

## Grads landing jobs near all-time low

Kyodo News

Only 91.8 percent of people who graduated from college in March secured jobs, the second-lowest employment rate on record, according to a government survey released Friday.

The figure, compiled as of April 1, was down 3.9 percentage points from a year earlier and neared the all-time low of 91.1 percent registered in 2000. The employment market for college students that year was likened to the ice age due to the economic slump in the early part of the decade.

However, the margin of yearly decline marked this spring was the largest ever, according to the survey conducted jointly by the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry and the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry.

Among those seeking work after graduating from high school, 91.6 percent found jobs as of the end of March, down 1.6 points from a year before. This means that about 15,000 students left high school without finding jobs, up about 1,000 from a year earlier.

Some 92.0 percent of male college graduates found jobs, down 3.9 points, while 91.5 percent of female college graduates secured employment, also down 3.9 points.

Among high school graduates, the rate stood at 94.1 percent for male students, down 1.4 points, and 88.2 percent for female students, down 2.0 points.

The survey also showed 94.5 percent of graduates at state- or local government-run universities found jobs, down 2.1 points. The proportion for those at private colleges came to 90.8 percent, down 4.6 points.

The largest percentage decline, a drop of 6.1 points to 88.4 percent, was registered by graduates of two-year colleges, while the figure for those who completed courses at vocational schools dropped 4.4 points to 87.4 percent.

By region, the employment rate among college graduates was the highest at 94.7 percent in the Kinki region centering on Osaka Prefecture. The lowest was 88.9 percent in Kyushu.

By prefecture, the highest employment was seen in Toyama and Fukui, both of which came to 98.1 percent. The lowest was 75.9 percent in Okinawa, followed by 79.3 percent in Hokkaido and 86.2 percent in both Osaka and Kochi.

The survey covered 6,250 students at 112 two-year and four-year colleges across the nation. Data on high school students were compiled via polls conducted by prefectural boards of education.

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