

Mobility: Immigration alert

April 2023



Singapore

Updates to the scoring criteria under the new Complementary Assessment framework

Executive summary

On 31 March 2023, the Singapore Ministry of Manpower (MoM) released further details regarding the Qualifications, Shortage Occupations List (SOL) and Strategic Economic Priorities (SEP) scoring criteria under the [COMPASS](#) framework.

Background

COMPASS is Singapore's upcoming points-based system for evaluating Employment Pass (EP) applicants based on a set of individual and employer-related attributes. Applicants must score at least 40 points across four foundational attributes (salary, qualifications, diversity, support for local employment) and two bonus criteria (SOL and SEP) to qualify under this framework. COMPASS will apply to new EP applications filed on or after 1 September 2023 and applications to renew passes that expire on or after 1 September 2024.

Criterion 2: Qualifications

On 31 March 2023, the MoM announced that applicants must have a degree from an approved [top-tier institution](#) to receive full points under the Qualifications criterion. Individuals who have a degree from a Group A institute in the list above will score 20 points, while those who have a degree from a Group B institute will score 20 points only if they have a degree from a specific faculty. When submitting an EP application, employers must select the relevant institute and faculty under the "Qualification" and "Faculty" sections.

Applicants who have one of the following "degree-equivalent" qualifications will score 10 points:

- ▶ Qualifications issued by institutes located abroad that are considered comparable to a bachelor's degree issued in the UK (based on assessments by authorized international bodies)
- ▶ Professional qualifications that are recognized by specific industries and endorsed by relevant government agencies

Criterion 5: Skills (Shortage Occupations List)

To score up to 20 bonus points under this criterion, employers must demonstrate that the applicant holds a role that matches the job description and duties of an occupation included in the [SOL](#) and select an eligible job title when filing the EP application. The MoM is expected to release a guide for employers that will provide further details regarding the SOL criterion (e.g., eligible job titles, additional document requirements) in the coming months. The MoM will review and update the occupations on the SOL annually.

Criterion 6: Strategic Economic Priorities

The MoM recently announced that to qualify for the SEP bonus, companies must participate in one of 15 [eligible programs](#) and demonstrate a commitment to developing the local workforce. Companies who fulfil the requirements of the program they are enrolled in will receive the SEP bonus for each applicant they sponsor for up to three years initially

(depending on the program duration and subject to the discretion of the government agencies in charge of the program). After this initial period, companies must score at least 10 points each on the Diversity and Support for Local Employment criteria to remain eligible for the SEP bonus. Companies that will be awarded the SEP bonus this year will be notified by the MoM by the end of July 2023.

Impact on employers

Employers may consider the latest updates regarding the new requirements under the COMPASS framework when assessing EP applicants and sponsoring applications. Companies that seek to employ highly specialized professionals with niche skillsets may be able to take advantage of the SOL bonus points when filing future EP applications under COMPASS. Companies may also be able to gain additional bonus points by participating in one of the 15 eligible SEP programs or considering candidates with degree-equivalent qualifications from the MOM's list of top-tier institutions. Finally, since COMPASS will apply to EP renewal applications starting next year, companies may review their existing foreign workforce and identify employees who may have issues obtaining the points necessary to be eligible for renewals.

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 Selvam Palaniandy
Partner - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
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