

New university grads' job rate up 2 yrs in row

The Yomiuri Shimbun The rate of new university graduates who secured jobs has improved for the second consecutive year, reaching 93.9 percent, the labor and education ministries announced Friday.

As of April 1, the employment rate of those who graduated from universities this spring rose 0.3 percentage point from the same period last year, according to the latest data. The data also revealed more female graduates were successful in their job searches than male students.

Many companies that suspended recruitment following the so-called Lehman shock hired new young workers, which positively affected the labor statistics, the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry and the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry judged.

The ministries also highlighted that the preference among university students for jobs at large companies has gradually waned.

An estimated 370,000 new graduates found jobs, while 24,000 could not find work despite their desire to do so.

The rate for male graduates was 93.2 percent, up 1.3 percentage points from the same period last year. The figure for female graduates was 94.7 percent, up 2.1 percentage points from a year earlier. This is the first time since fiscal 2007 the rate for female recruits has been higher than that for men.

The employment environment for female job hunters, particularly in the field of medical and nursing care, was strong, and the labor ministry believes this had a favorable effect on hiring.

Hiring figures improved in all regions except Kyushu, which saw the employment rate contract by 2.6 percentage points from the previous year to 90.6 percent.

In Hokkaido and Tohoku, the rate was 91.4 percent, up 1.4 percentage points; Kanto was at 95.8 percent, up 0.7 percentage point; Chubu was at 95 percent, up 0.1 percentage point; Kinki was at 93.2 percent, up 0.2 percentage point; and the Chugoku and Shikoku regions were at 93.8 percent, up 2.1 percentage points.

The two ministries concluded the latest figures reflect many students' tenacious efforts to find a job.

Additionally, the employment rate of new two-year college graduates rose 5.2 percentage points, reaching 94.7 percent, the highest level since fiscal 1996 when the survey was first taken.

Some individuals in the employment assistance industry linked the positive results to Abenomics, the economic policies of the administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

"Due to an improvement in business sentiment brought about by Abenomics, some small and midsize companies decided to hire new workers in the final phase of the recruiting period," said Takashi Mikami, editor at Mynavi Corp.

"The effects [of Abenomics] will be fully visible next spring," Mikami added.

On Friday, the education ministry also released the rate for high school graduates who secured jobs. As of late March, it was 95.8 percent, up 1 percentage point from a year earlier.

The figure improved for the third consecutive year and is at its highest of the past 20 years.

Helped by demand for workers in jobs related to reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake, employment rates in the three prefectures hit hardest by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami improved by 0.1 percentage point to 1.4 percentage points.

The rate in Iwate Prefecture was 97.9 percent, while Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures stood at 98.5 percent.