

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Singapore – New COMPASS Framework Launch Draws Near

As a reminder, from 1 September 2023, the Singapore Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will implement a points-based Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS) for new Employment Pass (EP) applications. (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2023-102](#), 17 May 2023.) The new framework will apply to EP renewals for passes expiring from 1 September 2024. Under COMPASS, in addition to meeting salary requirements, EP applications will need to score at least 40 points on four foundational criteria with bonus criteria, for skills in shortage and strategic economic priorities programmes, to assure complementarity with Singaporean employees.¹

As part of the COMPASS rollout, the MOM will make it mandatory for EP candidates to obtain verification/proof for educational qualifications declared in EP applications.²

WHY THIS MATTERS

COMPASS marks a watershed for Singapore workforce fair consideration policies, as it enables employers to access talent from around the world while duly considering suitability and complementarity in respect of locally available talent. Under COMPASS, how employers plan and manage their local workforce as well as the diversity in their foreign hires will have direct impacts for securing new global talent and their retention.

Alongside COMPASS, Singapore actively competes on the global stage to attract high-earners and highly-talented individuals through its Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass (ONE Pass) programme, which it launched in January 2023.⁴ In promoting personal work passes such as the ONE Pass, Personalised Employment Pass, and Tech Pass (which are obtained by the pass holder under his/her own sponsorship), there is a premium being placed on the employability of high-achieving foreign professionals and on incentivising them to choose Singapore. This translates potentially to more choices for companies to access global talent, especially those who qualify for the most senior positions as well as key strategic roles. This is expected to also allow the local workforce to benefit from the transfer of knowledge from these top talented employees.

More Details

The MOM has also enhanced its Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) to enable employers to assess EP applications in accordance with COMPASS evaluation criteria. The enhanced SAT was made available to employers from 1 August 2023, but is designed to only assess applications that will be submitted from 1 September 2023, and not any earlier. The enhanced SAT promotes predictability by letting employers know if the application will likely be successful, as well as transparency in COMPASS scoring since it breaks down the points earned in each of the foundational and bonus criteria. Employers may also use the enhanced SAT to assess if S Pass candidates will meet the new qualifying salaries from 1 September 2023.³ The enhanced SAT is accessible by a company's authorised personnel by logging in to the entity's EP eService portal.

Please refer to the MOM's COMPASS page for the [complete details of framework criteria](#), including salary benchmarking for different age groups and sectors, top-tier institutions, and bonuses for skills in shortage and strategic economic priorities.

KPMG NOTE

COMPASS's comprehensive approach to workforce planning presents opportunities as well as challenges for Singapore employers. It is vital that employers understand how they are meeting overall COMPASS criteria, and to identify the areas they may need to work on to help avoid challenges for future hiring and renewals. Employers are encouraged to plan holistically, and to consult with their usual immigration counsel or adviser or a member of the Immigration team with KPMG in Singapore.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Please see our detailed coverage of COMPASS and related developments in [GMS Flash Alert 2022-056](#) (15 March 2022), [GMS Flash Alert 2022-161](#) (13 September 2022), and [GMS Flash Alert 2023-102](#) (17 May 2023).

2 See [GMS Flash Alert 2023-069](#) (30 March 2023).

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

4 See [GMS Flash Alert 2022-161](#) (13 September 2022).

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Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Singapore:



Anna Low
**Partner, Personal Tax &
Global Mobility Services**
Tel. + 65 6213 2547
alow@kpmg.com.sg



Lee Yiew Hwa
**Principal Advisor, Personal Tax &
Global Mobility Services**
Tel. + 65 6213 2866
yiewhwalee@kpmg.com.sg



Jo Ann Adams
**Senior Manager
Immigration**
Tel. + 65 6213 3165
joannadams@kpmg.com.sg

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