

More top students seek public sector jobs

STUDENTS who have done well are now looking more towards public sector jobs – the first step being to secure a scholarship. According to the latest annual survey by JobsFactory – which owns the BrightSparks scholarship, higher education and career portal – the Public Service Commission (PSC) is the most popular scholarship provider with top students.

3,252 students took part in this year's survey, most of them A Level and International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma holders. Among this pool, 1,361 were top students – defined as A Level holders who scored three or more As for H2 subjects and IB diploma graduates who scored 39 points or more in their recent examinations. Fifty-six per cent of these top students indicated interest in applying for a PSC scholarship, ranking it tops among scholarship providers. The National University of Singapore (NUS) ranked second, followed by the FIREfly group of government organisations.

The percentage of top students interested in working in the public service grew substantially – from 23.3 per cent last year to 33.8 per cent this year. The public service ranked just behind banking and financial services – the top industry choice, but with only a 0.6 per cent increase in votes this year.

JobsFactory director Lim Der Shing said: “The government has stepped up hiring despite the economic downturn, which could be a key reason for more top students considering a public service career than before. The private sector may also be perceived to offer less job security currently.”

For individual scholarships, top students showed a preference for those offered by local universities. Of the 10 most popular scholarships, six are offered by NUS and Nanyang Technological University. More top students also want to study at local universities, with 37 per cent of those surveyed saying they would apply only to universities in Singapore, up from 32.5 per cent last year.