

Mobility: Immigration alert

March 2023



Singapore

Stricter verification requirements for Employment Pass applicants under the COMPASS framework

Executive summary

On 1 March 2023, the Singapore Ministry of Manpower (MOM) announced it will implement stricter verification requirements for certain Employment Pass (EP) applicants under the new Complementarity Assessment ([COMPASS](#)) framework, starting on 1 September 2023.

Background

On 1 September 2023, the Singaporean authorities will launch the COMPASS framework to determine foreign workers' eligibility for EPs. Under COMPASS, an applicant must score at least 40 points on four foundational criteria (i.e., salary, qualifications, diversity and support for local employment) and two bonus criteria (i.e., skills and strategic economic priorities). In general, the maximum score is 20 per criterion, except for strategic economic priorities, where the maximum score is 10. The COMPASS framework will go into effect on 1 September 2023 for new applications and 1 September 2024 for renewal applications.

Key developments

Once the COMPASS framework is launched, companies that sponsor foreign nationals who hold a post-secondary diploma or above to obtain EPs must verify their educational qualifications (i.e., educational certificates) via an authorized [background check agency](#) and submit proof of verification while filing the application. Companies that apply to renew their employees' EPs must start doing the same from 1 September 2024.

The proof of verification must:

- ▶ Be in English, or accompanied by an English translation if it is not in English
- ▶ Confirm that the qualifications are authentic and issued by an accredited institution

Applicants who hold qualifications issued by educational institutions in India or China Mainland may refer to the specific [requirements](#) applicable to them.

Currently, companies that sponsor EPs are required to furnish proof of verification of applicants' educational qualifications only if they have a diploma or above issued by an institution that is not recognized by the MOM. The MOM is expected to release further details regarding the upcoming change closer to the implementation date.

Impact on employers

Employers may consider the impact of the new requirements on their hiring policies and their options for background check agencies, as well as commencing relevant verification checks in advance, to ensure compliance with the new requirements once they go into effect.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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ED None

ey.com

Panneer Palaniandy
Partner and ASEAN Mobility Lead - People Advisory Services
Tel: +65 6309 8483
Email: panneer.selvam@sg.ey.com

Lily Cheang
Associate Partner - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +65 6309 8670
Email: lily.cheang@sg.ey.com

Tina Leong
Associate Director - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +65 6309 6617
Email: tina.leong@sg.ey.com

Angelina Liew
Associate Director - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +65 6309 8257
Email: angelina.liew@sg.ey.com

Raine NG
Manager - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +65 6718 1233
Email: raine.ng@sg.ey.com