

Mobility: Immigration alert

March 2022



Singapore

Singapore introduces new points-based COMPASS immigration framework

Executive summary

The Singaporean Government recently announced that it will introduce a new points-based Complementarity Assessment (COMPASS) framework to determine foreign workers' eligibility for Employment Passes (EP). The COMPASS framework will come into effect on 1 September 2023 for new EP applications and 1 September 2024 for EP renewal applications.

Eligibility criteria

The COMPASS framework aims to ensure a strong core labor market and workforce diversity, and attract high-quality foreign employees to take on positions as professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMET) in Singapore.

Under the COMPASS framework, an applicant must score at least 40 points on four foundational and two bonus criteria. In general, the maximum score is 20 per criterion (except for strategic economic priorities, where the maximum score is 10). Applicants will be assessed on the following individual and firm-related criteria:

- ▶ **Salary.** Applicants must meet salary criteria that vary based on their age and industry sector. To score maximum points for this criterion, the applicant's salary must equal or exceed

the salary paid out to the top 90th percentile of the PMET workforce in their industry sector

- ▶ **Qualifications.** To score maximum points for this criterion, the applicant must have an academic qualification from a top-tier institution, as determined by the Singaporean authorities
- ▶ **Diversity.** To score maximum points for this criterion, less than 5% of the Singaporean company's workforce must be of the same nationality as the applicant
- ▶ **Support for local employment.** To score maximum points for this criterion, the Singaporean company must have more local employees than the top 50th percentile of companies in its subsector
- ▶ **Skills bonus.** To score maximum points for this criterion, applicants must hold a job that is included in Singapore's Shortage Occupation List (SOL). The SOL contains occupations requiring highly specialized skills that are currently in shortage in the local workforce, and it will be released by March 2023
- ▶ **Strategic economic priorities bonus.** To score maximum points for this criterion, the Singaporean company must participate in specific programs run by authorized agencies or meet certain assessment criteria, and demonstrate its commitment to developing the local workforce or ecosystem

	Individual attributes	Firm-related attributes
Foundational criteria	C1. Salary - Relative to local PMET salary norms for the sector ≥ 90th percentile: 20 points 65th to 90th percentile: 10 points < 65th percentile: 0 point	C3. Diversity - Whether candidate improves nationality diversity in the firm ¹ < 5%: 20 points 5 to 25%: 10 points ≥ 25%: 0 point
	C2. Qualifications - Based on the candidate's qualifications Top tier institution: 20 points Degree-equivalent qualification: 10 points No degree-equivalent qualification: 0 point	C4. Support for local employment - Based on local PMET share relative to industry peers ^{1&2} ≥ 50th percentile: 20 points 20th to 50th percentile: 10 points <20th percentile: 0 point
Bonus criteria	C5. Skills bonus (Shortage Occupation List) - For candidates in jobs where skills shortages exist Job on the shortage occupation list: +20 points ³	C6. Strategic economic priorities bonus - For partnership with Government on ambitious innovation or internationalization activities Firm meets specific assessment criteria on innovation or internationalization activities: +10 points
<small>1. Small companies with fewer than 25 PMETs score 10 points by default on C3 and C4. According to the Ministry of Manpower, all employees earning at least SGD 3,000 a month are considered PMETs 2. If a firm's local PMET share is at least 70% (pegged to the 20th percentile of firms in the entire economy), the applicant will earn at least 10 points 3. The skills bonus is reduced to +10 if the one-third or more of the company's workforce are of the same nationality as the applicant</small>		

For additional details regarding the COMPASS framework, click [here](#).

Exemptions from COMPASS

EP applicants are not required to meet the COMPASS criteria if they:

- ▶ Earn a fixed monthly salary of at least SGD 20,000, or
- ▶ Apply as an overseas intra-corporate transferee under the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services or an applicable free trade agreement to which Singapore is a party, or
- ▶ Fill a role on a short-term basis (i.e., one month or less)

Enhanced transparency and certainty for employers

The Singaporean Government announced that it will introduce a Pre-Assessment Tool to support companies in assessing the viability of EP applications that they sponsor under the COMPASS framework (i.e., the likelihood that the application will be approved). In doing so, the COMPASS framework will enhance transparency and clarity for Singaporean companies that sponsor foreigners to work in Singapore.

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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EYG no. 00XXX-22Gbl

2101-3682263
ED None

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