

APPOINTMENTS



The future of AI is not about replacing humans, it's about augmenting human capabilities — Sundar Pichai

Grow with us

Nepal's graduates are struggling to find jobs: What can be done?

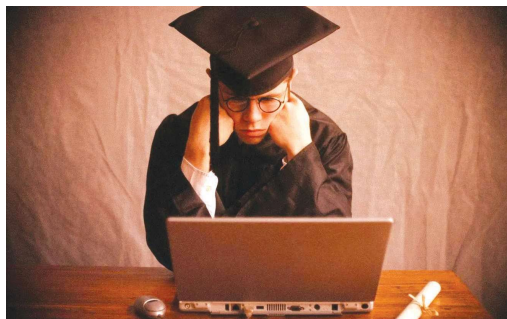
Skill Lab
Kathmandu

For many graduates in Nepal, the transition from university to the workforce comes with unexpected challenges. One student described applying through multiple platforms without success until structured job preparation helped them understand employer expectations. Another, who eventually secured a position related to their field of study, reflected on the difficulties of navigating the job market. These experiences point to a broader issue: while academic degrees are being earned, many young people still lack the skills, confidence, and exposure needed to secure meaningful employment.

According to the Fourth Living Standards Survey, Nepal's youth unemployment rate is 22.7 per cent, among the highest in South Asia. This raises pressing questions about the disconnect between higher education and employment, and what steps can be taken to bridge that gap.

GRADUATES' JOURNEY FROM CLASSROOM TO CAREER CONFUSION

The roots of unemployment often begin before graduation. Students frequently choose their courses based on tradition, family pressure, or limited information, rather than career guidance or labour market research. Career counselling remains rare in many educational institutions, leaving students uncertain about which fields offer



sustainable career paths. Though some technical education programmes include apprenticeships, these are often hampered by limited participation from the private sector and a lack of clear policy frameworks. A study by Skill Lab analysing 1,026 entry-level job postings across Nepal and Southeast Asia found that Nepali academic programmes meet only 58.1 per cent of market needs. By contrast, countries like Malaysia and Indonesia show better alignment, with curriculum relevance reaching up to 69.9 per cent.

WHY NEPALI GRADUATES CAN'T FIND JOBS EVEN WHEN JOBS EXIST

A major factor contributing to graduate unemployment is the misalignment between academic education and labour market demands. Employers today seek more than academic

credentials: they value professionals who can combine technical knowledge with practical abilities like leadership, adaptability, and communication.

Data from Skill Lab's study found that across sectors such as IT, marketing, administration, and customer service, soft skills frequently ranked among the most important. Skills like collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking were especially valued in international work environments where teamwork and cross-cultural communication are essential.

The lack of industry exposure also plays a role. In Malaysia, the Research Universities (MRU) initiative has helped bridge this gap by promoting research collaborations between academia and industry. Similarly, Indonesia's MP3EI (Master Plan for the Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesia Economic Development)

encourages cooperation between universities, businesses, and the government to align education with economic development goals. In Nepal, similar efforts are emerging. Some universities have begun partnering with international organisations and development agencies, while initiatives to establish high-tech research centres in collaboration with businesses are starting to take shape.

Short-term training programmes that focus on job application skills — such as CV writing and interview preparation — have also been effective in boosting student confidence. In Indonesia, such initiatives have helped students significantly improve their ability to present themselves to employers. In Nepal, students participating in similar programmes have reported that practical guidance has helped



them better navigate the job market.

BRIDGING THE EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT GAP

Addressing Nepal's graduate unemployment challenge requires coordinated action from educational institutions, employers, and policymakers. Research indicates that aligning higher education with industry needs is key.

This includes updating academic content, incorporating project-based learning (PBL), and promoting soft skill development.

PBL has been shown to improve critical thinking, teamwork, and communication, particularly in technical subjects like engineering and mathematics. Students engaged in real-world projects report increased confidence in their ability to present ideas and work collaboratively.

Encouraging students to participate in training programmes, seek certifications, volunteer, or pursue freelance work can also help them build practical skills and expand their career readiness.

Employers, too, have a role to play. By offering in-

ternships, co-developing curricula, and leading workshops, companies can help students gain industry-relevant experience. Platforms that support skill-building

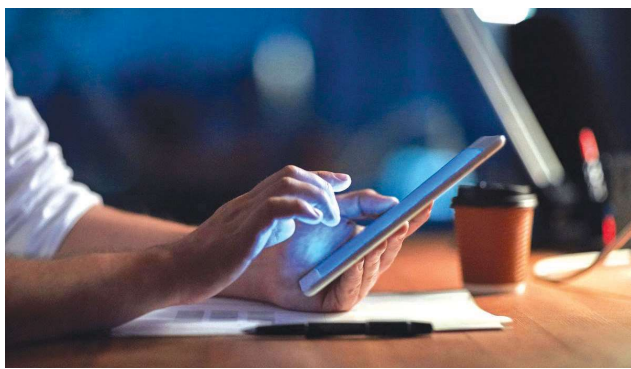
and job matching have shown potential to connect qualified candidates with job opportunities in targeted sectors. In one example, a training programme for entry-level Security Analyst roles at SecurityPal, in partnership with Skill Lab, aimed to prepare candidates with specific skills required for the job, while also introducing students to real-world expectations through college workshops.

LOOKING FORWARD

Nepal does not need to start from scratch. Examples from Malaysia and Indonesia illustrate how collaboration between government, academia, and industry can im-

prove employment outcomes. Similar models, adapted to Nepal's context, may help improve the link between education and employment. To ensure better job prospects for the country's graduates, it is critical to build stronger alignment between education systems and industry requirements. Research suggests that such efforts result in improved employability and better preparation for the realities of today's job market. With joint efforts across institutions, employers, and government bodies, Nepal's education can become a stronger foundation for long-term career success.

Why AI is discouraged in job applications?



It's a confusing time to be a job seeker right now. While artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly critical part of work, many companies (including AI-focused ones) are emphasising how much they disapprove of the technology being used in the job search.

"Please do not use AI assistants during the application process," Anthropic, the organisation behind popular AI assistant Claude, tells candidates who apply on its website, as reported by 404 Media last month.

"We want to understand your personal interest in Anthropic without mediation through an AI system, and we also want to evaluate your non-AI-assisted communication skills."

You may have a very good excuse for wanting or needing to use AI when applying to jobs. It can often feel like the only solution for tackling a crowded market that requires playing the numbers game.

You have massive volumes of job postings at the same time that people who are looking for roles are having to apply to more roles than they ever have before. It is understandable. You can write more content, you can try and have it become customised and bespoke to an opportunity. And so the temptation is large, and it's real to utilise

that. So what can we make of this contradiction — that adopting AI is a must for many workers, and yet discouraged in one of the most important stages of one's career journey? Turns out, recruiters and hiring managers have their reasons for rejecting this tool. But they also don't say you need to remove it from your process completely.

What's wrong with using AI in the job search?

Companies want to hire people, not robots — or else they wouldn't put out job postings in the first place. So when they say "Don't use AI," what they're really saying is, "I want to know there's a human being behind this resume or cover letter — a human being with interests, soft skills, and a unique background and perspective."

When you start artificially introducing these layers of the technology, that becomes an impediment to connecting with the real person. Whether you're a manufacturing business that's trying to find new hires or you're an AI technology company that's trying to find people at the end of the day, humans still have a massive role in commerce. People still buy from people

that they know and they trust.

Add to that the problem that AI isn't always an accurate or reliable source, especially if what you input or how the tech was trained leans a certain direction or lacks useful context. In turn, recruiters often can't trust an AI-generated (or seemingly AI-generated) application. The tech may exaggerate someone's qualifications, or make up skills or experiences the applicant doesn't actually have.

If you're looking for a specific outcome with your application development process, the AI is going to take your input of that desire, that wish that you have for it to be able to fit specific types of job opportunities, and it's going to try and make it fit as closely as it can, even if you're 10-15 degrees off of true north. AI can optimise a job application for keywords, but it can't manufacture real experience.

Hiring managers aren't just turned off by AI-supported applications because they seem untrustworthy. It can feel as if the applicant doesn't value the recruiter's time or commitment to finding the right person for the job. Even if it would demonstrate a candidate's adeptness at using AI tools, employers see it as a way of gaming the system and robbing them of their ability to evaluate talent.

And if everyone's using AI, it will

be harder for even superstar candidates to stand out. AI levels the playing field in a way that hiring managers don't necessarily want. If you're looking for the best talent, the last thing you want is a stack of applications that all sound eerily the same. What results in poor decision-making, bad hires, and a messier hiring process overall.

Consider, too, that HR teams are using AI in their everyday workflows — including using it to detect AI-generated content where they're required to weed it out. What reads as dislike for AI, then, might actually be a mere warning for candidates who don't want their resumes tossed in the "no" pile before they're given a fair shot face-to-face.

How to use AI in your job search

AI still has its place in the job search. If you're a curious person, you should be out there using AI — it's a force multiplier, and it has amazing capabilities. But at the end of the day, you've still got to be the best version of you.

One of the best uses of AI, they note, is for refining content you've already created. The use of AI, especially with regards to readability and grammar, is super helpful. Do not let AI write things whole-cloth. Write how you write, and then use your AI to make sure that your structured stuff in a proper way.

For example, it can help you get a cover letter started, or reframe a resume bullet point, or organise your LinkedIn summary. AI can also serve as an interview prep partner or career advisor. You can ask it to suggest responses to tough behavioural questions you might encounter, pretend to be an interviewer at a company you've applied to, or provide advice for a specific job search or career scenario. None of these instances require you to completely depend on the tech to make a good impression — rather, it can merely aid or inspire you when you're feeling stuck.

People fall into pitfalls when you are asking it to do stuff that you're not adept at, and it changes the meaning of what you're trying to say and do to represent yourself. —@emilysimon

Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu

VACANCY for the post of Energy/ Climate/ Food Security Advisor

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu was established in 2000 and employs 20 people including six Norwegian diplomats. It is centrally located in Patan, Bakhunde. The embassy is looking for an energetic and experienced Energy, Climate and Food Security Advisor. This portfolio makes up one of the three priority areas of development cooperation between Nepal and Norway along with governance and education/GESI.

The bilateral partnership on renewable energy with Nepal goes back more than 60 years. Climate adaptation and food security are also growing sectors that complement the energy investments. You can read more about Norway's investments here: [Clean Energy, Environment, and Economic Development \(CEED\) - Norway in Nepal](#)

The embassy also follows-up and engages with partners in the sectors that receive funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Norad.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a priority for Norway. We support human rights and women's rights and gender equality across sectors.

You will be working closely in a team with the Embassy's Counsellor for Energy and Climate. In addition, you will be engaging with cross-sectoral teams when and where relevant.

1. Main duties and responsibilities

- Provide high quality, reliable, timely and relevant advice to the embassy
- Provide strategic analysis and advice on issues of access to affordable and reliable renewable energy, climate mitigation and adaptation as well as food security related to climate vulnerability and its links to energy supply.
- Grant management of bilateral development assistance including preparation of decision documents, follow up of grant agreements, assessment of plans, budgets and financial reports, participate in formal and technical meetings, reviews and field visits
- Cooperate with embassy partners for effective implementation of programs/projects and contribute to develop and maintain a constructive dialogues and broad network with national stakeholders and international community in Nepal
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge base of government plans and policies in the Energy, Environment, and Agriculture sectors, with a clear understanding of how these are linked to Nepal's global commitments and development goals;
- Have updated knowledge on the current institutional and legal framework as well as planned sectoral reforms.
- Assess program and project related results and advise management and partners how to achieve and optimize annual results and targets
- Represent the Embassy in relevant conferences, seminars and formal meetings
- Act as a liaison officer between the Embassy and the Government (especially Ministry of Energy, Water and Irrigation and the Ministry of Forest and Environment)
- Work as the focal team for climate and environment as cross-cutting issues
- Mentor interns to improve their individual performance and development
- Other tasks might be assigned to the advisor depending on priorities and needs

2. Required qualifications and competencies

- A relevant university degree at master's level, preferably in a relevant subject area
- At least five years of work experience
- Experience from grant management is an advantage
- Good knowledge of government administrative systems and procedures
- Excellent spoken and written Nepali and English as well as good IT skills (Office 365, social media)
- Strong analytical, networking, communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to produce content for external communication channels
- Demonstrate critical and creative approaches to problem solving
- Ability to work both efficiently and thoroughly, independently and in team
- High level of personal integrity is required
- Renewable energy sector technical competencies such as in-depth knowledge about transmission and distribution of electricity, different renewable energy technologies and sources, productive use and innovative solutions
- Demonstrated knowledge of energy and climate sector related governance systems and mechanisms
- Mainstreaming methodologies for cross-cutting issues

The Embassy can offer

- The values of the Norwegian Embassy are: respect, openness, trust and inclusiveness
- High level of work-life balance and office hours of 37.5 hours per week
- 25 paid vacation days per year
- Strong focus on personal and professional development
- In lieu time off for required overtime
- Duty phone
- All-staff social gatherings and seminars
- 1,5 hours to exercise during office hours

This is a permanent position, available from 1 December 2025. The salary range offered is from NPR 230,000 – 270,000 basic per month (depending on qualifications) + 10% provident fund contribution. The Norwegian Embassy is an equal opportunities employer, dedicated to inclusivity, a diverse workforce and valuing differences. Qualified and eligible candidates from minority backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Short-listed candidates will be called for an interview, including a written test and oral presentation. Salary and benefits will commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Application procedure

The application must include a cover letter stating the suitability for the position including the evidence, competence and experience required and a CV including references marked "Energy/Climate/Food Security Advisor" submitted no later than **20 August 2025 to www.p2p.com.np**

Vacancy deadline: 20 August 2025 (midnight)