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QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF NEW GRADUATES OF FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

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The objectives of this project were to study job seeking status, working status, job satisfaction and the ability to apply the academic knowledge to the job of new graduates from the Faculty of Science and Technology, Thammasat University.

Quality Assessment of New Graduates of Faculty of Science and Technology, Thammasat University

The objectives of the project “Quality assessment of new graduates of the Faculty of Science and Technology, Thammasat University” were to study job seeking status, working status, job satisfaction and the ability to apply the academic knowledge to the job of new graduates from the Faculty of Science and Technology, Thammasat University.

The target population of this survey consists of new graduates from the Faculty of Science and Technology, Thammasat University in the year 2013. Census was used as the method of data collection from the new graduates. The size of the target population was 638 graduates from 10 departments: Mathematics and Statistics, Chemistry, Agricultural Technology, Rural Technology, Biotechnology, Physics, Computer Science, Environmental Science, Food Science and Technology and Textile Science and Technology, Thammasat University which is one the top five popular universities in Thailand.

The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire. Data analyses consist of descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and hypothesis testing using inferential statistics such as chi-square, t-test and F-test.

The results of this study: The total number of new graduates in 2013 was 638 cases. Most of the new graduates were from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (about

30 % of all new graduates). Most new graduates (73.8 %) were female and almost 80% of graduates have domicile in several provincial areas and did not pursue for master degree. About 15 -30 % of new graduates from almost all departments were studying in master degree level (except the new graduates from the Department of Textile Science and Technology for which only 9% were studying in master degree level). About 5 % of new graduates got a job and were studying for master degree at the same time. Employed graduates desired to study in master degree more than unemployed graduates and the main reason for not studying for master degree was shortage of funds.

About 70% of new graduates (excluding graduates who were studying) from The Faculty of Science and Technology were employed. There was a significant difference in percentage of new graduates employment among departments at a significance level of .05. New graduates from the Department of Science and Textile Technology and Department of Computer Science had higher percentages of employment than the graduates from other departments. About 72 % of new graduates were able to find the job within the first month of their graduations. They could find a job easily because of their special capabilities in computer programming and English language.

The average starting salary (per month) of new graduates of the Faculty of Science and Technology was about 18,273 baht (US\$ 590), however, varied depending to the department from where they graduated, their gender and type of their jobs. These results were supported by the hypothesis testing at the significance level of .05. The average starting salary of new graduates from the Department of Computer Science and Biotechnology was about 20,000 baht (US\$ 646) whilst the starting salary of new graduates from the other departments were about 14,000-19,000 baht (US\$ 452-US\$ 613). The average starting salary of male graduates was about 20,400 baht (US\$ 658) and it was about 2,900 baht (US\$ 94) higher than the average starting salary of female graduates. The new graduates who were self employed got the highest starting salary about 26,895 baht (US\$ 868) whilst the new graduates who work for government or got a temporary job had starting salary about 14,520 baht (US\$ 469) and 14,143 baht (US\$ 457) respectively.

Most of the new graduates had jobs that match their fields of study and they could apply their knowledge to their jobs in moderate level. About 80% of new graduates who were

employed were satisfied with their jobs. Most of graduates expressed the opinion that English courses, practical training / internship program and useful computer programming should be added in the curriculum to support their career.

Most of unemployed graduates (77.5%) did not have any trouble finding a job. For graduates who have trouble finding a job, the main reason was the job was not pleasant. The main reasons of unemployment were waiting for an answer from the agency and unwillingness to work during that time. Only 5.8 % of new graduates who did not study for master degree and could not find a job.

The suggestions based on this study are: improvements of the curriculum in the future, every department should consider adding various courses for example English course, practical training / internship program into the curriculum to support graduates' career. The departments should also consider the details of the course content, concerning theoretical knowledge and integrating more practice.