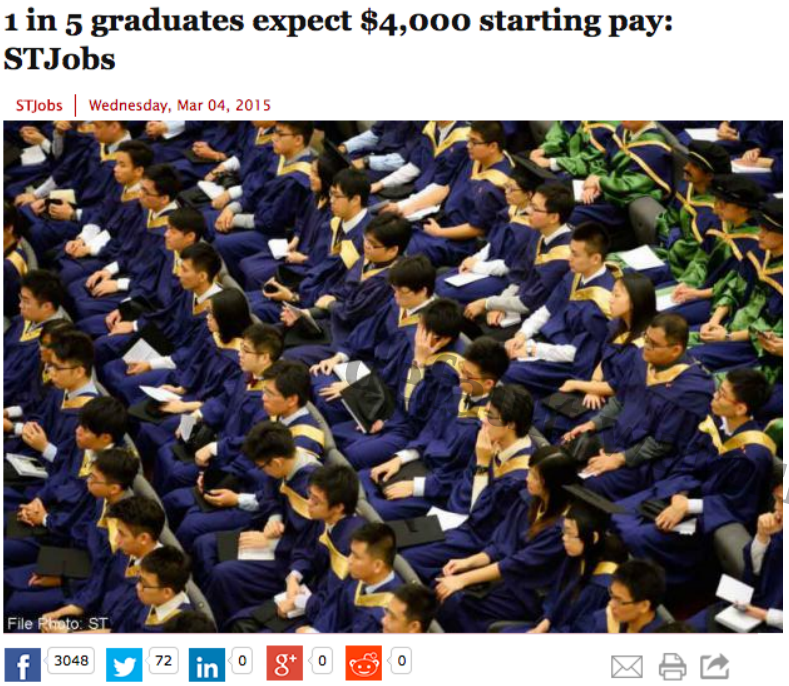
What Should the Starting Pay for a Fresh Graduate Be? $4000?

Description



This morning I read the news on how 1 in 5 graduates expect a starting pay of $4,000. It took me by surprise, because hidden in the middle of the article is the fact that **70% believe they should be paid up to $4,000**.

It took me by surprise, because my starting pay was only $2,500 when I graduated a few years ago. After CPF deductions, my take-home pay was only $1,999 back then.

I read on to see what these graduates had to say in order to justify their expected remuneration, and these were some of their defenses:

> Yu Lan, 26, a student from Nanyang Technological University, is one of them who thinks that her starting salary should be at least $4,000 as she has â??strong analysis skills and trouble-shooting abilityâ??.
>
> On the other hand, 25-year-old Samuel Tan expects to be paid up to $4,000 in starting salary as other jobs he has applied to offer similar payouts. Other reasons cited include â??I have the required abilities and good work ethics and experience from my part-time jobsâ?•.

I started working a part-time job related to my industry when I was 18. Thus, you could fairly say that what these people claim they have, I had them as well. So why did I accept a starting pay that was almost half of what they expect?

Because in your first job, it is more important to learn than to earn a high salary.

The experience and demands from a part-time job may be valuable, but they are not quite the same as a full-time job. In addition, office politics is a whole new different ballgame altogether. So hereâ??s a word of advice to my juniors and anyone reading this:

> **It is better to start with a lower-paid job which teaches you more, rather than going into a higher-paid job where you learn less.**

I strongly believe that if you are as good as you believe yourself to be, then sooner or later your abilities will be recognized and be paid fair value. I felt I was worth at least $3,000 for my starting pay, but accepted the lower pay anyway. Less than a year later, my skills and achievements had been noticed and a competitor offered me my due value together with a promotion.

If I had insisted on a role that paid me my expected salary in the beginning, all of these might not have happened. Today, Iâ??m doing far better than most of my peers (and probably earning more).

On that note, take a look at the results of CNAâ??s latest survey of how much the class of 2014 is earning at the workplace. While many people are questioning if the numbers are truly reflective, I was far more interested in the comments this article was receiving.

default watermark

There were a number of older folks leaving surprised comments that the income has not risen since the early 2000s. Take a look.

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Degree	Median gross monthly salary
Accountancy and Business	S$3,300
Business and Computing	S$3,450
Computer Engineering	S$3,400
Civil Engineering	S$3,100
Mechanical Engineering	S$3,100
Economics	S$3,200
Communication Studies	S$3,000
Art, Design and Media	S$2,700
Sociology	S$3,100
Biological Sciences	S$3,000
Mathematics and Economics	S$3,200
Physics/Applied Physics	S$3,100
Science/Arts (with Education)	S$3,475

SMU SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

Degree	Median gross monthly salary
Accountancy	S$2,875
Business Management	S$3,333
Economics	S$3,500
Social Sciences	S$3,000
Law	S$5,025
Information Systems Management	S$3,350

NUS National University of Singapore

Degree/Specialisation	Median gross monthly salary
Arts	S$2,800
Social Sciences	S$3,250
Business Administration	S$3,000
Computing (Computer Science)	S$3,500
Computing (Information Systems)	S$3,500
Industrial Design	S$2,565
Architecture	S$4,275
Chemical Engineering	S$3,300
Mechanical Engineering	S$3,200
Electrical Engineering	S$3,300
Law	S$5,150
Medicine	S$5,000
Nursing	S$3,200
Science	S$3,000

default watermark

Channel NewsAsia Singapore
27 February ·

How the Class of 2014 is faring at the workplace:
http://cna.asia/1E3OyJr

Like · Comment · Share

Matthew Ng Wei Shuen, Evonne Huang, Hai Shan and 2,308 others like this. Top Comments

2,640 shares

Robin Low I started work with my Electrical Engineering Degree from NUS in 1999, my classmates were making $3000 - $3500 back then. Today its about the same?
Like · Reply · 116 · 27 February at 22:50

24 Replies

Gary Ng Degrees don't guarantee success. You need network, effort and some luck. Suck it up guys.
Like · Reply · 49 · Yesterday at 00:34

1 Reply

Yongjia Lin I think you needa deduct $200-300 from your figures~
Like · Reply · 21 · 27 February at 22:54

Muhammad Yusuf Osman Sample size. How was this arrived?
Like · Reply · 19 · 27 February at 22:42

Write a comment...

According to this Robin Low, an engineering graduate was paid $3,000 â?? $3,500 back in 1999. While I donâ??t have friends who can attest to that, I do have friends who are engineers today and earned a starting pay in that same range too. But between 1999 â?? 2015, our cost of living has shot up much higher.

Obviously, salaries are not catching up.

But before you start complaining, think about what else has gone up.

Our expectations.
(Read What Do We Really Need?)

Back in the 1990s, our parents were happy enough to have a roof over their head, enough food to eat without worry, and earning enough to pay the bills. Todayâ??s teenagers and young working adults, however, want so much more. We want to travel the world (Iâ??m equally guilty), follow the latest fashion trends, own branded items and go cafe-hopping where we can take Instagram photos to show everyone what a good life we have.



Am I the only one who sees a problem here?

Cost of living goes up. Societal expectations go up, along with our own expectations of what constitutes a decent life. **We need increasingly more money to survive, but our earnings are not catching up fast enough.**

If salaries havenâ??t changed much in the last 16 years, what makes these graduates think itâ??ll hit $4,000 in the next few years?

default watermark

This is why Iâ??m not content enough to simply save, but am also actively investing. And why I think you should, too. But hey, thatâ??s a post for another day.

Till then, be realistic.

With love,
Budget Babe

Category

1. Savings