Ministry of Data and Statistics

Press Release

Embargo 12:00P.M., July 23, 2026 Release Date 8:30A.M., July 23, 2026

Supplementary Results of the Economically Active Population Survey for the Young Population in May 2026

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Supplementary Results of the Economically Active Population Survey for the Young Population in May 2026

□ In May 2026, the young population aged 15 to 29 totaled 7.822 million persons, which decreased by 152 thousand persons compared to May 2025.

❍ The labor force participation rate of the young population stood at 47.2%, down 2.3%p year-on-year.

❍ The employed people aged 15 to 29 marked 3.427 million persons, falling by 255 thousand persons year-on-year. The employment-population ratio of the young population stood at 43.8%, down 2.4%p year-on-year.

❍ The unemployed people aged 15 to 29 marked 266 thousand persons, rising by 5 thousand persons year-on-year. The unemployment rate of the young population stood at 7.2%, up 0.6%p year-on-year.

< Economic activities of the young population >

(Unit: thousand persons, %, %p)

	May 2025				May 2026				Change			
	Young population	15~19	20~24	25~29	Young population	15~19	20~24	25~29	Young population	15~19	20~24	25~29
<Total>	7,974	2,233	2,357	3,384	7,822	2,284	2,228	3,310	-152	51	-129	-74
○ Economically active population	3,943	146	1,171	2,627	3,694	150	1,000	2,544	-250	5	-171	-83
- The employed	3,682	140	1,081	2,461	3,427	137	927	2,363	-255	-3	-153	-98
- The unemployed	262	6*	91	166	266	13*	72	181	5	8	-18	15
○ Economically inactive population	4,030	2,087	1,186	757	4,128	2,134	1,228	766	98	47	42	9
○ Labor force participation rate	49.5	6.5	49.7	77.6	47.2	6.6	44.9	76.9	-2.3	0.1	-4.8	-0.7
○ Employment-population ratio	46.2	6.3	45.8	72.7	43.8	6.0	41.6	71.4	-2.4	-0.3	-4.2	-1.3
○ Unemployment rate	6.6	3.8*	7.7	6.3	7.2	8.9*	7.2	7.1	0.6	5.0	-0.5	0.8

Note) Be careful when using figures with an asterisk due to a high relative standard error (25% or more).

□ It took 4 years and 5.7 months on average to graduate from a university (including a 2-year or 3-year college), which grew by 1.3 months year-on-year.

❍ The average duration of study for male college (or university) graduates was 5 years and 2.1 months, rising by 0.5 months year-on-year. The average duration of study for female college (or university) graduates was 3 years and 11.6 months, rising by 1.6 month year-on-year.

❍ Among people with the experience of taking time off from a college (or a university), their average duration of taking time off was 1 year and 9.9 months, dropping by 0.3 months year-on-year.

< Average duration for graduation by school type >



□ The young population with job experience while attending a school stood at 41.1%, which fell by 2.1%p year-on-year.

○ Regarding the main type of employment experience, 'Part-time employment' occupied the largest share at 74.2% (-0.8%p), which was followed by 'Full-time employment' (10.2%, +0.4%p) and 'On-the-spot internship' (8.3%, +0.4%p).

□ The young population with employment experience after graduation stood at 84.8%, which declined by 1.6%p year-on-year.

○ The graduates with one-time employment experience stood at 46.1%, which grew by 2.9%p year-on-year.

○ 27.0% of the young population with employment experience thought that their recent job was highly relevant to their major. This share went down by 0.3%p year-on-year.

○ Regarding the main activity of the unemployed or economically inactive young population, 'Vocational training and preparation for employment exams' occupied the largest share at 39.3%, falling by 1.2%p year-on-year. ‘Just spending time doing nothing’ occupied 25.3%, going up by 0.2%p year-on-year.

□ It took 11.2 months on average to get the first job as a wage worker after graduation, which decreased by 0.1 months year-on-year. The average service period of the first job was 1 year and 6.8 months, which rose by 0.4 months year-on-year.

○ Regarding the industry of the first job, 'Accommodation and food service activities' occupied the highest share at 15.9%, which was followed by 'Wholesale and retail trade' (12.4%). Regarding the occupation of the first job, 'Managers and professionals & related workers' occupied the highest share of 26.1%, which was followed by 'Service workers' (24.5%).

○ Regarding the wages of the first job, the largest share (42.1%) of the young population earned '2 million won ~ less than 3 million won'. This share was followed by '1.5 million won ~ less than 2 million won' (23.3%) and ‘0.5 million won ~ less than 1 million won' (11.8%).

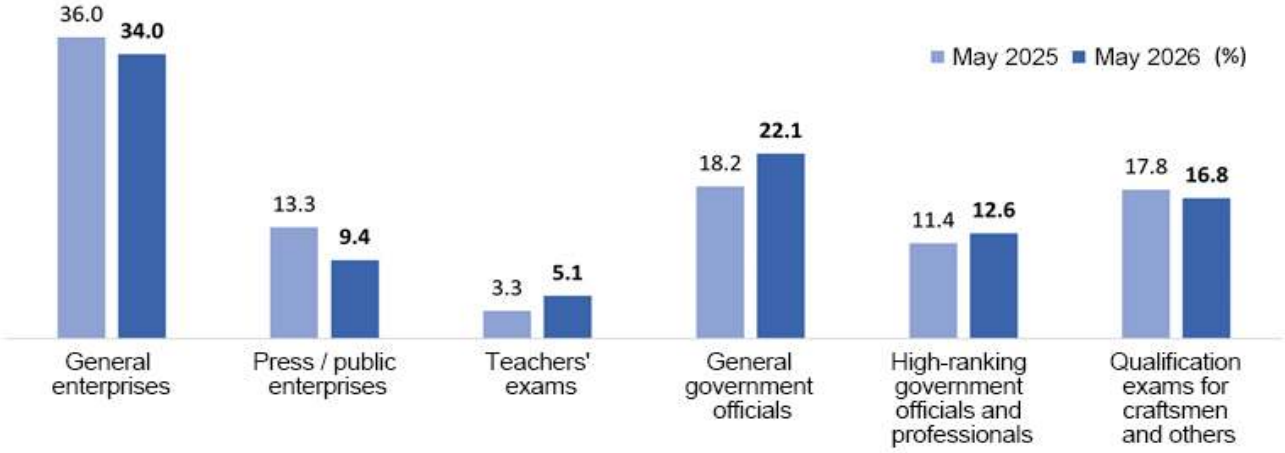
○ Regarding reasons for quitting the first job, 'Dissatisfaction with working conditions (including wages and hours worked)' occupied the largest share at 44.4%, down 2.0%p year-on-year.

□ 14.5% of the economically inactive young population prepared for employment exams, remaining the same year-on-year.

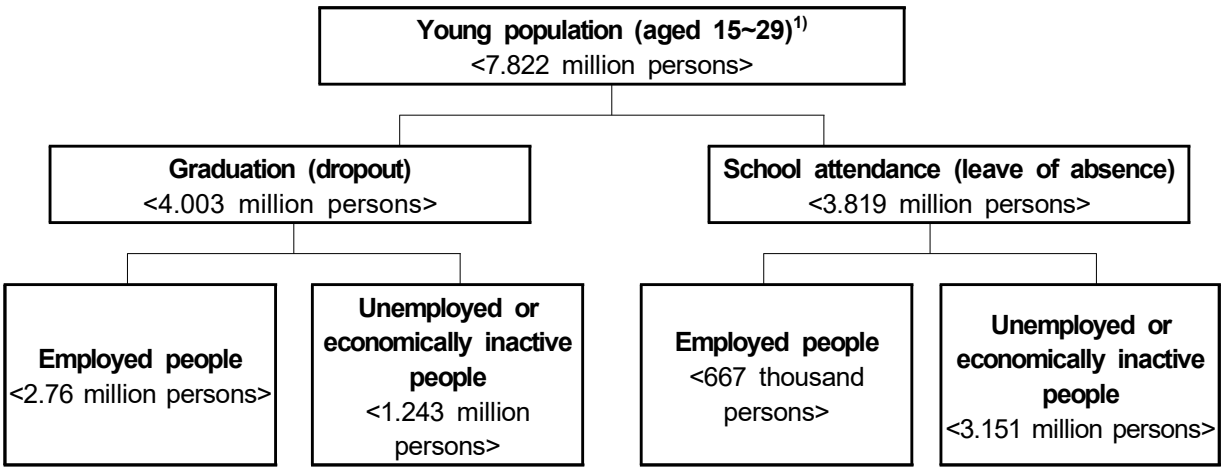
○ Regarding the preparation for employment exams*, the largest share of the economically inactive young population prepared for exams for 'General enterprises' (34.0%), which was followed by 'General government officials' (22.1%).

* The figures on the preparation for employment exams were based on the young population who prepared for exams for the past 1 week.

< Economically inactive young population's preparation for employment exams by sector >



< Composition of the Economically Active Population by Schooling Status >



< May 2026 >

(Unit: thousand persons, %, %p)

		Population	Employed		Unemployed		Economically inactive population
				Employment-population ratio		Unemployment rate	
Size	Total	45,984	29,120	63.3	878	2.9	15,986
	Young population[1)]	7,822	3,427	43.8	266	7.2	4,128
Change[2)]	Total	250	-40	-0.5	25	0.1	264
	Young population	-152	-255	-2.4	5	0.6	98

1) Including 'uneducated'
2) Compared to May 2025