

Singapore enhances work pass framework to attract top talent

31 August 2022

In brief

To strengthen Singapore's position as a global hub for talent, and enable companies to be more responsive to business needs, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) **announced, on 29 August 2022**, significant enhancements to the current work pass framework for foreigners.

Foreign work pass applicants and their employers should take note of the following developments:

- The new **Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass ("ONE Pass")** and related specific exemptions to the employer's foreign hiring, and local-foreign complementarity requirements
- Increased minimum salary requirement for the **Fair Consideration Framework (FCF)** job advertising exemption and **Personalised Employment Pass (PEP)** eligibility to SGD 22,500
- FCF job advertising timelines reduced from 28 to 14 days, and improved Employment Pass (EP) application processing times
- Five-year EP validity for experienced tech professionals

Please see below for our summary of the coming changes.

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ONE Pass

At the **Press Conference on Strengthening Singapore's Position as a Global Hub for Talent**, the Minister for Manpower emphasised the importance of drawing global "rain makers" to Singapore by introducing a new category of work passes, the new ONE Pass in addition to the EP, PEP, EntrePass and **Tech.Pass** (administered by the Singapore Economic Development Board) for professionals.

We set out below a comparison between the forthcoming ONE Pass and the current EP regimes.

	EP	ONE Pass (based on details released by the MOM on 29 August 2022)
Implementation date	(in force)	from 1 January 2023
Suitable for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign professionals, managers and executives with a job offer in Singapore who meet the eligibility criteria. • Higher-earning EP holders or overseas foreign professionals may also apply for a PEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOM, together with the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Communications and Information, will consider the ONE Pass as a "signature pass for top talent". The target group is talent comparable to the top 5% of EP holders. • Suitable applicants for the ONE Pass possess valuable networks, as well as



	EP	ONE Pass (based on details released by the MOM on 29 August 2022)									
		deep skills and expertise, which can help Singapore grow.									
Employee qualifying salary	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sectors</th> <th>Current</th> <th>New applications from 1 September 2022 Renewals from 1 September 2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>All</td> <td>SGD 4,500 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 8,400 for candidates in their mid-40s)</td> <td>SGD 5,000 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 10,500 for candidates in their mid-40s)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Financial services</td> <td>SGD 5,000 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 9,300 for candidates in their mid-40s)</td> <td>SGD 5,500 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 11,500 for candidates in their mid-40s)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sectors	Current	New applications from 1 September 2022 Renewals from 1 September 2023	All	SGD 4,500 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 8,400 for candidates in their mid-40s)	SGD 5,000 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 10,500 for candidates in their mid-40s)	Financial services	SGD 5,000 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 9,300 for candidates in their mid-40s)	SGD 5,500 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 11,500 for candidates in their mid-40s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONE Pass applicants must be earning a fixed monthly salary of at least SGD 30,000 within the last year or show that they will earn a fixed monthly salary of at least SGD 30,000 under their future employer based in Singapore. ONE Pass applicants who are not existing work pass holders will also need to demonstrate that they have worked or will be working for an established company (see "employer qualifying criteria" below). MOM will treat the fixed monthly salary as just one proxy. In addition to the salary criteria, the applicant and their employer must meet all of the qualifying criteria.
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Financial services	SGD 5,000 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 9,300 for candidates in their mid-40s)	SGD 5,500 (increases progressively with age, up to SGD 11,500 for candidates in their mid-40s)									
	Employers should expect MOM to issue regular updates to the EP qualifying salary to reflect local professional wage trends, taking into account prevailing economic conditions.										
Other employee qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates must have acceptable qualifications, usually a good university degree, professional qualifications or specialised skills. For new applications, candidates must pass the Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS) from 1 September 2023. For renewal of existing EPs, candidates must pass COMPASS from 1 September 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who do not meet the salary criterion must show outstanding achievements in the arts and culture, sports, science and technology, and research and academia. The MOM will release more details on the eligibility criteria for new applications and renewals under this route closer to 1 January 2023. 									
Employer qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current criteria for granting the EP primarily focus on the foreign individual applicant. However, MOM has introduced company-specific considerations for the employer when assessing the EP applications, and the EP online application form requires employers to disclose information about their hiring practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ONE Pass applicant must be an employee of an established foreign company OR they will be employed by an established company in Singapore. An established company is a company that has a market capitalisation of at least USD 500 million or an annual revenue of at least USD 200 million. 									
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-time candidates: up to two years Renewals: up to three years From 1 September 2023, experienced tech professionals with skills in shortage may apply for a longer five-year validity EP to provide employers experiencing a shortage in these particular skills with greater certainty in hiring and better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-time candidates: five years Renewals: five years 									



	EP	ONE Pass (based on details released by the MOM on 29 August 2022)
	workforce planning (see below for more details).	
Family passes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the EP holder earns at least SGD 6,000 a month, certain family members are allowed to join the EP holder in Singapore, subject to the family member meeting the requirements for a Dependant's Pass (DP) or a Long Term Visit Pass (LTVP). DP and LTVP holders who wish to work during their stay in Singapore, be it in part-time or temporary jobs, will need to apply for a relevant work pass, such as an EP, S Pass or Work Permit. The relevant qualifying salary, dependency ratio ceiling and levies for the respective work passes will apply. There is also a narrow exception applicable for DP holders who are business owners to work in Singapore on a Letter of Consent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certain family members are allowed to join the EP holder in Singapore, subject to the family member meeting the requirements for a DP or LTVP. The ONE Pass holder's spouse will be able to work in Singapore on a Letter of Consent. Other DP and LTVP holders who wish to work during their stay in Singapore, be it in part-time or temporary jobs, will need to apply for a relevant work pass, such as an EP, S Pass or Work Permit. The relevant qualifying salary, dependency ratio ceiling and levies for the respective work passes will apply. There is also a narrow exception applicable for DP holders who are business owners to work in Singapore on a Letter of Consent.
Local-foreign complementarity requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers must first advertise the job on MyCareersFuture for at least 28 consecutive days (to be reduced to 14 days from 1 September 2022) to allow Singaporean job seekers to view and apply for the vacancy. The advertisement and hiring process must comply with the FCF. EP candidates must also pass COMPASS from 1 September 2023, the points-based system which MOM will use to assess both employee and employer attributes to holistically evaluate an EP applicant's complementarity to the employer's Singaporean core. The exemption threshold for the FCF job advertising requirement and COMPASS is currently SGD 20,000, and will be raised to SGD 22,500 from 1 September 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONE Pass candidates who meet the employee qualifying salary will also qualify for FCF and COMPASS exemptions. MOM has assured that there will be no cap on the number of ONE Passes approved.
Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An EP holder must obtain a new pass if they change jobs. An EP holder cannot be transferred to a related company in Singapore without cancelling the EP and having the related company obtain a different EP. Where a company intends to appoint an EP holder from a related company to its Board of Directors, the company must first obtain a Letter of Consent from the MOM for this directorship. PEP holders are not allowed to start a business or conduct any form of entrepreneurial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONE Pass holders do not need to reapply for a new pass to change jobs. ONE Pass holders will be able to concurrently start, operate, and work for multiple companies at any one time.
Continuing obligations	<p>EP and PEP holders or their employers must notify MOM of changes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates to company name and address Changes in occupation Lowering of salary Change in EP holder's residential address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure ONE Pass holders are utilising the flexibilities accorded to contribute meaningfully, MOM will request the following information from the pass holders yearly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details on all professional activities over the past year



	EP	ONE Pass (based on details released by the MOM on 29 August 2022)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual salary earned from all professional activities The above information will contribute to MOM's assessment of eligibility for renewal.

Summary of other enhancements

The other enhancements proposed by MOM will take the form of relaxations to the current EP regime and expediting the application process.

Enhancement	Implementation Date
Five-year duration EP for experienced tech professionals: The candidate must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be employed in a specific tech occupation on the COMPASS Shortage Occupation List (SOL). MOM will announce the first SOL in March 2023. Earn a fixed monthly salary of at least SGD 10,500 (for candidates aged 36 and above, the salary required increases with age up to a maximum of SGD 13,500 at age 45 and beyond). Pass COMPASS and score at least 10 points on Criterion 3 (Diversity). 	September 2023
Reduction of the FCF job advertising duration from 28 days to 14 days	1 September 2022
Reduced processing time for EP applications – EP applications will be processed, or an update will be given to employers, within 10 business days.	(with immediate effect)

Preparing for the coming changes

MOM has noted that the new ONE Pass and the relaxations to the local-foreign complementarity requirements will affect talent comparable to the top 5% and 10% of the current EP holders respectively. We would be happy to provide further information on how the coming changes will affect employers, particularly those that meet the "established company" criteria, which currently employ these EP holders as well as applicants who may be interested in this new work pass.

For those interested in recent work pass developments and COMPASS, please see our previous alerts:

- [New pass to attract top global tech talents in January 2021](#)
- [Policies announced to support the Singapore workforce, deter nationality discrimination](#)
- [Budget 2022 employment updates - work pass qualifying salaries to increase](#)
- [Minister for Manpower introduces points-based rubric for EP applicants](#)



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