



# Success in Singapore: Immigration Essentials for Business

With its vibrant, globally connected economy and competitive business climate, Singapore is historically the top business destination in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. One key to success in Singapore is the ability of companies to effectively employ and deploy foreign talent to Singapore. The corporate immigration professionals in Newland Chase's Singapore office offer this brief guide to the common work authorisations and dependant visa options for foreign nationals and their families living and working in APAC's most dynamic business destination.

## Common Work Authorisations

The Singapore **Ministry of Manpower** has essentially three primary categories of work authorisation for foreign nationals to work in Singapore: the Work Pass, the S Pass, and the Work Permit, with the Work Pass category having multiple routes depending on sponsorship, salary, and activities.

### WORK PASS

The **Work Pass** category includes several types of work authorisations applicable to professionals, managers, and executives. Applicants in this category must demonstrate university degrees and/or appropriate professional qualifications. No quotas apply in the Work Pass category.

**Employment Pass (EP)** is the route applicable for both corporate transfers and local hires. The EP requires company sponsorship and a minimum monthly salary of S\$3,600.

**Personalised Employment Pass (PEP)** is the route applicable for self-sponsored high earning professionals. While no company sponsorship is required, overseas applicants must demonstrate a minimum monthly salary of S\$18,000. Current EP holders who wish to switch to PEP must earn at least S\$12,000 per month.

**Training Employment Pass (TEP)** is the route applicable for short-term practical training for periods of up to three

months. The TEP generally requires company sponsorship and a minimum monthly salary of S\$3,000.

**Miscellaneous Work Pass** is the route applicable for short-term assignments of up to 60 days. Common uses of this route include seminar speakers, journalists, and religious workers.

**Work Pass Exempt (WPE) Activities** is the route applicable for certain unique activities such as specialised services, exhibitions, location filming, etc. Available for periods of up to 90 days per calendar year, this route generally carries narrow conditions regulating the permissible activities.

### S PASS

The **S Pass** category is the route applicable for skilled workers and technicians. Applicants in this category must demonstrate university degrees, diplomas, technical certificates, and/or relevant work experience. The S Pass requires company sponsorship and a minimum monthly salary of S\$2,300. This category is subject to a quota allowing no more than 15 percent of a service sector company's total workforce to consist of foreign nationals and no more than 20 percent of a company's total workforce to consist of foreign nationals in other industry sectors. This category is also subject to a financial levy in a range of S\$330 to S\$650 per month.

## WORK PERMIT

The **Work Permit** category is the route applicable for blue-collar workers. The Work Permit requires company sponsorship, but no salary minimum applies. This category is subject to quotas allowing no more than a range of 40 percent to 87.5 percent of a company's total workforce to consist of foreign nationals, depending on the industry sector. This category is also subject to a financial levy in a range of S\$250 to S\$950 per month.

## Fair Consideration Framework (FCF)

Introduced in 2014, the **Fair Consideration Framework (FCF)** is designed to create a level playing field on which both foreign and Singaporean national applicants compete for jobs in Singapore. The FCF requires employers in Singapore submitting Employment Pass (EP) applications to first advertise the job vacancy on the Workforce Singapore (WSG) *Jobs Bank* and give any Singaporean applicants *fair consideration* before hiring a foreign national.

Exemptions from the requirements of the advertising and fair consideration requirements include:

- Companies with less than ten employees
- Job positions with monthly salaries of S\$15,000 or higher
- Intra-corporate transfer (ICT) positions
- Short-term assignments of up to 30 days

Recent years have seen a marked increase in application and enforcement of the FCF. Failure to comply with the FCF requirements can result in rejection of work pass applications, companies being placed on a watch list for future applications (*resulting in longer processing times and heightened application scrutiny and requirements*), and work pass privileges being curtailed.

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## Visas for Dependents

### DEPENDANT PASS (DP)

The **Dependant Pass (DP)** is the route for legally married spouses and unmarried dependant children under age 21 to accompany the primary pass holder for residence in Singapore. To be eligible for the DP, the primary pass holder (*EP, PEP, or S Pass holder*) must demonstrate a minimum monthly salary of S\$6,000.

Holders of DPs whose primary pass holder in an EP or PEP holder can be authorised to work in Singapore with a *Letter of Consent*. However, holders of DPs whose primary pass holder is an S Pass holder must obtain independent passes or permits in order to work in Singapore.

### LONG TERM VISIT PASS (LTVP)

The **Long Term Visit Pass (LTVP)** is the route for common-law spouses, handicapped dependant children age 21 and over, and dependant parents to accompany the primary pass holder for long-term visits to Singapore. To be eligible for the LTVP for common-law spouses and handicapped dependant children, the primary pass holder (*EP, PEP, or S Pass holder*) must demonstrate a minimum monthly salary of S\$6,000. To be eligible for the LTVP for dependant parents, the primary pass holder (*EP, PEP, or S Pass holder*) must demonstrate a minimum monthly salary of S\$12,000.

Holders of LTVPs must obtain independent passes or permits in order to work in Singapore and may also require Student Passes in order to attend some schools in Singapore.

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