Employment for university graduates hits record-high 97.6% amid labor shortage

A record-high 97.6 percent of new university graduates had landed jobs as of the April 1 start of the 2017 business year, government data showed Friday, reflecting demand from companies amid Japan’s labor shortage.

The rate increased 0.3 percentage point from a year earlier, up for the sixth consecutive year, in an annual survey conducted since 1997 by the labor and education ministries.
A labor ministry official attributed the strong figure to many students who began hunting for jobs at an early stage, adding, “The ratio of job offers to job-seekers remains high for university graduates and the trend is likely to continue.”

By region, the highest number of new university graduates who landed jobs was in Kanto, at 98.8 percent.

Businesses were also willing to hire students from high schools and vocational schools.

The employment rate among new high school graduates who sought jobs rose 0.3 percentage point from the previous year to 98.0 percent, marking the seventh straight annual rise, according to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Kochi National College of Technology, which trains engineers, received more than 2,600 job offers for 93 students who were seeking employment.

“More companies, including those that used to seek only university graduates, have started posting vacancies (for vocational school graduates),” said Katsunori Yokoi, head of the career support center at the school.

Tokyo Metropolitan Shiba Commercial High School attained a 100 percent employment rate for its graduates. Miki Kobayashi, senior teacher at the school, said, “Job-seekers can make better choices as a number of job offers for infrastructure-related businesses and hotels increased in the run-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.”

Meanwhile, an estimated 9,900 new university graduates had failed to find employment as of April 1.

The survey interviewed graduates at 24 randomly selected public and 38 private universities.