

# **Job Vacancies 2020**

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Singapore

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JOB VACANCIES 2020

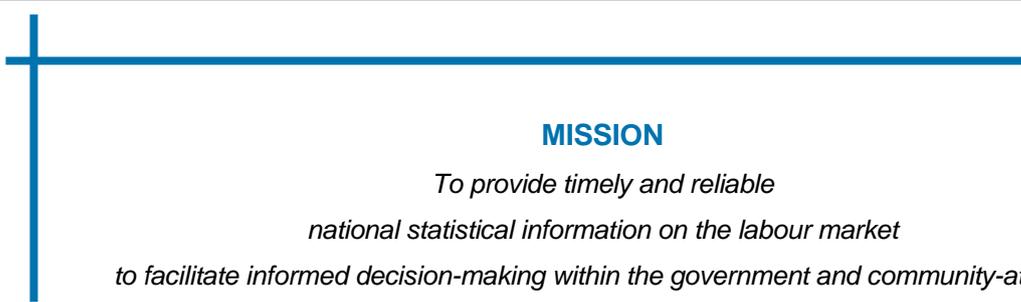
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## **Abbreviations**

Acad Qual	: Academic Qualifications
Dipl. & Prof Qual	: Diploma & Professional Qualification
ICT	: Information & Communications
IT	: Information Technology
Min Qual	: Minimum Qualification
PMETs	: Professionals, Managers, Executives & Technicians
Post-Sec (Non-Tert)	: Post-Secondary (Non-Tertiary)
Pri & Below	: Primary & Below
Sec	: Secondary

# Job Vacancies 2020

## PREFACE

The Manpower Research and Statistics Department (MRSD) publishes job vacancy numbers on a quarterly basis in its labour market reports. The number of job vacancies provides a measure of labour demand. When related to the number of unemployed persons, it also offers a sense of how easy or hard it is to find employment at any given time.

Every year, MRSD also releases a detailed report on job vacancies. The report analyses in detail the type and nature of positions that employers are looking to fill, the type of jobs in demand, and difficulties in filling these jobs. The findings from the report are based on a comprehensive survey carried out in September of each year. A total of 14,480 establishments employing 2,044,500 employees responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 85.8%.

As the 2020 survey was conducted at a time when Singapore was gradually recovering from the impact of the coronavirus, the findings will be influenced by this episode.

## 1 Executive Summary

Among the job openings in 2020, 45% were newly created positions, an increase compared to the past 2 years. Expansion into new functions, job restructuring and redesign in the firms contributed to the bulk of the increase. The suite of government initiatives aimed at supporting companies' business transformation, coupled with digitalisation efforts, could also have contributed to the increase.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a widespread implementation of flexible work arrangements, with around half of employers providing formal tele-working arrangements. Mirroring this trend, about four in ten job vacancies in 2020 involved work that could be done remotely. These vacancies were mainly for PMET roles.

In 2020, 27% of job vacancies were unfilled for six months or more, down slightly from the previous year. The challenges faced by employers when filling PMET and non-PMET vacancies were different, signalling the need for targeted interventions to match jobseekers to available positions. For PMET vacancies, employers commonly cited the lack of necessary skills and work experience. On the other hand, a mismatch in employment conditions was a common challenge faced by employers when filling non-PMET positions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the pace of digital transformation, resulting in firm demand for ICT professionals. IT development roles such as *software, web & multimedia developers* and *systems analysts* were the most sought after, with demand for such roles rising in the recent five years. Combined with the rise of Big Data, firms were increasingly hiring for associated roles such as *data analytics* and *cybersecurity professionals*. This trend looks set to continue under our Smart Nation initiative and as businesses ramp up their digital capabilities.

Looking ahead, the healthcare sector is expected to continue to expand, with the growing healthcare needs of our ageing population. Overall, demand remains robust for *registered nurses, enrolled nurses* and *healthcare assistants*. Though not yet a top job, *medical & pathology laboratory technicians* saw significant growth in job vacancies over the last five years, following the need for prompt and accurate clinical testing.

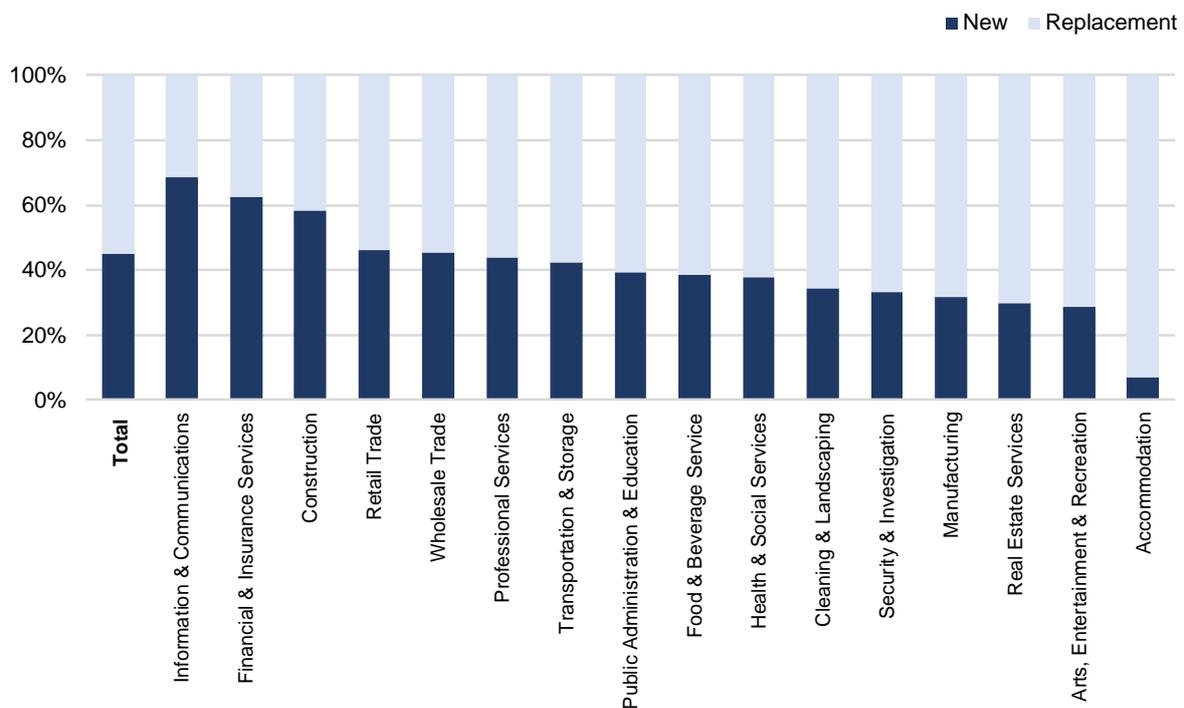
### *Among jobs unfilled, share of newly created positions continued to increase in 2020*

2.1 Among the job openings in 2020, 45% were newly created positions, an increase compared to the past 2 years (Fig. 1). Expansion into new functions, job restructuring and redesign in the firms contributed to the bulk of the increase. The suite of government initiatives aimed at supporting companies' business transformation, coupled with digitalisation efforts, could also have contributed to the increase.

2.2 *Information & Communications* and *Financial & Insurance Services* had the highest proportion of job vacancies for newly created positions, more so than a year ago. *Software, web & multimedia developers, systems analysts, and commercial & marketing sales executives* made up 38% of the newly created roles in these two sectors, with the accelerated adoption of digital technologies.

2.3 Among the new job vacancies created in 2020, most were for permanent headcount (76%). The share of new fixed-term contract positions rose over the year (18% to 24%), led by *Public Administration & Education* and *Health & Social Services* as the COVID-19 pandemic created new temporary manpower needs, for example, to support increased testing and healthcare functions.

**Figure 1: Distribution (%) Of Job Vacancies By Type Of Vacancy**



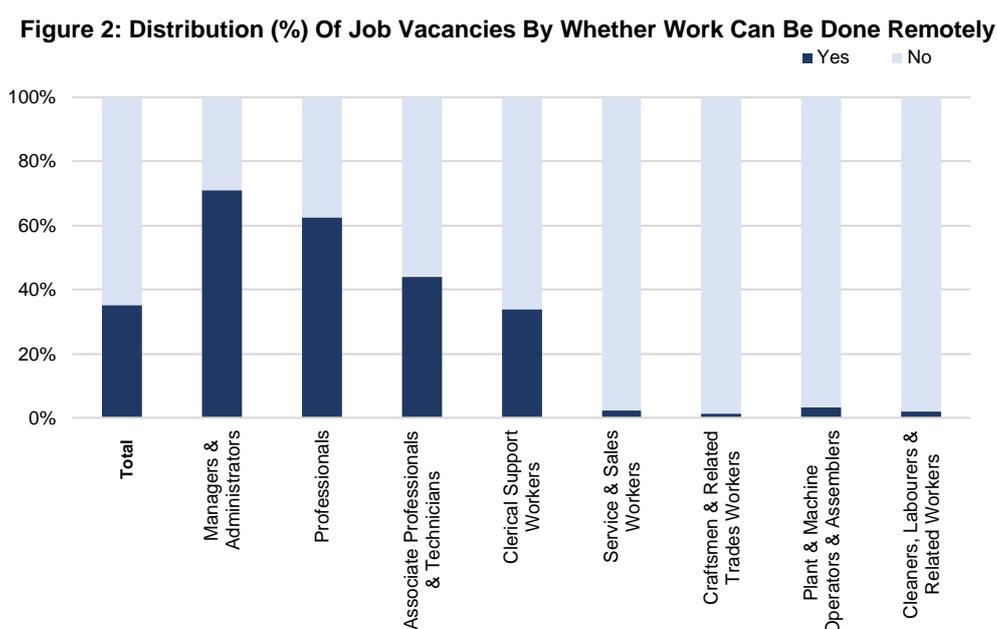
Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

## About four in ten job vacancies can be done remotely

2.4 The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a widespread implementation of flexible work arrangements, with around half of employers providing formal tele-working arrangements.<sup>1</sup> Mirroring this trend, the survey found that about four in ten (35%) of job vacancies in 2020 involved work that could be done remotely (Fig. 2).

2.5 This largely reflected the possibility of remote working for positions seeking professionals, managers, executives & technicians (PMETs) (57%), as almost all non-PMET positions were reported by employers to be not suitable for remote work (only 6% were suitable). The proportion of job vacancies that can be done remotely was the highest for managers & administrators (71%), as this group mainly consisted of positions involved in planning, directing and evaluating (e.g. *business development managers, administration managers*), tasks not bounded by the work location. This was followed by professionals (62%), especially in IT positions (e.g. *applications/ systems programmers, cybersecurity professionals, IT infrastructure specialists*) and jobs chiefly involving research/ analysis (e.g. *market research professionals, policy analysts, financial analysts*). However, there is relatively less flexibility for medical-related professionals to work remotely as the job often requires physical interaction with patients (e.g. *nurses, general/ specialist medical practitioners, therapists, pharmacists*), and among engineers who require the use of technical equipment or perform tests onsite.

2.6 For non-PMET positions, the low proportion feasible for remote work reflected the need for onsite work, either for service delivery (e.g. *shop sales assistants, waiters*) or operating machinery (e.g. *construction labourers, material & freight handling workers*).



Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

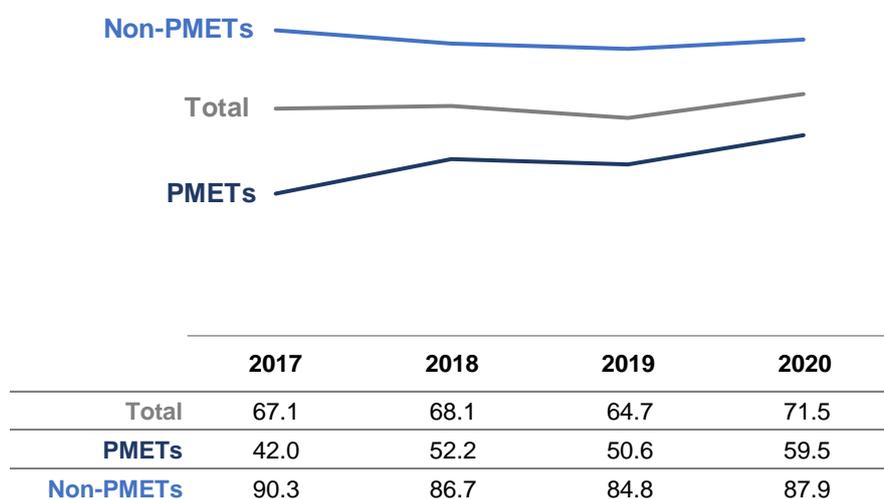
<sup>1</sup> Source: Conditions of Employment Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

## **Seven in ten job vacancies did not use academic qualifications as the main consideration for filling the positions**

2.7 Employers are increasingly looking beyond academic qualifications when recruiting (Fig. 3). However, there is still some difference between their approach towards PMET and non-PMET vacancies. Employers are more likely to indicate that qualifications are not the main consideration for non-PMET jobs compared to PMET jobs. The proportion with respect to PMET vacancies (59%<sup>2</sup>) is lower than that of non-PMETs (88%), although it has risen steadily in the last few years (from 42% in 2017).

2.8 When asked why they did not view qualification as the main consideration, majority of employers indicated that (1) relevant skills/work experience matter more as this enables the candidate to perform the job almost immediately; and (2) qualifications gets the candidate the interview, but the candidate with the right skills and attitude gets the job. At the same time, fewer indicated other reasons such as the lack of candidates with required qualifications or that few academic qualifications can equip candidates with the niche skills required for the job. This confirms that employers are consciously looking beyond academic qualifications when hiring for the right candidate. There is however, evidence to suggest that while qualifications are not the main consideration, employers continue to use it as a filter for selecting candidates for interviews (see reason (2)).

**Figure 3: Proportion (%) Of Job Vacancies For Which Academic Qualifications Were Not The Main Consideration**



Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

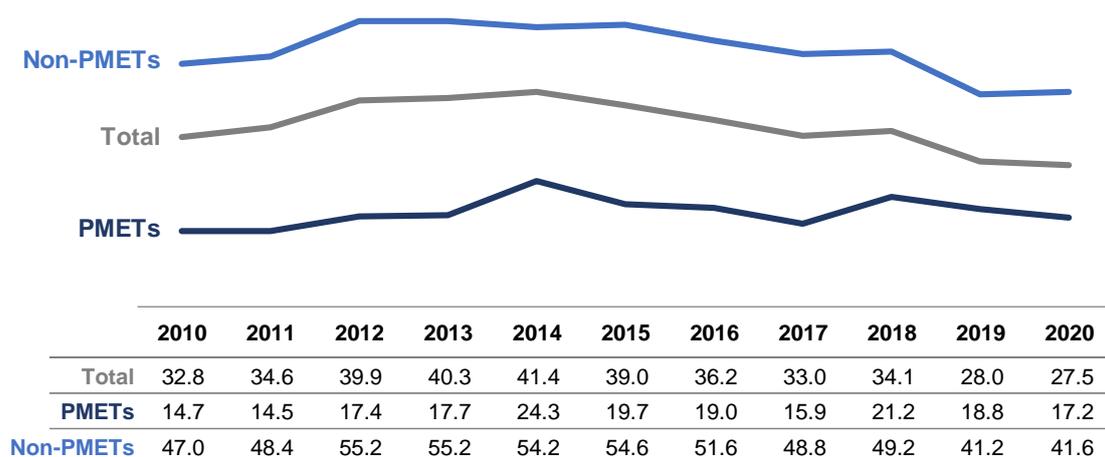
<sup>2</sup> These vacancies commonly included occupations that featured strongly among top PMET jobs in demand, namely *systems analysts, commercial & marketing sales executives and software, web & multimedia developers*.

## Difficulty in filling job vacancies eased slightly, but mismatches remained a challenge

2.9 27% of job vacancies were unfilled for six months or more in 2020, down slightly from the previous year (28%) (Fig. 4). In general, non-PMET vacancies were harder to fill than PMET vacancies, but the challenges faced by employers when filling PMET and non-PMET vacancies were different.

2.10 For PMET vacancies, employers commonly cited the lack of necessary skills and work experience, especially in positions where incumbents rely on specialised technical knowledge such as *software, web & multimedia developers* and *systems analysts*. *Registered nurses & other nursing professionals* and *enrolled/ assistant nurses* also saw sizeable positions that were harder to fill, mainly due to competition from other prospective employers as well as workers' preference for more regular work arrangements. On the other hand, a mismatch in employment conditions was a more common challenge faced by employers filling non-PMET positions (Fig. 5).

Figure 4: Proportion (%) Of Job Vacancies Which Were Unfilled For At Least Six Months



Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

**Figure 5: Top Positions Unfilled For At Least Six Months And Top Reasons For Job Vacancies That Were Hard To Fill By Residents**

Top Positions Unfilled For At Least Six Months		Top Reasons For Job Vacancies That Were Hard To Fill By Residents (%)	
<b><u>PMET</u></b>			
1	Registered Nurse & Other Nursing Professional	Lack Necessary Specialised Skills	43.6
2	Enrolled/ Assistant Nurse	Lack Necessary Work Experience	32.8
3	Software, Web & Multimedia Developer	Find Pay Unattractive	22.9
4	Systems Analyst	Competition From Other Employers Too Stiff	18.0
5	Manufacturing Engineering Technician	Prefer Not To Do Shift Work	16.3
<b><u>Non-PMET</u></b>			
1	Cleaner	Find Job Physically Strenuous	42.1
2	Construction Labourer	Find Pay Unattractive	38.8
3	Security Guard	Find Working Environment Not Conducive	36.0
4	Shop Sales Assistant	Prefer Not To Work On Weekends/ Public Holidays	34.7
5	Waiter	Prefer Not To Do Shift Work	29.7

Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes:

- (1) Establishments are allowed to indicate more than one reason for vacancies being hard to fill by residents.
- (2) Figures are expressed as a proportion of the hard to fill vacancies.

### 3 Jobs And Skills In Demand

#### *Jobs in demand remained in healthcare, IT, business development and sales*

3.1 While the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the economy and labour market, it has accelerated the pace of digital transformation, resulting in firm demand for ICT professionals. IT development roles such as **software, web & multimedia developers** (1<sup>st</sup> among PMET job vacancies) and **systems analysts** (3<sup>rd</sup>) were the most sought after in 2020, and their demand has risen in the recent five years (Fig. 6). These vacancies require the incumbent to possess knowledge of programming languages (e.g. Java, Python and C#) and common software development processes to understand, design, monitor and improve technical systems. Employers were prepared to pay more to attract candidates with the right skills for **software, web & multimedia developers** and **systems analysts**, as the minimum salary employers were willing to offer increased to \$5,000 in 2020.

3.2 The emergence of Big Data also brought about a rise in hiring for analytics professionals (e.g. **market research professionals, operations research analysts, data scientists**) to help make sense of the wealth of data businesses have. With this, there is also a growing emphasis by companies to fortify their digital infrastructure against cyber threats, and they are on the lookout for **cybersecurity professionals** (Fig. 7). These trends look set to continue under our Smart Nation initiative and as businesses ramp up their digital capabilities.

3.3 Positions for business development and sales, such as **commercial & marketing sales executives** (2<sup>nd</sup>) and **business development managers** (7<sup>th</sup>), also remain crucial to firms, as they adapt to changes and seek out new business opportunities. Besides having job specific working experience, these positions increasingly require candidates to have technical skillsets as well, such as knowledge of enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management and data analytics software.

3.4 Beyond the pandemic, the healthcare sector is expected to expand, with the growing healthcare needs of our ageing population. The government has also recently announced<sup>3</sup> that public healthcare workers will see a rise in their salaries which could help attract and retain talent. Overall, demand remains robust for **registered nurses** (5<sup>th</sup>), **enrolled nurses** (10<sup>th</sup>), and **healthcare assistants** (ranked 11<sup>th</sup> among non-PMET job vacancies). Though not yet a top job, **medical & pathology laboratory technicians** saw significant growth in job vacancies over the last five years, following the need for prompt and accurate clinical testing.

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<sup>3</sup> In the 2021 Committee of Supply speech, Ministry of Health (MOH) has stated that nurses in the public healthcare sector will receive an increase of 5 to 14% in their monthly base salaries, phased over the next two years, from July 2021.

Figure 6: Top Ten PMET Job Vacancies, 2020

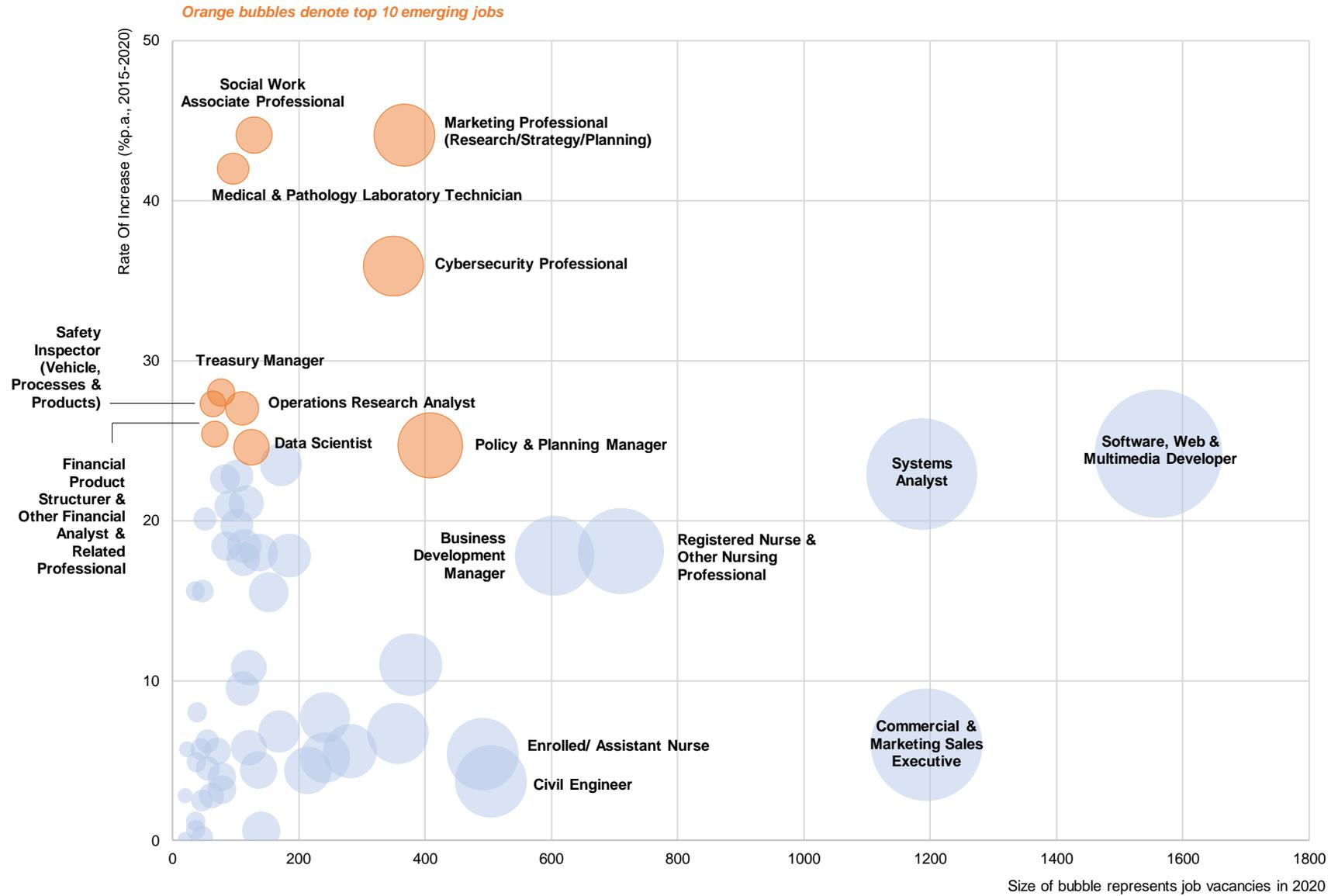
RANK, 2020	OCCUPATION	RANGE OF WAGES ESTABLISHMENTS PREPARED TO OFFER	COMMON MIN QUAL	ACAD QUAL NOT THE MAIN CONSIDERATION	TOP SKILLS REQUIRED*	COMMON WORKING EXPERIENCE
1	Software, Web & Multimedia Developer	5,000  8,090	Degree		Programming Complex Problem Solving Judgement and Decision Making	Job Specific
2	Commercial & Marketing Sales Executive	2,800  3,800	Degree		Persuasion Social Perceptiveness Negotiation	Job Specific
3	Systems Analyst	5,000  8,000	Degree		Systems Analysis Complex Problem Solving Systems Evaluation	Job Specific
4	Teaching & Training Professional	1,800  7,845	Dipl. & Prof Qual		Instructing Active Learning Complex Problem Solving	None required
5	Registered Nurse & Other Nursing Professional	2,300  4,500	Dipl. & Prof Qual		Social Perceptiveness Service Orientation Judgement and Decision Making	None required
6	Management Executive	2,500  4,882	Dipl. & Prof Qual		Judgement and Decision Making Coordination Complex Problem Solving	None required
7	Business Development Manager	5,000  9,400	Degree		Complex Problem Solving Judgement and Decision Making Active Learning	Job Specific
8	Operations Officer (Except Transport Operations)	2,500  3,500	Dipl. & Prof Qual		Coordination Time Management Management of Personnel Resources	Job Specific
9	Civil Engineer	3,210  8,555	Degree		Complex Problem Solving Operations Analysis Systems Analysis	Job Specific
10	Enrolled/ Assistant Nurse	1,700  2,500	Post-Sec (Non-Tert)		Social Perceptiveness Service Orientation Active Learning	Job Specific

Indicates occupations where academic qualifications were not the main consideration for at least 59.5% (PMET average) of the vacancies in 2020.

\* Occupations are mapped to the O\*NET database of occupational information. Skills commonly needed across these jobs and not shown separately include critical thinking and active listening skills.

Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Figure 7: PMET Job Vacancies Which Saw An Increase In Demand From 2015 To 2020



Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

3.5 Non-PMET vacancies were commonly for **cleaners** and **security guards**, as businesses step up efforts on sanitation and enforcing safe distancing (Fig. 8). Consumer-facing roles such as **shop sales assistants** and **waiters** also ranked high, reflecting the resumption of business operations after Circuit Breaker measures were lifted. Demand for **construction labourers** also rose, as the sector gradually restart construction activities.

**Figure 8: Top Ten Non-PMET Job Vacancies, 2020**

RANK, 2020	OCCUPATION	RANGE OF WAGES ESTABLISHMENTS PREPARED TO OFFER	COMMON MIN QUAL	ACAD QUAL NOT THE MAIN CONSIDERATION	TOP SKILLS REQUIRED*	COMMON WORKING EXPERIENCE
1	Cleaner	1,352 ● 1,600	Pri & Below	●	Coordination	None required
2	Security Guard	2,200 ● 2,600	Sec	●	Critical Thinking Coordination Social Perceptiveness	Job Specific
3	Shop Sales Assistant	1,500 ○●●● 2,500	Pri & Below	●	Persuasion Service Orientation Social Perceptiveness Negotiation	None required
4	Waiter	1,700 ● 2,100	Pri & Below	●	Service Orientation Social Perceptiveness Coordination	None required
5	Construction Labourer	800 ○●●● 1,600	Pri & Below	●	Critical Thinking Social Perceptiveness Coordination	Industry Specific
6	Receptionist, Customer Service & Information Clerk	2,000 ○● 2,700	Post-Sec (Non-Tert)		Service Orientation Social Perceptiveness Coordination	General Working Experience
7	Material & Freight Handling Worker	1,600 ● 2,000	Pri & Below	●	Coordination Operation and Control Operation Monitoring	None required
8	General Office Clerk	1,600 ○●●●● 2,762	Post-Sec (Non-Tert)		Critical Thinking Social Perceptiveness Time Management	General Working Experience
9	Heavy Truck & Lorry Driver	2,000 ○●●● 3,000	Pri & Below	●	Operation and Control Operation Monitoring Time Management	Job Specific
10	Kitchen Assistant	1,500 ● 1,925	Pri & Below	●	Social Perceptiveness Coordination Service Orientation Time Management	None required

● Indicates occupations where academic qualifications were not the main consideration for at least 87.9% (Non-PMET average) of the vacancies in 2020.

\* Occupations are mapped to the O\*NET database of occupational information. Skills commonly needed across these jobs and not shown separately include active listening skills.

Source: Job Vacancy Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

## **4 Concluding Remarks**

4.1 The accelerated adoption of technologies and changes in work arrangements in 2020 have accentuated shifts in hiring patterns. Jobs in demand remained in healthcare, IT, business development and sales, but Big Data and digital transformation has resulted in greater demand for data analytics and cybersecurity professionals. About four in ten job openings in 2020 were for work that could be done remotely.

4.2 Newly created positions formed a higher share of unfilled jobs in 2020, contributed by organisations' expansion into new functions, job restructuring and redesign.

4.3 But employers are still experiencing difficulties in filling some positions, though the proportion of these positions has declined slightly. For PMET positions, employers cited the lack of necessary skills and work experience. Individuals should tap on government initiatives to gain the necessary skills and move into new jobs.

## **SURVEY COVERAGE & METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The *Job Vacancy Survey, 2020* was conducted by the Manpower Research and Statistics Department of the Ministry of Manpower under the Statistics Act (Chapter 317). The survey was conducted from 24 September to 23 November 2020.

### **Objective**

The survey was conducted to collect comprehensive information on job vacancies in the various industries by detailed occupations. The survey also asked employers on (i) the gross monthly wage the establishment is prepared to pay for the job vacancies; (ii) the requirement of skills, relevant working experience, minimum qualification required; and whether the vacancies were (iii) unfilled for at least six months, and (iv) hard to fill by residents.

### **Coverage**

The survey covered private sector establishments each with at least 25 employees and the public sector comprising government ministries, organs of state and statutory boards. A total of 14,480 establishments employing 2,044,500 employees responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 85.8%.

### **Methodology**

The survey was conducted using mail questionnaires. Respondents could submit their returns online, by post, email or fax, with clarifications made over the phone.

### **Reference Period**

The reference date for the survey was 30 September 2020.

### **Data Collected**

Establishments were asked to provide information pertaining to the job vacancies in their establishments:

- Job title
- Number of vacancies
- Minimum qualification required
- Whether the position was newly created
- Whether the position could be done remotely
- Whether academic qualifications were the main consideration in selecting candidates
- Whether working experience was required
- Whether vacancies were vacant for at least 6 months
- Reasons for vacancies that were hard to fill by residents
- Gross wage organisation was prepared to pay

## Classification

The industries of the surveyed establishments were classified according to the Singapore Standard Industrial Classification (SSIC) 2015. Descriptions of job vacancies were classified according to the Singapore Standard Occupational Classification (SSOC) 2020, while the classification of minimum qualification was based on the Singapore Standard Educational Classification (SSEC) 2015.

## CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

### Job Vacancy

This refers to the number of unfilled posts for which the establishment is actively recruiting employees from outside the establishment. It excludes positions for which the employees have been appointed, but not yet commenced duty, and positions open only to internal transfers, promotions, etc.

Recruitment action to fill a post includes advertising in newspapers, posting notices on Internet (e.g. online job banks), making 'word of mouth announcements', soliciting employees through employment agencies or job fairs, contacting or interviewing job applicants.

### Gross Monthly Wage

This refers to the sum of the basic wage, overtime payments, commissions, allowances, and other regular cash payments. It is before deduction of employee Central Provident Fund (CPF) contributions and personal income tax and excludes employer CPF contributions, bonuses, stock options and other lump sum payments-in-kind.

### Minimum Qualification Required

The minimum qualification required are classified into one of the following categories:

**Primary & below** refers to those who never attended school, have pre-primary/kindergarten education, or primary education with or without Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) certificate or equivalent, or Certificate in Basic Education for Skills Training (BEST) 1-4, or at least 3 Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) Statements of Attainment in Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (WPLN) at Level 1 or 2 (e.g. under Employment Skills System (ESS), Employability Skills (ES)).

**Lower secondary** refers to those with secondary education without a General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary ('O')/Normal ('N') Level pass or equivalent, or have Certificate in Worker Improvement through Secondary Education (WISE) 1-3, or basic vocational certificates (including Institute of Technical Education (ITE) Basic Vocational Training), or at least 3 WSQ Statements of Attainment in WPLN at Level 3 or 4 (e.g. under ESS, ES).

**Secondary** refers to those who have at least 1 GCE 'N'/'O' Level pass, or have National ITE Certificate (NITEC) (Intermediate) or equivalent (e.g. National Technical Certificate (NTC) Grade 3, Certificate of Vocational Training, BCA Builder Certificate), or have ITE Skills Certificate (ISC) or equivalent (e.g. Certificate of Competency, Certificate in Service Skills) or at least 3 WSQ Statements of Attainment in WPLN at Level 5 and above (e.g. under ESS, ES), or other certificates/qualifications of equivalent standard.

**Post-secondary (non-tertiary)** refers to those who have at least 1 GCE Advanced ('A')/ Higher 2 ('H2') Level pass or other certificates/qualifications of equivalent standard. It also includes those who have NITEC (e.g. Post NITEC, Specialist NITEC, Certificate in Office Skills, National Technical Certificate Grade 2, National Certificate in Nursing, Advanced Builder Certificate), or have Higher NITEC (including Certificate in Business Skills, Industrial Technician Certificate and other polytechnic certificates), or Master NITEC or equivalent (e.g. National Technical Certificate Grade 1). This group also includes WSQ Certificate/Higher Certificate/Advanced Certificate or equivalent, International Baccalaureate/High school diploma or other advanced certificates (e.g. Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) certificates).

**Diploma & professional qualification** refers to those who have Polytechnic diploma, or Polytechnic advanced diploma (including Polytechnic advanced/post/specialist/management/graduate diploma), and those who have qualifications awarded by professional bodies, or National Institute of Education (NIE) diploma, ITE diploma and other diploma qualifications (e.g. SIM diploma, LaSalle-SIA diploma, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) diploma, WSQ diploma and WSQ specialist diploma).

**Degree** refers to those who have Bachelor's Degree, or Postgraduate Diploma (including NIE postgraduate diploma), WSQ graduate certificate, WSQ graduate diploma, Master's, or Doctorate.

## FEEDBACK FORM

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1. How would you rate this publication in terms of :

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
a) Relevance to your work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Providing useful insights on prevailing labour market trends/development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Which area(s) of the report do you find most useful? Please provide reasons.

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3. How do you find the length of the report?

Too detailed       Just right       Too brief

4. Overall, how would you rate this publication?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. What additional information (if any) would you like us to include in our future issues?

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Labour Market Advance Release First Quarter 2021	29-30 Apr 2021*
Labour Market Report First Quarter 2021	14-18 Jun 2021*
Singapore Yearbook Of Manpower Statistics 2021	30 Jun 2021

## PAST ...

Job Vacancies Report 2020	9 Apr 2021
Labour Market Report 2020	16 Mar 2021
Conditions Of Employment 2020	3 Mar 2021
Labour Market Advance Release 2020	28 Jan 2021
Labour Force In Singapore 2020	28 Jan 2021
Labour Market Report Third Quarter 2020	17 Dec 2020
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