

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Singapore - New Education Verification Requirement for Employment Pass Applications/Renewals

The Singapore Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has announced that educational qualifications declared in Employment Pass (EP) applications from 1 September 2023, and in EP renewals from 1 September 2024, have to be supported by verification proof issued by one of the [background screening companies approved by MOM](#).¹

WHY THIS MATTERS

The new requirement is timed with the implementation of the Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS) for EP applications.² It places the responsibility on employers to make sure that their candidates' qualifications are authentic and were awarded by institutions recognised by MOM. Verification is especially important for applications which need points from the qualifications criterion in order to pass the COMPASS assessment.

The additional step of securing verification proof could create delays in EP application processing if not properly planned. Employers and their job candidates should allocate four weeks or more to procure the verification, and should recognise that the timing is affected by the educational institution's response time. Candidates should carefully consider securing their verification proof as early as possible to be more work-ready for Singapore, and recruiters/HR should consider requesting it upfront from candidates at offer stage.

Details

The verification proof consists of a confirmation document issued by the MOM-approved screening company which checks whether: 1) the certificate provided by the candidate is authentic, and 2) it was awarded by an educational institution included in MOM's list of approved institutions.

Verification is required for all post-secondary diploma qualifications and higher that are declared in the EP application. The verification exercise is one-off, meaning that the EP candidates will only do it once and their subsequent employers will not

need to verify again. If the candidate's qualifications have been verified before, the MOM system will have the record and employers will not be prompted to upload a verification proof.

In addition, MOM is reviewing its list of approved background screening companies. An updated list of background screening companies will be released by MOM in June 2023.

To date, MOM has not advised if the verification requirement will be extended to S Pass applications in the future.

KPMG INSIGHTS

The Singapore government has been releasing details on COMPASS's four foundational criteria progressively since early last year. With the recently-announced third-party verification for academic credentials, and with further details for the two bonus criteria (the Skills Bonus and the Strategic Economic Priorities Bonus) expected to be released by the end of March 2023, the COMPASS framework is shaping up more fully as the 1 September 2023 launch date draws near.

Companies that already engage, or who are planning to engage, background screening companies for pre-employment checks should consider the updated list of MOM-approved companies planned for release in June 2023.

FOOTNOTES:

1 The announcement was made in a speech by the Minister for Manpower at Committee of Supply 2023 on 1 March 2023. The full text of the speech is available [here](#).

2 See [GMS Flash Alert 2022-056](#), 15 March 2022.

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