



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Singapore – New ONE Pass and Other Key Immigration Enhancements

Amid intensifying competition for global talent, Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has announced a series of enhancements to Singapore's work pass framework,¹ to take effect from September 2022 until September 2023.² Among these key changes is the introduction of an Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass (ONE Pass) to attract high-calibre foreign talent across all sectors.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Individuals who will receive the new ONE Pass will benefit from the flexibility to work and engage with multiple companies at the same time. As a personalised pass which does not require employer sponsorship, it enables the holder to work under more than one employer and job role, and to change jobs without applying for a new work pass. The ONE pass-holders' spouses will be able to obtain a Letter of Consent, compared to spouses of other work pass holders who must qualify for and obtain their own work pass.

With the qualifying criteria set so high, the ONE Pass meets the government's aim of attracting "top-grade" foreign talent to Singapore. It also gives international companies another option to bring in this level of employee with greater flexibility compared to the Employment Pass (EP) or other existing pass types.

At the same time, for all other positions, employers continue to be expected to fairly consider Singaporean citizens and residents before hiring foreign nationals.

New Top Talent Pass – the ONE Pass

From 1 January 2023, the MOM will accept applications from high-earners and highly-talented individuals for a new Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass (ONE Pass), a personalised, five-year work pass which will allow the holder to start, operate, and

work for multiple companies in Singapore at the same time.

Eligibility

Candidates will need to earn a fixed monthly salary of at least SGD 30,000, comparable to the top 5% of Employment Pass (EP) holders. Individuals with outstanding achievements in the fields of arts and culture, sports, science and technology, and research and academia can qualify for the new pass even if they do not earn SGD 30,000 or above.

[Source: www.xxe.com – SGD 1 = USD 0.716 | SGD 1 = 0.707 | SGD 1 = 0.613 | SGD 1 = AUD 1.039]

Overseas candidates will need to show that they have worked for an established company overseas for at least one year or will be working for an established company in Singapore. As guided by the MOM, an established company is one which has a market capitalisation of at least USD 500 million, or an annual revenue of at least USD 200 million.

The ONE Pass is applied for directly by the individual, and does not require employer sponsorship.

Other ONE Pass Details

The pass is renewable for five years each time; the MOM will release details regarding the requirements for annual notification and eligibility for renewal.

The pass holder's spouse will be able to work on a Letter of Consent.

ONE Pass holders will not be subject to the Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS)³ and employers who wish to hire them will not be subject to the Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) job advertising requirement.

More details will be released closer to January 2023.

New Single Salary Benchmark

Currently, EP holders earning a fixed monthly salary of SGD 20,000 and above are exempted from the FCF job advertising requirement, and the upcoming COMPASS.

Also currently, the minimum fixed monthly salary to apply for a Personalised Employment Pass (PEP) is SGD 12,000 for existing EP holders, and SGD 18,000 for overseas applicants.⁴

From 1 September 2023, the MOM will align a single salary benchmark of SGD 22,500 as the minimum threshold for the FCF job advertising exemption, COMPASS, and PEP applications. The minimum SGD 22,500 is pegged to the top 10 percent of EP holders, to be reviewed annually.

Five-Year EP Option

With the launch of COMPASS on 1 September 2023, a five-year EP option will be introduced for candidates who meet all of these criteria:

- a) Fill specific “tech” occupations on the COMPASS Shortage Occupation List (SOL);
- b) Earn a fixed monthly salary of at least SGD 10,500 (older candidates need higher salaries to qualify); and
- c) Pass COMPASS and score at least 10 points on the Diversity criterion.

The MOM is expected to release the SOL in March 2023 or sooner.

The standard EP is issued for two years, renewable for three years at a time. Receiving a five-year EP would give qualifying EP candidates more security and incentivise employers that hire these experienced tech professionals who are in high demand.

Shorter Job Ad Duration and EP Application Processing

From 1 September 2022, the MOM restored the FCF job advertising duration for EP and S Pass applications to 14 days, from 28 days previously. It may be recalled that the duration was increased to 28 days in October 2020 to give jobseekers more time to respond to advertisements amid a job market weakened by the pandemic (for related coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2020-391](#), 8 September 2020).

The MOM also relayed that it has performed technological upgrades to its application systems to enable faster application processing. As a result, EP applications are now processed, or an update will be provided, within 10 business days from submission. Previously, the standard EP application processing time was up to three weeks.

KPMG NOTE

As countries compete to attract top-notch foreign talent, Singapore joins countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom that offer a global talent visa.

It will be interesting to see how Singapore will develop the ONE Pass pathway alongside other personalised passes, such as the PEP and the Tech Pass. Like the ONE Pass, the Tech Pass⁵ also allows its holder to start, operate, and work for more than one Singapore entity although it was created particularly for highly-successful leaders and experts in the tech industry.

The new pass will instil more tiers within Singapore's foreign professional workforce, with ONE Pass holders occupying the most senior positions, followed by PEP and Tech Pass holders (as applicable), and then EP and S Pass holders.

Further announcements are expected to follow, as the launch of COMPASS draws closer. We will endeavour to report on related developments as they happen.

FOOTNOTES:

1 For related coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2022-056](#), 15 March 2022.

2 See MOM Press Release dated 29 August 2022 on MOM website: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/press-releases/2022/0829-strengthening-singapores-position-as-a-global-hub-for-talent>.

3 For related coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2022-056](#), 15 March 2022.

4 Ibid.

5 See [GMS Flash Alert 2020-476](#), 1 December 2020.

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