GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY 2022

UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA

CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING & UNIVERSITY STATISTICS

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

2022

University of Kelaniya

CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING & UNIVERSTIY STATISTICS

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PROLOGUE

The present report is the outcome of the annual graduate employability survey of 2022 conducted by the Centre for Strategic Planning & University Statistics of the University of Kelaniya. The survey was carried out continuously for the sixth time since 2016.

Adopting the strengths and features from the changes made in the previous surveys, the graduate employability survey 2022 has been a clear reflection of the status of the graduates of the University in 2022. The findings of the survey reveal the influential factors for employability as well as the reasons for unemployability.

The survey is not free from limitations. Incomplete or invalid responses and inappropriate and contradictory responses made some drawbacks, but the research team managed to complete the report as mistake-free as possible.

If anyone gets full use of this report to facilitate the first employment after completing the degree or to rearrange the study patterns during the academic period so that the undergraduates could get immediate employment opportunities the utmost purpose of doing the survey will be fulfilled.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Centre for Strategic Planning & University Statistics (CSPS) extends its heartfelt appreciation to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya, Senior Professor (Mrs.) Nilanthi De Silva, for enabling the completion of this graduate employability survey and report for 2022. Special thanks are also extended to the Deans of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Director of the Inter-Faculty Center for Coordinating the Modular System (ICCMS) for granting permission to access essential data and information as needed. Additionally, we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the systems analysts from the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, Faculty of Science, and the ICCMS, as well as the Deputy Registrars and staff of the Academic Division and Examinations Branch, for providing necessary information promptly and accurately. We express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Chathura Rajapakse, Director of the CSPS, for developing the employability survey questionnaire, and to Dr. Dileepa Ediriweera, one of the former Directors of the CSPS, for introducing the RedCap data collection platform and offering guidance to the analysis team. Lastly, we extend our deepest thanks to the graduates who participated in the survey and shared their candid feedback on the University.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

UoK	:	University of Kelaniya
FCMS	:	Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies
FCT	:	Faculty of Computing & technology
FHU	:	Faculty of Humanities
FMED	:	Faculty of Medicine
FSC	:	Faculty of Science
FSS	:	Faculty of Social Sciences
GCE A/L	:	General Certificate of Examination Advance Level

INTRODUCTION

The quality of higher education is a significant factor that greatly influences a country's economy and development. When examining this quality, the concept of "graduate employability" becomes crucial, highlighting the capacity of higher education institutions to promote high employability rates among graduates as a measure of their overall quality(Maharasoa and Hay 2001). The competitive nature of today's job market demands that graduates possess not only relevant academic qualifications but also a diverse set of skills and experiences that enable them to adapt to the challenges of an ever-changing workforce. As such, understanding the factors influencing graduate employability has never been more critical.

Over the past decade, the landscape of graduate employment has transformed significantly, influenced by various economic factors, including globalization, automation, and the rise of the gig economy. According to a report by the World Economic Forum(Anon, 2022). The employability rate for recent graduates varies widely across disciplines, with graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields enjoying higher employment rates compared to their peers in the humanities and social sciences. This disparity highlights the necessity for a nuanced understanding of the attributes that contribute to successful employment outcomes, particularly as the demand for skilled labor continues to evolve.

Employability, as defined by Harvey(Harvey 2001), refers to the capacity of individuals to gain initial employment, maintain sustainable employment, and obtain new employment if required. This definition underscores the multidimensional nature of employability, which encompasses a range of attributes, including skills, knowledge, and personal qualities. The increasing emphasis on employability within higher education has prompted institutions to re-evaluate their curricula, ensuring that they equip students with the necessary competencies to thrive in a competitive job market.

Several studies emphasize the importance of various factors that influence graduate employability.(Rowe and Zegwaard 2017) highlights the role of internships in developing essential employability skills, demonstrating that practical experiences significantly enhance a graduate's readiness for the job market.

The present survey aims to explore the multifaceted dimensions of graduate employability, focusing on critical factors such as the medium of instruction, participation in extracurricular activities, and the role of computer literacy. By examining these elements, we seek to provide valuable insights that can inform educational practices and enhance the employability of future graduates. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering a workforce that is not only capable but also adaptable to the changing demands of the global economy.

As we delve deeper into the factors influencing employability, it becomes evident that academic qualifications play a pivotal role in determining job prospects. The type of degree attained can significantly impact an individual's employability, with employers often prioritizing candidates who possess specialized knowledge and skills relevant to their industry. Additionally, academic performance, as reflected in grade point averages (GPAs), has been shown to correlate with job opportunities, with higher-performing graduates more likely to secure desirable positions.

Moreover, practical experience gained through internships and part-time employment is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in enhancing employability. Employers value candidates who can demonstrate real-world experience and a proactive approach to their professional development. Research indicates that graduates with relevant work experience are more likely to

transition smoothly into the workforce, possessing not only the technical skills required for their roles but also the soft skills that facilitate effective collaboration and communication in professional settings(Passaretta and Triventi 2015).

The medium of instruction during one's education also plays a crucial role in shaping employability outcomes. Graduates who have studied in English or other widely spoken languages often find themselves better positioned in the global job market, as language proficiency is a sought-after skill in many industries. A comparative analysis of employability outcomes based on medium of instruction reveals that graduates from institutions where English is the primary language of instruction tend to secure employment more quickly than their counterparts from non-English speaking institutions(Zenyka, Zebedeus, and Sihotang n.d.).

In addition to academic and experiential factors, the role of extracurricular activities in developing employability cannot be understated. Participation in clubs, societies, and volunteer work fosters the development of transferable skills, such as leadership, teamwork, and time management. Studies have shown that graduates who engage in extracurricular activities are often viewed more favorably by employers, as these experiences indicate a well-rounded individual capable of balancing multiple responsibilities(Kumarasinghe and Udeshika 2015).

This survey will investigate these critical factors influencing graduate employability, aiming to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this area and provide actionable insights for educators. By highlighting the importance of a comprehensive approach to employability, this research seeks to underscore the need for educational institutions to adapt their strategies to better prepare students for the complexities of the modern job market.

METHODOLOGY

The information required for the preparation of this document was collected through a questionnaire (Annexure I). The information of the students who passed in the proper batch who graduated in the year 2022 was subjected to this analysis and the information related to this study was based on from six months to ten months after the results effective date. The data collection was conducted online using Redcap Software. This chapter explains the methodology used in this analysis in brief.

POPULATION, TARGET POPULATION AND ACCESSIBLE POPULATION

The University graduate output of 2022 is 3,040 students, which includes the proper batch students as well as the repeat candidates. As indicated in Table 1, out of the 3,040 graduates, 2,758 are proper batch graduates. The study omitted the MBBS graduates of the Faculty of Medicine assuming that they all get employment right away. Also, the BSc Speech & Hearing Sciences students did not respond to the survey. Thus, the accessible population of the survey is 2,581.

Table 1: Population, target population, accessible population

Faculty	Graduate Output	Target population	Accessible Population	Response Rate
FCMS	665	653	653	19%
FCT	217	169	169	21%
FHU	604	559	559	20%
FMED	211	177	0	
FSC	486	399	399	69%
FSS	857	801	801	24%
Total	3040	2758	2581	29%

SAMPLING METHOD, SAMPLING TECHNIQUE, AND SAMPLE SIZE

Stratified sampling was used considering each faculty as a stratum. Accordingly, there were four strata namely. Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Science, and Faculty of Social Sciences. And, the selection of the sample was conducted using the simple random sampling methods using a random number generator with the need of selecting an unbiased sample for the survey.

To reduce the sample biasedness and a finite population, probability sampling techniques were adopted and the sample size for the study based on the previous survey was as following;

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^{2}\, p\,(1-p)}{\left(\frac{a}{100}\right)^{2} + \left(\frac{Z_{\alpha}^{2}\, p\,(1-p)}{N}\right)};$$

Where Zα=1.96, a=5, p=0.53, N=2,581

And thus,

n =332

The sample sizes for each faculty are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Required sample size

Faculty	Sample Size
FCMS	84
FCT	22
FHU	72
FSC	51
FSS	103

DATA

The survey questionnaire consists of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. It included general information regarding the graduates and their academic period, academic activities, and performance. Then, upon the choice of their employment situation at that moment, either questions related to employed graduates or unemployed graduates could be answered.

The demographic variables collected through the questionnaire included name, gender, year of exam and z-score, location, and contact details. And the academic related questionnaire included, Faculty, name of the degree program, name of the department, type of the degree, medium of instruction, English language proficiency, computer literacy rate, Academic performance, feedback about the University education, and involvement in extracurricular and concurrent activities.

The unemployment section of the questionnaire consisted of questions regarding the reasons for unemployment, job rejection, job field of interest, and feedback on the University and requests for the University to improve employability. On the other hand, the employment section consisted of questions on the status of employment, type of employment, date of appointment, field of employment, economic sector, position rank, and monthly salary. Furthermore, the employment section also included a method of finding employment, the most relevant aspect of getting a job, employment in relation to the study area, and job satisfaction.

A few additional questions have been incorporated into the 2022 questionnaire, supplementing those from the 2021 version. These new questions assess current English language proficiency, computer literacy levels, computer knowledge, and level of position.

DATA ANALYSIS

This report focuses on an overall idea about the employability in relation to the employment as well as unemployment. Therefore, the study involves analyzing both quantitative data and

qualitative data related to employed graduates and unemployed graduates. Basic descriptive statistics and content analysis is used to address the objectives of the study.

Monte Carlo sampling method was adopted for the survey and 1000 samples were considered to estimate the University's overall employability rate.

FINDINGS

This chapter contains the results and findings of the graduate employability study conducted to estimate the population proportion of employed graduates in 2022.

This chapter also includes discussion on employed graduate profile and unemployed graduate profile along with the factors associated with employability. Apart from that, this chapter focuses on special discussion regarding the hurdles face by graduates in finding employment, common reasons for unemployability and the feedback given to the University of Kelaniya.

SAMPLE PROFILE AND DATA

In 2022, a total of 2,829 graduates passed under the main cohort (excluding the graduates of the Faculty of Medicine), and 769 of them responded to the survey. The sample was allocated to each Faculty proportional to the number of graduates of the respective Faculty. Accordingly, the sample consisted of 13% of representatives from each faculty.

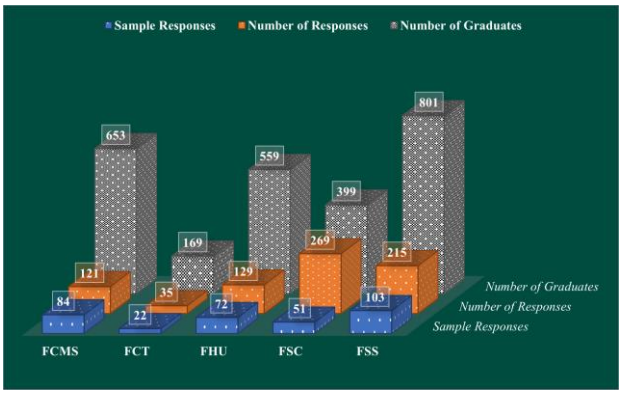

Figure 1: Accessible population, number of responses and sample size

The respondents of the survey are more likely to come from the Western province. That is, 35.9% out of the total sample is from the Western Province, and among them most are from the Colombo District. Taken as a whole, most of the respondents are from Gampaha District (16.6%) and least are from Mannar, and Vavuniya Districts of Northern Province and Batticaloa District of Eastern Province. Following Table 3 and the geographical map in Figure 2 depict a picture of respondents' locations.

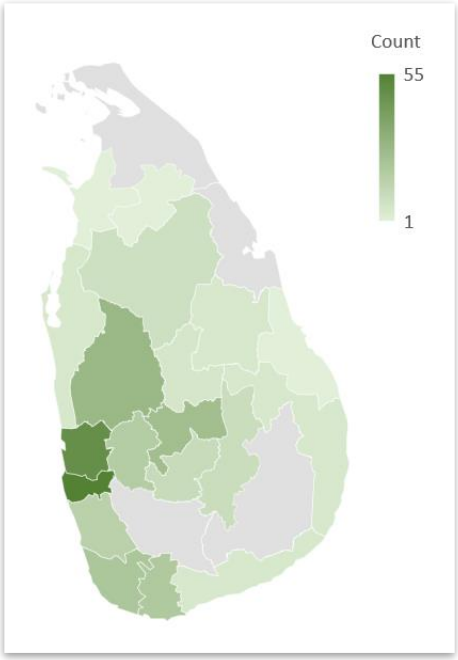

Figure 2: Respondents by Location

Table 3: Respondents by Location

District	Count	Percentage
Colombo	55	16.6%
Gampaha	48	14.5%
Rathnapura	29	8.7%
Kurunegala	28	8.4%
Kandy	25	7.5%
Galle	21	6.3%
Matara	20	6.0%
Kegalle	18	5.4%
Kalutara	16	4.8%
Nuwara Eliya	11	3.3%
Badulla	10	3.0%
Anuradhapura	9	2.7%
Matale	6	1.8%
Monaragala	6	1.8%
Ampara	5	1.5%
Hambantota	5	1.5%
Jaffna	5	1.5%
Polonnaruwa	5	1.5%
Puttalam	5	1.5%
Trincomalee	2	0.6%
Batticaloa	1	0.3%
Mannar	1	0.3%
Vavuniya	1	0.3%
Total	332	100%

SAMPLE BY GENDER

This sample included more female graduates than male graduates. Accordingly, the sample consisted 77% of female graduates and 23% of male graduates (Figure 3). However, when considering the University's student enrollment, annually more female students are enrolled to the programs than male students. Furthermore, highest number of female graduates are from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, and Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies. The Faculty of Science has approximately 55% of female graduates.

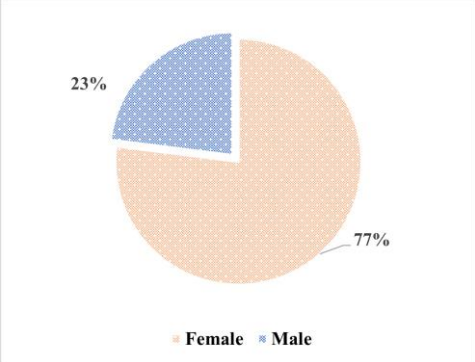

Figure 3: Sample by Gender

EMPLOYABILITY RATE

The employability rate of the University reflects the percentage of graduates from a given year who were engaged in paid employment during the data collection period of the survey. In essence, it represents the proportion of graduates employed at the university. The employability rate was estimated using the Monte Carlo simulation method, based on 1,000 samples of size 355, with calculations conducted at a 95% level of significance. The analysis determined that the employability rate for 2022 was 58.5%, with a 95% confidence interval of (55.2%, 62.1%).

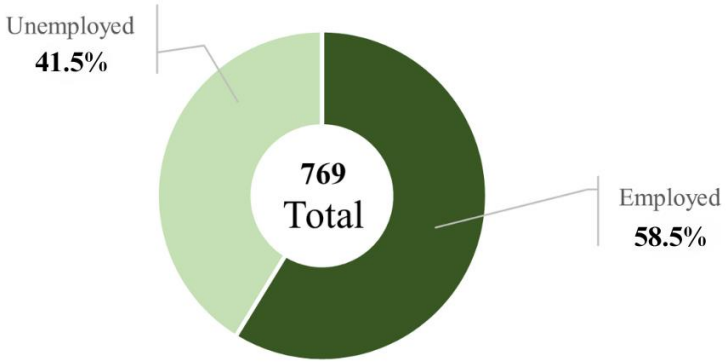

Figure 4: Employment Rate

EMPLOYABILITY BY FACULTY

The Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies at the University of Kelaniya achieved the highest employability rate, with 85.1% of respondents engaged in employment. Conversely, as shown in Table 4, the Faculty of Social Sciences recorded the lowest employability rate, with only 39.4% of its graduates employed.

Table 4: Employability by Faculty

	FCMS	FCT	FHU	FSC	FSS
Employment Rate	85.1%	71.5%	43.6%	67.8%	39.4%

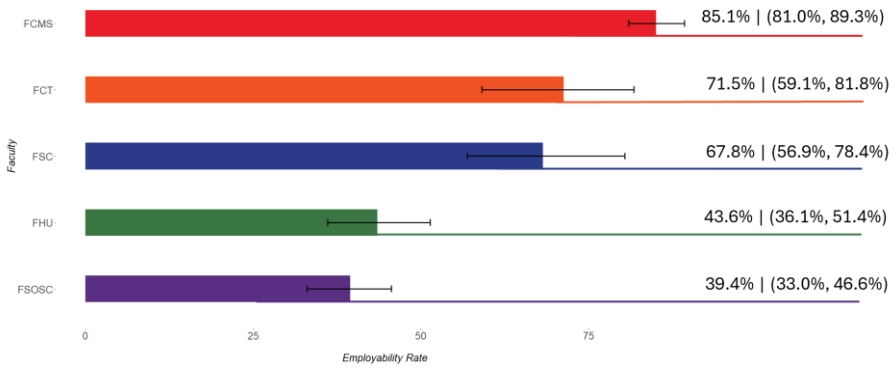

Figure 5: Employability by Faculty

EMPLOYABILITY BY GENDER

The employment rates of male and female graduates vary across the different faculties. The Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies (FCMS) reports the highest employment rates, with 88.2% of male graduates and 83.9% of female graduates employed. In contrast, the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) records the lowest employment rates, with only 36.8% of males and 37.6% of females employed. Notably, female graduates from the Faculty of Computing & Technology (FCT) have a higher employment rate (77.7%) compared to their male counterparts (69.5%). Conversely, male graduates from the Faculty of Humanities (FHU) and the Faculty of Science (FSC) have slightly higher employment rates than females.

Table 5: Employability by gender

	FCMS	FCT	FHU	FSC	FSS
Employment Rate - Male	88.2%	69.5%	50.3%	72.2%	36.8%
Employment Rate - Female	83.9%	77.7%	42.5%	65.9%	37.6%

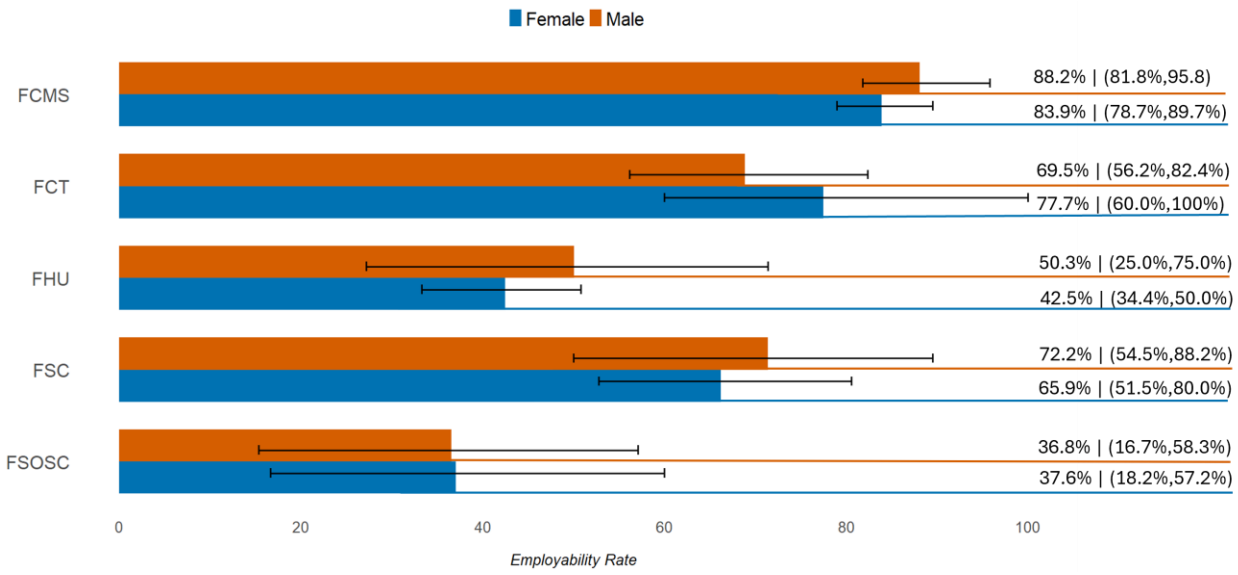

Figure 6: Employability by gender

EMPLOYMENT RATE OVER THE YEARS

The employability rates from 2016 to 2022 exhibit a noticeable trend. From 2016 to 2017, the employability rate remains relatively stable, hovering around 80%, indicating favorable conditions for graduates entering the workforce. However, from 2017 onward, a decline is evident, with a steady drop in employability rates reaching a low point in 2020. This downward trend could be attributed to various factors, including economic challenges or external influences, such as the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted global employment rates. After 2020, the data shows a gradual recovery, with employability rates improving slightly each year through 2022. This suggests a slow but steady rebound, possibly due to economic recovery efforts or adjustments in the job market. Overall, the data reflects a period of economic difficulty followed by a positive recovery in employability.

Table 6: Employability rates over the years

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Employment Rate	78%	81%	61%	51%	35%	54%	59%

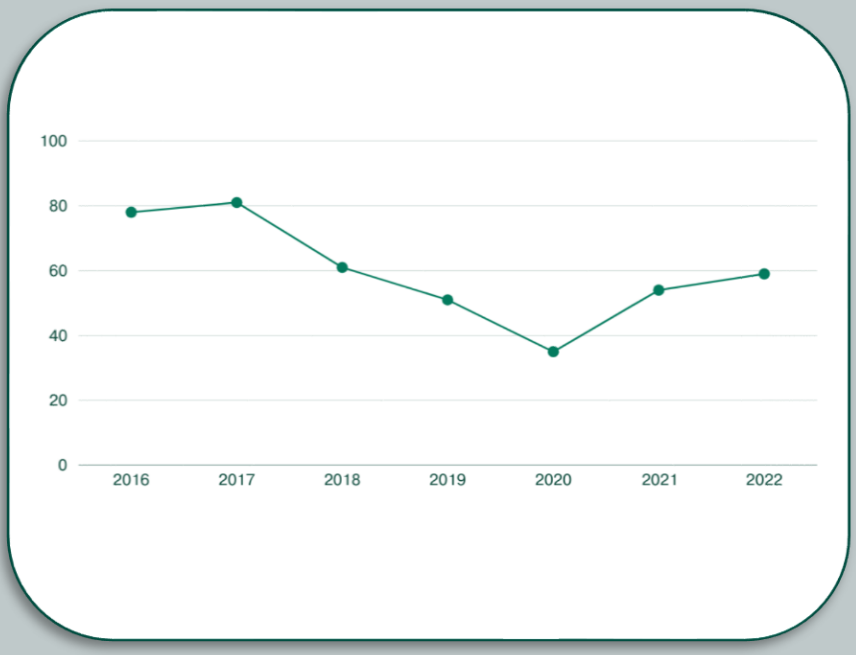

Figure 7: Employability Rates over the years

CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYMENT

As highlighted in previous employability surveys conducted from 2017 to 2021, employability encompasses various factors. These include the timing to find employment, current status of the employment, type of employment, economic sector, method of finding the employment, job position, and average monthly salary. These employability characteristics provide a comprehensive understanding of how graduates are progressing in the corporate world.

Timing of the Employments

Figure 8 shows the duration of employment among graduates of different faculties. Across all faculties, most graduates found employment after completing their degree, ranging from 52% in the Faculty of Computing and Technology to 85.33% in the Faculty of Social Sciences. However, most students (48%) of the Faculty of Computing and Technology have managed to find employment during their university years. In contrast, very few graduates of all faculties secured employment after their advanced level exams, with a percentage not exceeding 3.8% in any faculty. This highlights that while many graduates rely on completing university education to improve their employment prospects, only a minority manage to secure employment earlier in their academic journey.

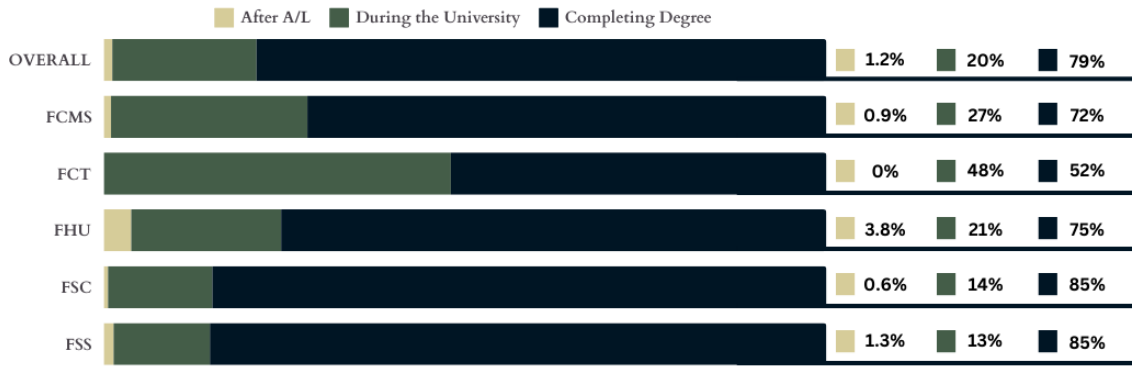

Figure 8: Timing of the employment

The Status of Employment, Type of Employment, and Economic Sector

Employment status can be categorized as permanent employment, temporary employment, self-employment, and entrepreneurship. Moreover, employment can belong to the public sector or private sector, semi-government sector, and as well as for different economic sectors.

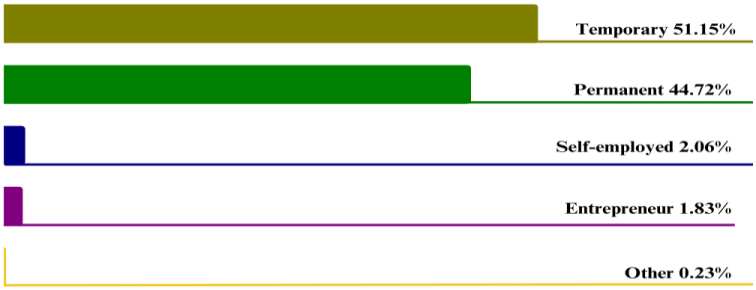

Figure 9: Status of employment

The above figure provides a detailed overview of the current employment status of graduates, categorized into five distinct types: permanent employment, temporary/contract/assignment basis, self-employed, entrepreneur, and other. The largest portion of graduates, 51.15%, are employed on a temporary or contract basis, making it the most common employment status. This is followed by 44.72% of graduates who hold permanent positions. A small percentage of graduates are self-employed (2.06%) or engaged as entrepreneurs (1.83%). The least represented category is the other, accounting for only 0.23%. Therefore, Figure 9 indicates that more than half of the graduates are employed on a temporary or contract basis, while nearly half are in permanent roles. Self-employment and entrepreneurship represent only a small fraction of the employment statuses, showing that most graduates prefer structured employment opportunities over independent ventures.

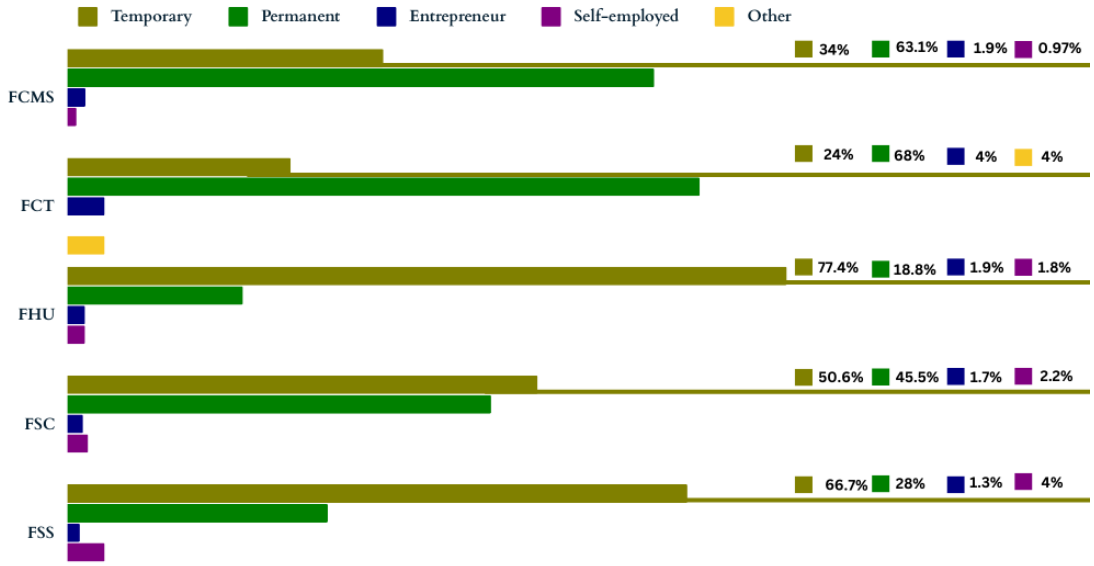

Figure 10: Status of employment by Faculty

The chart presents the current employment status of graduates from various faculties, segmented into categories such as permanent employment, temporary/contract/assignment basis, entrepreneurship, self-

employment, and other forms of employment. The Faculty of Computing & Technology has the highest percentage (68%) of graduates in permanent employment, followed by Commerce & Management Studies (63.11%) and Science (45.56%). Also, temporary or contract-based employment is most common in the Faculties of Humanities (77.36%), Social Sciences (66.67%), and Science (50.56%). Entrepreneurship and self-employment represent a small portion of graduates across all faculties. For example, the Faculty of Computing & Technology has 4% of graduates as entrepreneurs, while the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies has 1.94% in the same category. Self-employment is relatively low across all faculties, not exceeding 4%. In summary, permanent positions dominate in some faculties, while temporary or contract-based jobs are more prevalent in others, with entrepreneurship and self-employment being less common career paths among graduates.

Employment Sector

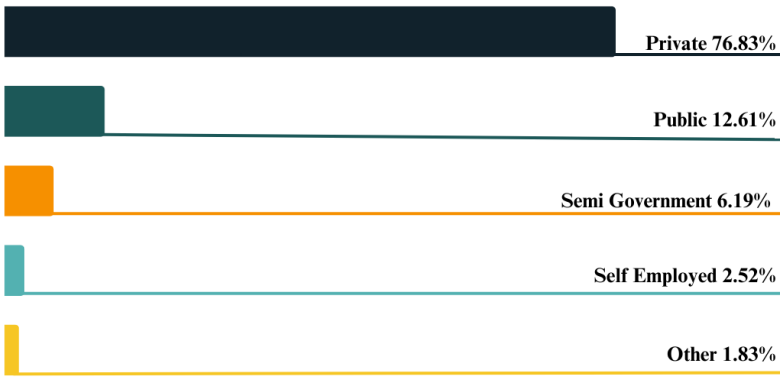

Figure 11: Employment Sector

The provided figure illustrates the distribution of employment types among respondents, highlighting key trends in the labor market. A large majority, 76.83%, are employed in the private sector, indicating a strong preference for private jobs. The public sector accounts for 12.61% of the workforce, suggesting that government jobs are less common. The Self-employed category represents 2.52%, highlighting that only a small fraction of individuals option for entrepreneurship. Additionally, 6.19% work in semi-government positions, while the Other category represents 1.83% of respondents. Overall, the data shows a clear trend towards private sector employment, with limited representation in public and self-employment.

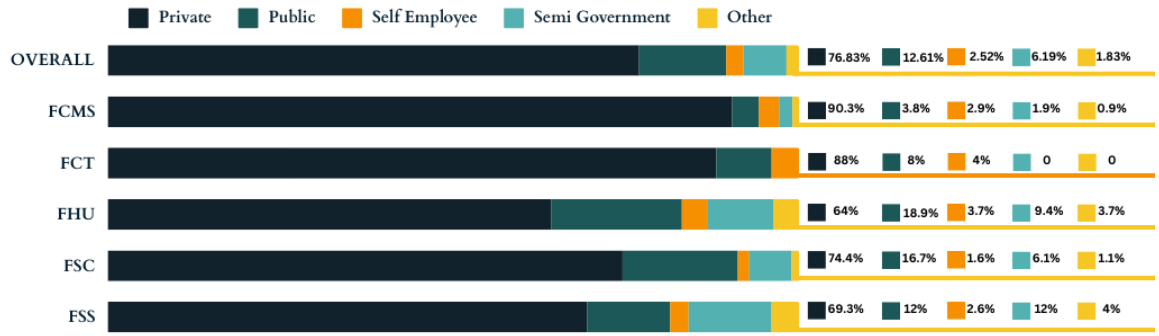

Figure 12: Employment Sector by Faculty

Figure 12 shows a detailed overview of the distribution of jobs among graduates of different faculties. Graduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies have a strong preference for employment in the private sector, with a remarkable 90.3% working in this area. The public sector represents only 3.88% and self-employment only 2.91%. Similarly, the Faculty of Computing and Technology exhibits a high proportion of 88% in private roles, 8% in the public sector, and 4% self-employed, reinforcing the trend of graduates leaning towards private sector careers. Faculty of Science also reflects these trends, showing 74.44% in private employment, 16.67% in government employment, and a small 1.67% self-employment. In contrast, the Faculty of Humanities presents a more balanced employment distribution, with 64.15% private employment, 18.87% government roles, and 9.43% para-government positions, with 3.77% self-employed, reflecting a wide range of careers. options. Finally, graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences reveal 69.33% in private sector positions, 12% in government roles, 2.67% in self-employment, and 12% in semi-government roles. Overall, the data shows that a clear majority of jobs across all faculties are in the private sector. Also, opportunities in the public sector and semi-government sector are less and self-employment remains a minor option. These trends indicate that graduates are more inclined to seek opportunities in the private sector, reflecting the current economic environment and job availability.

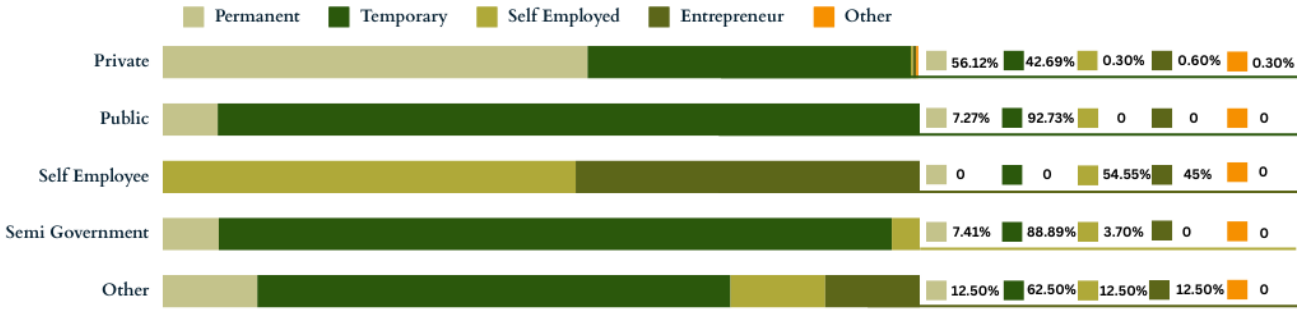

Figure 13: Employment Status by Employment Sector

According to Figure 13, Within the private sector, 56.12% of graduates secure permanent positions, reflecting a significant level of job security and stability. In contrast, the public sector is overwhelmingly composed of temporary positions (92.73%), with only a small percentage (7.27%) in permanent roles, indicating limiting permanent job opportunities or budget constraints. Similarly, the Semi-Government Sector follows this pattern, with most employees on temporary contracts and very few in permanent positions. The self-employed category, as expected, consists almost entirely of self-employed individuals (54.55%) and entrepreneurs (45%), with no permanent or temporary employees. This data presents a clear picture of the employment landscape for graduates. The private sector is the most significant employer, offering a mix of stability and flexibility. In contrast, both the public and semi-government sectors exhibit a heavy reliance on temporary positions, raising concerns about job security for graduates.

Position Rank

In the context of this graduate employability survey, position ranking refers to the hierarchy of employment roles occupied by graduates within an organization. This ranking categorizes positions based on levels of responsibility, authority, and decision-making power. Typically, positions are ranked as Staff, Executive, Junior Manager, Middle Manager, Senior Manager. This ranking helps assess the distribution of graduates across different organizational levels, providing insight into their career progression and the types of roles they occupy within the workforce.

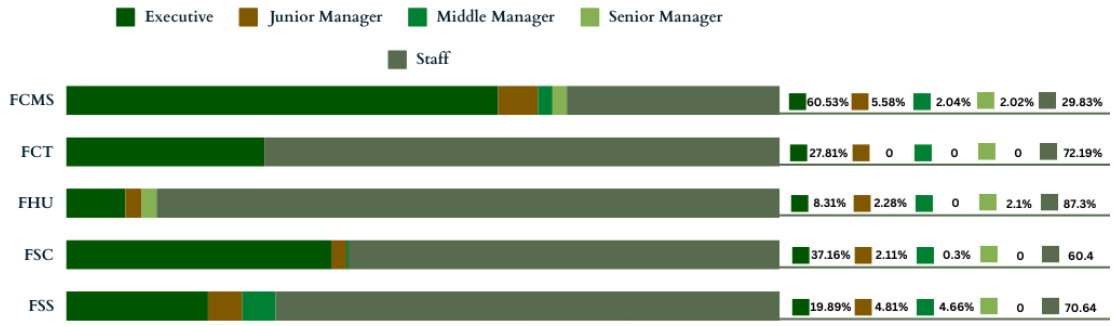

Figure 14: Position Rank

This graph illustrates the distribution of job roles across various faculties, highlighting a strong reliance on staff positions and limited representation in managerial roles. In each faculty, Staff positions constitute the majority, with FHU having the highest proportion at 87.3%, followed by FSS at 70.64%. Executive roles are the second most common across faculties, with FCMS showing the highest executive percentage at 60.53%, whereas FHU has the lowest at 8.31%. There is minimal representation in Junior Manager, Middle Manager, and Senior Manager roles across all faculties, suggesting a lack of hierarchical structure within these institutions. FCMS is the only faculty with a more balanced distribution, including 5.58% in Junior

Manager and around 2% in both Middle and Senior Manager roles. In contrast, Faculty of Computing and Technology (FCT) has no representation in any management roles beyond Executive, which indicates a very flat structure. Overall, this distribution reveals that most faculties are heavily weighted towards staff and executive roles, with limited opportunities for middle and senior management, potentially indicating streamlined operations with fewer hierarchical layers in these academic settings.

Average Monthly Salary

Monthly average salary serves as an important indicator of financial well-being and can vary widely depending on factors such as industry, location, experience, and education level.

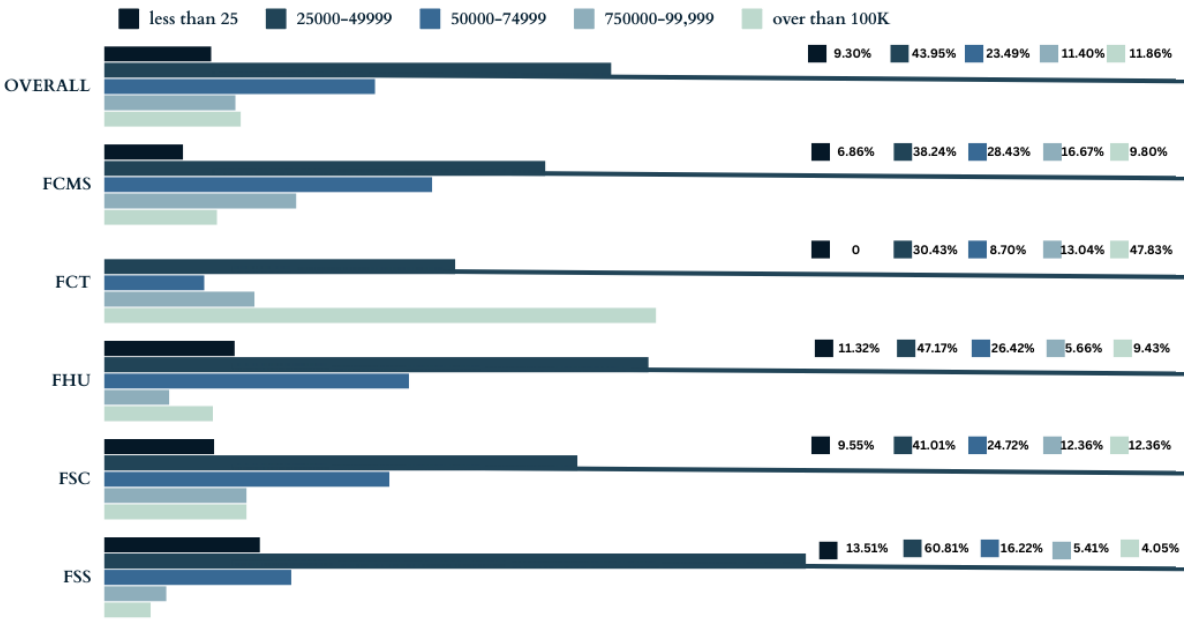

Figure 15: Average monthly salary by Faculty

In overall, most of the employed graduates earn between Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 49,999 while around 9.3% of employed graduates earn below Rs. 25,000. However, it is noted that the percentage of graduates who earn beyond Rs. 100,000 is approximately 12%. Furthermore, the percentage of employed graduates who earn more than Rs. 50,000 is 47%.

When comparing the average monthly salary of the graduates of each Faculty, FCT has the highest percentage of employed graduates who earn beyond Rs. 100,000 and the percentage is 47.83%. Moreover, FCMS has the highest percentage of employed graduates among all faculties who earn between Rs 75,000 – Rs. 99,999 and the percentage is 16.67%. Apart from the FCMS, FCT and FSC has a higher percentage

of employed graduates who earn between Rs. 75,000 – Rs. 99,999. On the other hand, most of the graduates of all faculties earn between Rs. 25,000 – Rs. 49,999 except for FCT. Notably, FSS has the highest percentage (13.51%) for a salary range of less than Rs. 25,000, potential challenges in securing well-paying jobs. In conclusion, these statistics suggest that the field of study plays a significant role in determining starting salaries, with more specialized or in-demand fields offering better financial outcomes.

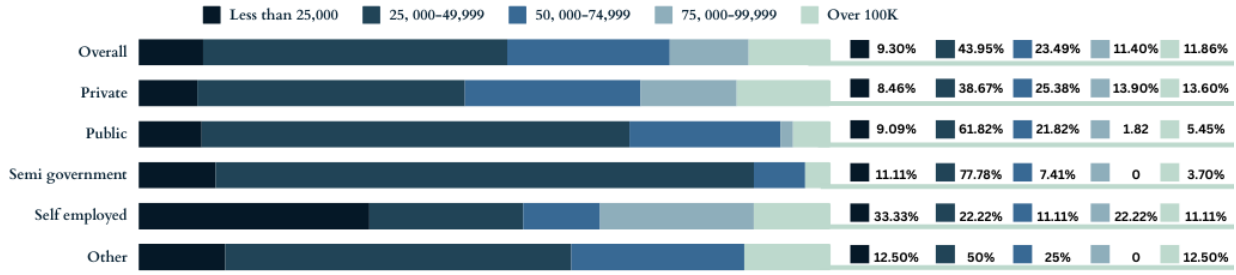

Figure 16: Salary by employment sector

Further analysis revealed that the highest incomes are generated by the employed graduates who are in the private sector where 14% earns beyond Rs. 100,000. Moreover, graduates employed in the self-employed also earn beyond Rs. 75,000 than other sectors. In contrast, the public and semi-government sectors are more varied between Rs. 25,000 – Rs. 49,999. In general, the percentage of employed graduates who earn beyond the average salary is higher in the private sector than in other categories. That is, 53% of private sector graduate employees are generating income of more than Rs.50,000. Even though the self-employment sector is second to the private sector, 44% of them have earned a salary of more than Rs. 50,000. Overall, the private sector and self-employment have higher salary potential, while public and semi-government jobs have lower income levels.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE EMPLOYABILITY

Employment encompasses various attributes that define the work experience and its impact on individuals and organizations. In this survey, we have identified several key attributes essential for understanding the experiences of students. These include degree types, academic performance, medium of instruction, computer literacy, English proficiency, participation in extracurricular activities, and involvement in full-time or part-time employment during their university years. Together, these attributes provide a comprehensive view of the student experience and inform targeted interventions to enhance educational outcomes for graduates.

Degree Type

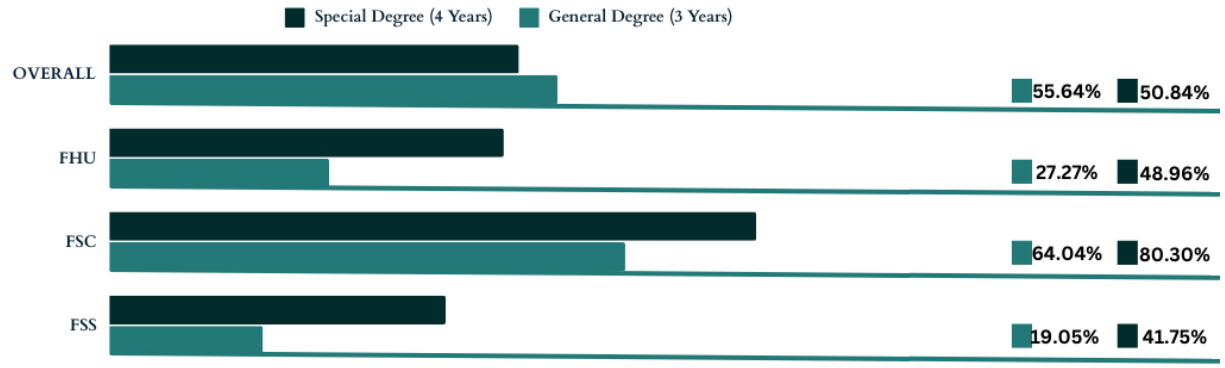

Figure 17: Employability by the type of degree program

Figure 17 shows the employment rates for three faculties: Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences, based on the type and length of their degree programs. In the Faculty of Humanities, the overall employment rate is 43.41%, with graduates of the Special 4-year degree having a much higher employment rate (48.96%) compared to those with a General 3-year degree (27.27%). The Faculty of Science has the highest employment rate overall at 68.03%, where Special degree holders (80.30%) are more likely to find jobs than General degree holders (64.04%). On the other hand, the Faculty of Social Sciences has the lowest employment rate at 39.53%, with Special degree graduates (41.75%) doing better in employment than General degree graduates (19.05%). Overall, this data shows that across all faculties, those with a Special 4-year degree have much better chances of finding a job than those with a General 3-year degree. However, taking the University of Kelaniya as a whole, the data shows that graduates of the 3-year general degree program have a slightly higher employment rate than the 4-year special degree program.

Academic Performance

The effectiveness of academic performance on the employment rate for graduates can be significant, but it depends on multiple factors. One of the main factors is the class of the degree. The University's previous studies on graduate employability have also suggested that the top-performing students have a higher employability rate than the lowest-performing students.

Table 7: Graduate output by faculty

Faculty	First Class	Second Class – Upper Division	Second Class – Lower Division	Ordinary Pass	Total
FCMS	95 (14%)	308 (46%)	178 (27%)	84 (13%)	665
FCT	10 (5%)	56 (26%)	48 (22%)	103 (47%)	217
FHU	74 (12%)	381 (63%)	68 (11%)	81 (13%)	604
FMED	5 (2%)	24 (11%)	72 (34%)	110 (52%)	211
FSC	72 (15%)	145 (30%)	86 (18%)	183 (38%)	486
FSS	54 (6%)	714 (83%)	45 (5%)	44 (5%)	857
Overall	310 (10%)	1628 (54%)	497 (16%)	605 (20%)	3040

The undergraduate graduate output data from the University of Kelaniya in 2022 reveals varying levels of academic performance across its faculties. The Faculty of Social Sciences had the highest number of graduates, with 714 students achieving Second Class – Upper Division honors, though only 54 earned First Class distinctions. The Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies also performed well, producing 95 First Class graduates and 308 in the Second Class – Upper Division. In contrast, the Faculty of Computing and Technology had the lowest output, with just 217 graduates and only 10 achieving First Class honors. The Faculty of Humanities showed a balanced performance, while the Faculty of Medicine had few First Class graduates (5) but a significant number of Ordinary Passes (110). Overall, the data highlights both strengths and areas for improvement, particularly for faculties like FCT, guiding the university in enhancing its academic strategies.

Table 8: Employability by academic performance

Faculty	First Class	Second Class – Upper Division	Second Class – Lower Division	Ordinary Pass
FCMS	95.24%	89.47%	75.68%	66.67%
FCT	100%	82.35%	50%	62.5%
FHU	61.9%	42.35%	21.43%	44.44%

Faculty	First Class	Second Class – Upper Division	Second Class – Lower Division	Ordinary Pass
FSC	83.33%	70.65%	75.47%	56.38%
FSS	52.38%	39.43%	27.27%	25%
Overall	74.74%	55.16%	63.41%	54.40%

The Table 8 depicts a clear correlation between academic performance and employability. The Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies exhibits the highest employment rates across all classifications, with 95.24% for First Class graduates and 89.47% for those in the Second Class – Upper Division, indicating that students in this faculty are highly sought after by employers. The Faculty of Computing and Technology achieved a perfect 100% employment rate for First Class graduates, demonstrating exceptional employability. In contrast, the Faculty of Social Sciences displayed the lowest employment rates across all categories, particularly for Ordinary Pass graduates, where only 25% found employment. The Faculty of Humanities showed moderate employment rates. The Faculty of Science maintained solid employment rates, especially for First Class (83.33%) and Second Class – Lower Division (75.47%) graduates, indicating a favorable job market for its graduates. Overall, the data suggests a strong link between higher academic classifications and employment rates, highlighting the importance of academic performance in enhancing employability.

Medium of Instruction

Degree programs of the University are offered in three medium instructions. Those are English medium, Sinhala medium, and a combination of Sinhala and English medium. Degree programs in the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies, Faculty of Computing & Technology, and, Faculty of Science are offered in English medium while the degree programs of the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences are offered either in any of the above three mediums.

The medium of instruction has been identified as a factor that influences the employability of a graduate by previous studies. In 2022, considering the sample, 72.65% of those who mentioned English as the medium of instruction for the entire university were employed. Also, 43.28% of those who mentioned Sinhala and English media and 28.95% of those who mentioned Sinhala media are employed.

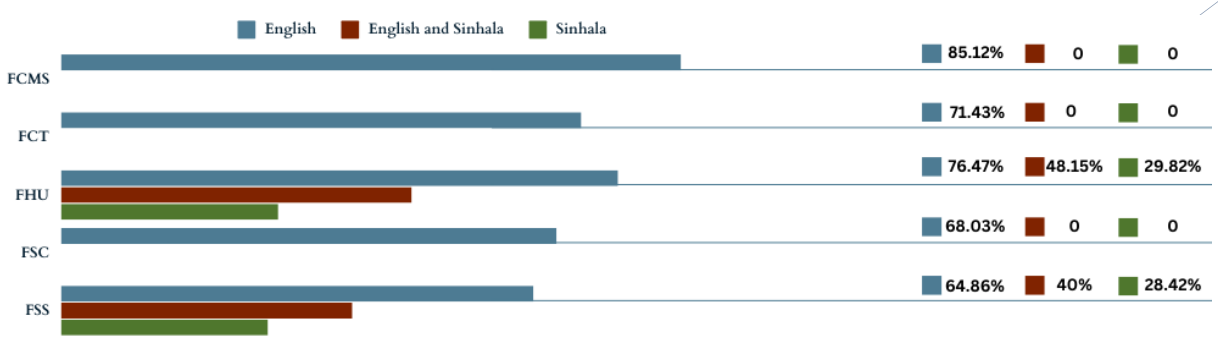

Figure 18: Employability by the medium of instruction

This graph illustrates that the employability rates based on the medium of instruction across various faculties reveal significant trends and insights. Notably, the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies boasts the highest employability rate for students using English as their medium of instruction, at 85.12%. Furthermore, FCT and FSC show high employability rates for those using English as their medium of instruction. Accordingly, the employment rate is 71.43% and 68.03%, respectively. In the Faculty of Humanities, the gap in employability based on language is pronounced. English-medium graduates have a relatively high employability rate of 76.47%, while those taught in both English and Sinhala see a drop to 48.15%, and Sinhala-only graduates have the lowest rate at 29.82%. This suggests that English proficiency in the humanities significantly boosts job prospects, possibly because English is widely used in academia and international communication. The Faculty of Social Sciences also demonstrates the impact of language on employment outcomes. English-medium graduates have an employability rate of 64.86%, while those instructed in both English and Sinhala drop to 40%, and Sinhala-only graduates fare the worst at 28.42%. Overall, the data clearly indicates that English-medium instruction enhances employability across all faculties, whereas graduates instructed in Sinhala or both English and Sinhala generally face greater challenges in the job market.

Computer Literacy

Computer literacy is crucial for employment as it enables individuals to efficiently use technology in the workplace. It enhances productivity, adaptability to new tools, and access to information, making employees more effective in their roles. Employers prioritize candidates with computer skills, leading to increased employability and opportunities for career advancement. Additionally, computer literacy facilitates communication and collaboration in a digital work environment, making it an essential skill for success in today's job market.

Table 9: Computer Literacy Level among Employed Graduates

Computer Literacy Level	Percentage
Very Low	0.4%
Low	0.2%
Moderate	7.1%
High	26.3%
Very High	65.9%

The table above includes computer literacy levels among employed graduates. These data indicate a strong correlation between computer literacy levels and employment. Among the employed graduates, the vast majority, 65.9%, rated their computer literacy as very high, indicating a high level of proficiency in digital skills. Another 26.3% are classified as high and 7.1% fall in the moderate category. Only a very small percentage of employed graduates rate their computer literacy as low (0.2%) or very low (0.4%). This distribution clearly indicates that high computer literacy is a key factor in securing employment, and almost all employed graduates have above average proficiency in computer skills.

English proficiency

To assess English proficiency, three core skills reading, writing, and speaking were evaluated for each individual. Each skill was rated, and then an average proficiency score was calculated. This average score determined each individual's overall English proficiency level.

After calculating the average proficiency score, individuals were grouped into categories of Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor based on their average scores. Employability rates were then calculated within each proficiency category.

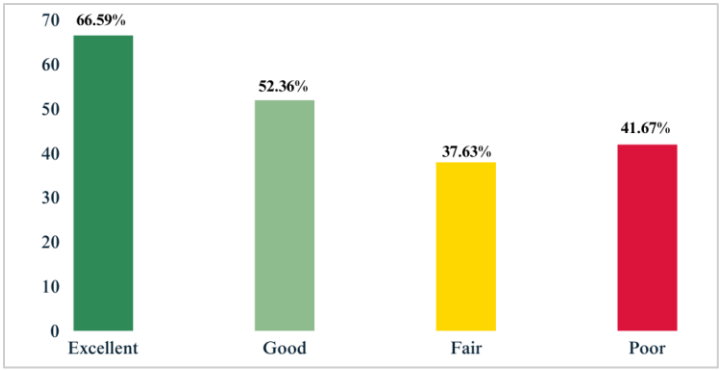

Figure 19: Employability by English Proficiency

The table reveals those individuals with higher English proficiency those in the Excellent and Good categories show higher employability rates, at 66.59% and 52.36%, respectively. In contrast, those with Fair and Poor proficiency have lower employability rates, at 37.63% and 41.67%. This suggests a positive relationship between English proficiency and employability, indicating that enhanced English skills in reading, writing, and speaking can significantly improve job prospects.

Involvement in extra-curricular activities

A University is a place with so many opportunities. An undergraduate can be involved in various extra-curricular activities during the academic period. The University of Kelaniya has several clubs like, the Gavel Club, AISEC, and Rotaract Club as well as student Unions like the Catholic Students Movement, Buddhist Association, Nature Club, and some other subject unions such as SCSSA, Mathematics Students' Union, etc. and Students councils. Apart from that, students can involved in sports, aesthetic activities, and voluntary services. All of these activities help to improve the interpersonal skills of undergraduates.

Involvement in extra-curricular activities enhances communication skills, teamwork, creativity, language proficiency, ability to adapt to new situations, analytical skills, problem-solving skills, and decision-making skills.

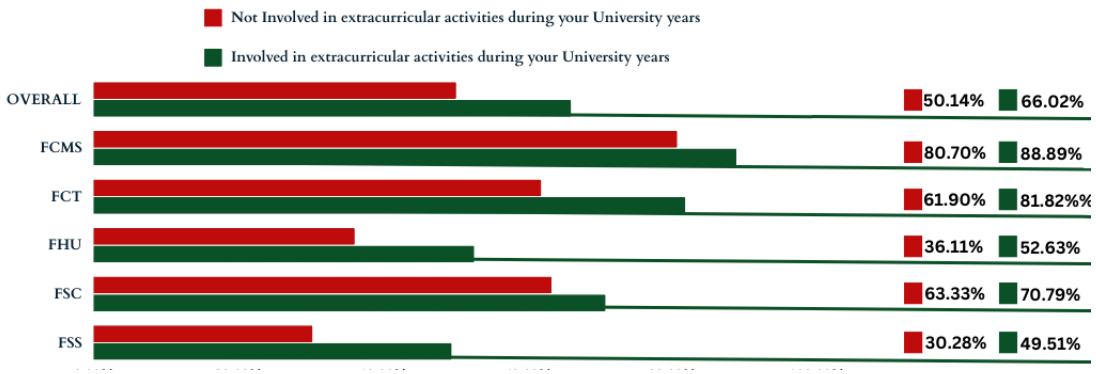

Figure 20: Employability by participation in extra-curricular activities

Figure 20 illustrates a clear positive correlation between involvement in extracurricular activities during university and employability rates across various faculties. Graduates from the FCMS who participated in extracurriculars have an employability rate of 88.89%, compared to 80.70% for those who did not. Similarly, graduates from the FCT show an employability rate of 81.82% for participants versus 61.90% for non-participants. This trend continues across other faculties, including the Humanities (52.63% vs. 36.11%), Science (70.79% vs. 63.33%), and Social Sciences (49.51% vs. 30.28%). Moreover, taking the University of Kelaniya as one unit, the employment rate of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities (66.02%) is higher than the employment rate of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular

activities (50.14%). Overall, these findings suggest that extracurricular engagement enhances job prospects, highlighting its importance in preparing graduates for the workforce.

Involvement in part-time/ full-time employment

Sometimes involvement in full-time or part-time work during university years positively impacts graduate employability. Relevant work experience enhances resumes and provides opportunities for professional networking, which can lead to job referrals and internships. Additionally, such experiences allow students to explore different career paths and gain insights that may significantly increase their chances of securing desirable positions after graduation.

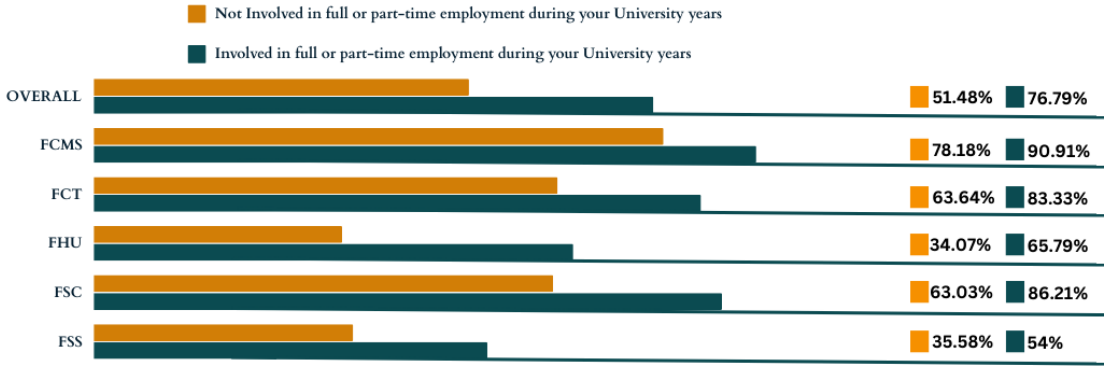

Figure 21: Employability by participating in full-time or part-time employment

According to Figure 21, graduates from the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies have the highest employment rate at 90.91% for those who worked, followed by 86.21% in the Faculty of Science and 83.33% in Computing & Technology. In contrast, the Faculty of Humanities has a lower employment rate of 65.79%, while the Faculty of Social Sciences shows the lowest at 54%. Graduates who did not engage in work consistently have lower employment rates across all faculties, highlighting the importance of practical experience in enhancing employability. This suggests that educational institutions should incorporate more work-related opportunities into their programs to better prepare students for the job market.

GRADUATES' ATTITUDES ON EMPLOYABILITY

The collapse of Sri Lanka's economy has severely impacted individuals' careers, leading to heightened job insecurity. Due to various factors, securing reliable and suitable employment has become increasingly difficult in the current environment. This study, therefore, examined the key elements that helped graduates find stable and suitable employment, enabling the university to equip its undergraduates for the corporate world better.

Most influential factors in finding a job

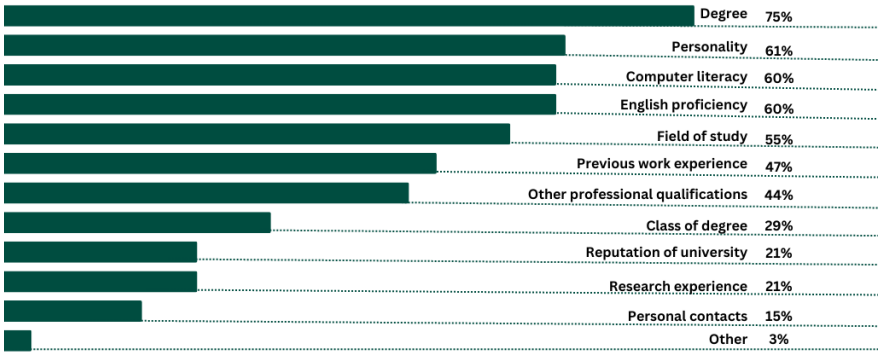

Figure 22: Most influential factor in obtaining employment

Rather than deciding the influencing factors, by the University itself, it is more useful to get the graduate employees' point of view of their own experience. Accordingly, among these, 75% of respondents highlight the importance of their degree as the most significant element in securing a job. However, personality (61%), computer literacy (60%), and English proficiency (60%) are also highly valued, illustrating that technical skills and interpersonal abilities are critical in the job market. Additionally, the field of study (55%) and previous work experience (47%) demonstrate that practical experience and education play significant roles in obtaining employment while other professional qualifications and class of degree are less impactful compared to other factors. Overall, the figure indicated that degree, technical skill, work experience, and personal attributes are the most critical elements for graduates seeking employment, while factors like the class of the degree, reputation of the university, and personal contacts hold less weight.

Method of finding employment

Figure 23: Methods of finding employment

This graph illustrates the various methods used to find employment, with online/social media platforms emerging as the most popular avenue, accounting for 49% of employment opportunities. This highlights the increasing reliance on digital tools for job searches. Personal contacts play a significant role as well, with 24% of individuals finding jobs while internships contribute to 11% of employment. Traditional methods such as newspapers, gazettes, or competitive exams account for 6%, showing that while still relevant, they are less influential today. Similarly, university contacts (6%) and continuing with the same job held during university education (5%) offer limited but notable employment avenues. Job fairs and career guidance services represent the smallest category at 3%, indicating they have a less direct impact on job placement compared to other methods.

Relevance of degree program to employment

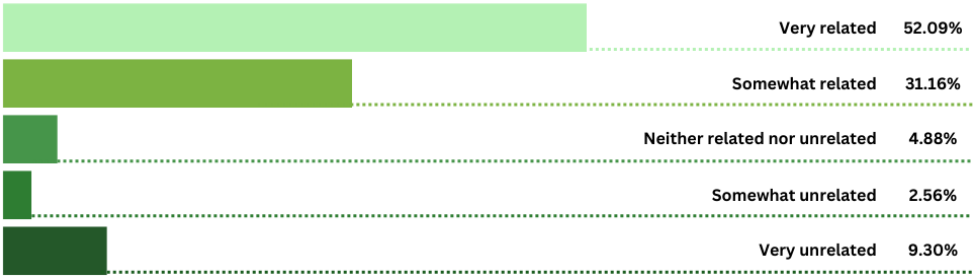

Figure 24: Relevance to the degree program

This graph illustrates the relevance of graduates' degree programs to their employment. A significant majority, 52.09%, reported that their jobs are very related to their field of study, suggesting that over half of the graduates secure employment closely aligned with their academic background. Additionally, 31.16% indicated that their jobs are somewhat related. On the other hand, 2.56% found their jobs somewhat unrelated to their degree program, and 9.3% stated that their employment is very unrelated. This graph

demonstrates that the majority of graduates find employment that is directly or somewhat linked to their degree programs.

Job Satisfaction

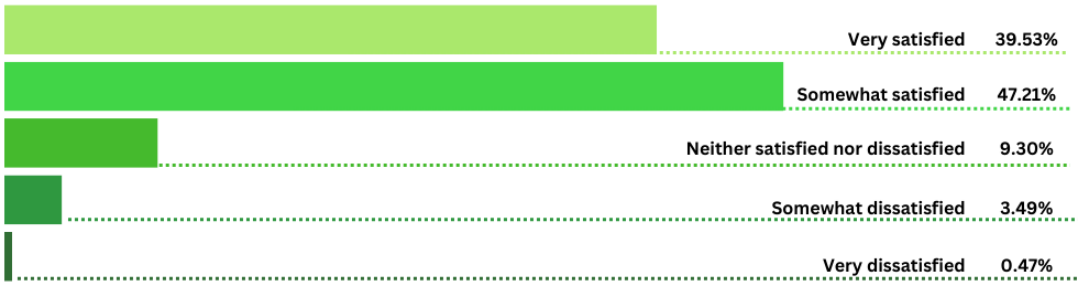

Figure 25: Job Satisfaction

Figure 25 illustrates that most of the graduates are somewhat satisfied (47.21%) with their job. Among the graduates, 39.53% graduates are very satisfied with their jobs. Also, the percentages of somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied were 3.49% and 0.47% respectively. Overall, 86.74% are satisfied with their employment.

UNEMPLOYABILITY

In 2022, unemployment was influenced by several interrelated factors stemming from the ongoing economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. While some sectors saw a resurgence in hiring, others continued to struggle, resulting in layoffs and stagnant job growth. And also, unemployment may have various reasons such as difficulty in finding employment and not getting suitable employments related to the academic field or interests.

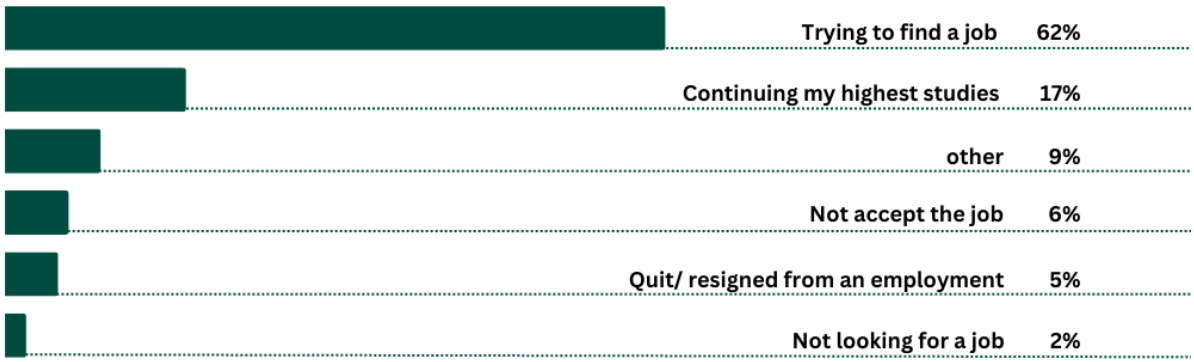

Figure 26: Unemployability Rates

The most common reason for graduate unemployability is not finding a job. 62% of unemployed graduates have mentioned that they were unable to find proper employment. Apart from that, 17% are continuing further studies and thus they are not looking for a job. And 5% haven't accepted the job offers they got. The 5% who resigned from the job or rejected the offer mentioned that the lower salary, irrelevance to the academic field or interest, and difficult working conditions were a few reasons for their decision. Moreover, some have resigned from their jobs to start further studies. The majority, that is, the group who couldn't find employment have mentioned that fewer opportunities, skill shortage, and lack of English and computer knowledge were several reasons for being unable to find employment.

DISCUSSION

Graduate employability is a key performance indicator for universities, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of their academic programs. This annual study assesses how well the University of Kelaniya is preparing graduates who meet the expectations of the corporate sector. For the 2022 survey, data was collected from 2,758 graduates, with over 1,006 responding. After data cleaning and validation, 769 responses were included in the final analysis, yielding a response rate of 40%, which is slightly lower than in 2021.

The analysis estimated a graduate employability rate of 58.5%, with a 95% confidence interval of 55.2% to 62.1%. The Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies reported the highest employability rate, while the Faculty of Social Sciences recorded the lowest. Furthermore, male graduates report a higher employability rate than female graduates. On average, most employed graduates secured permanent positions in the private sector with monthly earnings between Rs.25,000 to Rs.49,999. Moreover, academic performance, high computer literacy level, and English language skills are identified as the most influential factors in securing jobs.

Compared with prior years, the employability rate has shown improvement, reversing a trend of declining rates observed since 2017. The employability rate was at its lowest in 2020, at 35%, but saw an increase in 2021, above the rate reported in 2019. The feedback reveals multiple challenges faced by job seekers, primarily fresh graduates. Key barriers include a lack of work experience, especially as many employers require one or more years of practical experience, which recent graduates find difficult to acquire without internship opportunities. Additionally, limited English language proficiency and insufficient communication skills are common concerns, affecting candidates' confidence in interviews. The economic and political instability in Sri Lanka further exacerbates the scarcity of job opportunities, as companies reduce vacancies or favor internal hires. Geographic location also plays a role, with candidates from areas outside Colombo facing fewer job options, higher travel costs, and logistical challenges. Many respondents express frustration over the lack of government initiatives to support graduate employment, and some believe that government jobs are inaccessible.

Additionally, a growing number of graduates expressed an interest in migrating abroad, especially among those from the Faculty of Science, many of whom plan to pursue further studies. Conversely, there was a

notable rise in graduates, particularly from the Faculties of Humanities and Science, who aspired to start their own businesses.

Graduates suggested that to facilitate first employment after graduation, several initiatives that universities could undertake. A primary recommendation was establishing structured internship programs, ideally during the final year or even making them compulsory for a year, to help students gain practical experience. Respondents emphasized the importance of connecting students with reputable companies, either through networking events like career fairs or by directly engaging with recruitment managers. They also highlighted the need for enhanced career guidance, including support in building professional qualifications, English and computer literacy, and industry-relevant skills. Additionally, some recommended creating stronger alumni networks and partnerships with industries to foster job placements. Furthermore, respondents mentioned that universities could assist by promoting relevant job opportunities and advocating for government-backed programs to increase graduate employability.

Lastly, 96% of graduates would recommend the degree program of the University of Kelaniya to others, though 4% refused to recommend the University due to citing limited job opportunities, outdated and irrelevant coursework, and a lack of specialization. They criticized the program's focus on theory over practical skills, such as programming, and noted the absence of internships or industry exposure. The selection process for subject combinations was also seen as restrictive, limiting students' ability to align studies with career goals.

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This document is only used for illustration. Graduates are given an online questionnaire

Questionnaire 2022

Form 01

Employability Study of Graduates 2022

This is the official census form on employability for all graduates this year.

PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION

1) Student Number: ……
2) Name with Initials: ……
3) Gender:

○ Male ○ Female

4) GCE (A/L) Examination:

District	Z-Score	Year

5) E-mail: ……
6) Do you have a LinkedIn profile:

○ Yes ○ No

7) If 'yes', mention the URL of your LinkedIn profile: ……

PART B - ACADEMIC INFORMATION

8) Faculty/ Institution:
○ Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies
○ Faculty of Computing & Technology
○ Faculty of Humanities
○ Faculty of Medicine
○ Faculty of Science
○ Faculty of Social Sciences

9) Degree type: ○ General (3 years) ○ Special (4 years) ○ Medical (5 years)

10) Please specify the degree program……

11) If "Special" please specify Academic Department……

12) Medium of Instruction (Mark with a "√" to all that applies)

☐ English ☐ Sinhala ☐ English and Sinhala

13) Class received:

☐ First Class ☐ Second Upper ☐ Second Lower ☐ Ordinary Pass

14) English Language Proficiency

Examination	Grade Received				
GCE(O/L) English Language	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	☐ S	☐ F / W
GCE(A/L) General English	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	☐ S	☐ F / W

15) Have you sat for any examinations for any courses offered by the DELT? ○Yes ○No
16) What is the highest grade you have obtained for any course offered by the DELT: ……

17) Rate your current English language skills on a 100% scale. (Where 0 is lower 100 is the best)

Reading	☐
Writing	☐
Speaking	☐

18) Rate your computer literacy level ☐

19) How did you get computer knowledge:
☐ Followed a private computer course/s
☐ Through computer courses offered by the University
☐ Job-related activities
☐ Training given from the office
☐ From family members/friends/relations
☐ Self-study
☐ Other

20) Can you do these activities using a computer:

Email Communication	○Yes	○No
Handling Databases	○Yes	○No
Creating and Managing Spreadsheets and Word Documents	○Yes	○No
Ability to design web	○Yes	○No
Able to write computer program	○Yes	○No

21) Do you like to recommend your degree program to others: ○Yes ○No

22) If "No", Please specify the the reason:

23) Was there an Internship Training component in your degree programme?

○Yes ○No ○ Not relevant

If yes answer Questions 23.1 & 23.2

23.1 Was **Internship Training**

○ Compulsory with Credits
○ Compulsory without Credits
○ Elective with Credits
○ Elective without Credits

23.2 Did you get the support from the university to find an **Internship Training**?

○ Yes ○ No

24) Were you involved in any of the following during your university years?

Category	Yes	No	If yes, please specify
Extra-curricular activities			
Vocational training			
Other educational/professional qualifications			
Full/part-time employment			

25) What are your career goals for the next two years? (Mark with a "√" to all that applies)

□ Find a better job □ Migration □ Further studies
□ Be an entrepreneur □ Other If other, please specify ……
□ Upgrading the current position

26) What do you think could be done to facilitate the first employment after graduation? Please give suggestions

27) What do you think could be done to facilitate the first employment after graduation by University:

PART C – Current Employment Status

28) What is your current employment status:
○ Employed ○ Unemployed

29) How do you think the university can help the student to find better employment after graduation:

PART D – Unemployment Information

30) What are the reasons for Unemployment

- □ I am not looking for a job
- □ I am continuing my highest studies
- □ I did not get any job and I am still trying to find a job
- □ I did not accept the job/s I got
- □ I quit/ resigned from an employment
- □ Other If other, please specify ……

31) What kind of job in which area you looking at?. Please specify the reason/s:

32) If you didn't accept any job offer you got, please specify the reason/s:

33) If you resigned or quit a job, please specify the reason/s:

34) What do you think are the main obstacles for you to get a job? Please give details:

PART D – Employment Information

35) Current status of the employment

○ Permanent ○ Temporary/Contract Basis /Assignment Basis
○ Self Employed ○ Entrepreneur ○ Other……

36) When did you find your **current job**?

After AL's — During the University — After completing the degree

37) Date of the current employment as you remember DD/MM/YYYY ……

38) What is the organization currently employed: ……

39) Which sector are you employed in?

- ○ Public
- ○ Private
- ○ Semi-Government
- ○ Self-employed
- ○ Other, please specify……

40) The position you hold currently: …….

41) Rank your position accordingly:

- ○ Staff
- ○ Executive
- ○ Junior Manager
- ○ Middle Manager
- ○ Senior Manager

42) To which economic sector does your current job belong to: ……

43) What is your current gross monthly salary (In Rupees)?

- ○ Less than 25,000
- ○ 25,000 – 49,999
- ○ 50,000 – 74,999
- ○ 75,000 – 99,999
- ○ Over 100,000

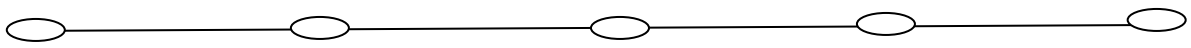
44) How did you find this job?

- □ Newspaper/ Gazette/ Competitive exam
- □ Online/ Social Media
- □ Personal contacts
- □ Continuing the same job held during university
- □ Via an internship
- □ Via University
- □ Via personal contact in the University
- □ Job fair/ career guidance
- □ Other If other, please specify …….

45) What do you think were the most important aspects in getting this job? (Check all that applies)

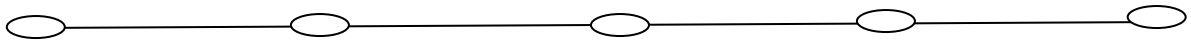
- □ Degree
- □ Class of degree
- □ Reputation of university
- □ Field of study
- □ Research experience
- □ Personal contacts
- □ Previous work experience
- □ English proficiency
- □ Personality
- □ Computer literacy
- □ Other professional qualifications
- □ Other If other, please specify ……

46) Is this job related to the field you studied for your degree?



Very Related | Somewhat related | Neither related nor unrelated | Somewhat unrelated | Very unrelated

47) How satisfied are you with this job?



Very satisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. | Somewhat dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied

48) Any Other Comments

49) Would you like to be involved in a tracer study conducted by the University of Kelaniya for institutional purposes in the future:

○Yes ○No

50) If "Yes" Please provide your address and telephone number:

Thank you for completing this census. We appreciate the time you have spent in providing us with feedback that will help reform.