

## **The employability of Science and Technology graduates passed out from the national universities in Sri Lanka**

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A mailing survey was conducted to study the employability of graduates who have passed out from the science, agriculture and engineering faculties of the national universities in Sri Lanka. The survey was conducted in two consecutive studies in year 2001 and 2003 for the graduates passed out in the years 1998/1999 and 2000/2001 respectively. A structured questionnaire was sent to a total of 3,531 and 4,486 graduates passed out from the Universities of Eastern, Colombo, Jaffna, Sabaragamuwa, Open, Kelaniya, Morotuwa, South Eastern and Wayaba relevant to the above years. The response rate was 36% and 40% respectively.

Of the graduates responded 78% (only 70 % on permanent basis) and 61% (only 36 % on permanent basis) were employed accordingly in two surveys. This indicates clear decline of the number of employed graduates from years 2001-2003. The number of graduates pursuing higher studies had increased 3% to 7% from 2001 to 2003. Similarly, the graduates involved in self employment showed growth from 1% to 2.3 % from the period of 2001 to 2003. The number of unemployed graduates had increased from 14.6 % to 30.5 % during the above period. Employability was highest among the engineering graduates in both studies. However, there was a considerable decline in the employability rate of the engineering graduates within the period of 2001-2002 (from 96% to 80%). The rate of the employability of agriculture graduates and general science graduates showed decline over the study period of 2001 to 2003 (96% to 80%). The unemployability was highest (43%) for the agriculture graduates in the year 2003. However in the previous study (2001), the highest unemployed rate was recorded in general bio-science graduates (24.1%). The analysis also was extended to test the rate of employment in different sectors and obstacles faced by the graduates in finding employments.

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