

# Immigration Guide

## Singapore



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## Entry Visa

Most passport holders are eligible to enter Singapore, for limited purposes, without requiring a visa in advance.

Certain nationals, including those from India, PRC China and Russia, are required to obtain an Entry Visa prior to entering Singapore. This will involve submission of an advance application to the Singapore Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) or the Singapore Embassy in their home location. The ICA website ([www.ica.gov.sg](http://www.ica.gov.sg)) provides a list of those nationals who must obtain an Entry Visa prior to entry into Singapore.

The Short Term Visit Pass that is granted to all visitors on entry by the immigration checkpoints typically ranges from 30–90 days. An extension of stay may be applied for prior to the expiry of the duration granted.

## Business Visitor

Foreigners can enter Singapore as a Business Visitor on the Short Term Visit Pass granted upon entry provided the scope of their activities are limited to:

- Meetings
- Negotiations
- Discussions
- Fact finding missions
- Exploring business opportunities

## Work Pass Exempt Activities

The Work Pass Exempt Activities (WPEA) scheme covers certain work activities that are of short duration and sporadic in nature. Some of them also require specialist skills or expertise that is generally not available in Singapore.

Foreigners are permitted to ‘work’ for the length of their Short Term Visit Pass (up to a maximum of 60 days) provided they fall under one of the categories listed by the Ministry of Manpower (MoM) which include:

- Organising or conducting training, speaking or facilitating at a seminar, workshop or conference providing the subject matter does not include race, religion or politics
- Participation in any exhibition or trade fair as an exhibitor or trader
- The commissioning or audit of new plant or equipment
- Activities relating to the installation, dismantling, transfer, repair or maintenance of any equipment, process or machine
- Journalist activities supported by Singaporean government or agency
- Activities relating to sports competition, event or training supported by Singaporean government or agency
- Arbitration or mediation services providing the subject matter does not include race, religion or politics

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- Junket activities
- Facilitating of a tour by tour leaders/facilitators employed by a foreign company

Upon arrival in Singapore, the foreigner (or someone on their behalf) must complete an e-notification procedure online. Following submission, a letter of acknowledgment is issued which must be carried by the individual while in Singapore.

## Employment Pass

With the exception of the Business Visitor and the WPEA categories, all foreigners who intend to work in Singapore must obtain a valid Employment Pass prior to commencing work. This is the case irrespective of where the individual is being remunerated or where their employment contract is signed. The duration of the assignment is also not a factor therefore strictly speaking, even if someone is coming to work for a day or two, an Employment Pass is required.

The category of Employment Pass issued will be determined by factors including the salary, qualifications and the professional position of the applicant.

## Family Members

If a foreigner's non-working spouse or children accompany them to Singapore, they must apply for a Dependant's Pass. If the accompanying dependants intend to work, they have the option to apply for a Letter of Consent (tied to the approved Dependant's Pass) or secure an Employment Pass separately through their own employer.

An unmarried partner will be required to apply for a Long Term Visit Pass. If they later wish to work in Singapore it will be necessary to cancel this pass and apply for their own Employment Pass. Singapore Immigration regulations do not recognise same sex partners.

## Application Process

All applications will be submitted to the MoM, either using the online system or manually. Once approved, the successful applicant must be in Singapore at the time the pass is issued.

Passes are typically valid for a two year period and an application to renew is available.

## Supporting Documents

Documents to support the Employment Pass application will typically include education certificates, passport sized photos and a copy of the passport details page. For Dependant's Pass applications, a copy of the marriage/birth certificates will also be required. An official translation will be required if documents are not in English.

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## Sponsorship of Passes

Applications for a pass (including Employment Pass and Dependant's Pass) must be sponsored by a Singapore entity. This need not be the "employer" of the assignee but should be the entity for which the individual is working while in Singapore. The sponsor will be required to provide some company information and documents and to provide an authorised signature and stamp on the application documentation. The sponsoring company will confirm ultimate responsibility for the individual's stay, maintenance and repatriation.

## Timeline

The processing time for an Employment Pass application is approximately four to six weeks for a manual application or one to two weeks using the online system. Some applications, for example relating to a newly established entity, may require a longer processing time.

## Alternative Immigration Options

Other options available to foreigners seeking to reside in Singapore may include:

### Personalised Employment Pass (PEP)

Certain Employment Pass holders or qualifying foreign professionals are eligible to apply for a PEP. This pass does not require sponsorship by a Singapore entity, as it is tied to the individual applicant. The individual is also able to sponsor the passes for accompanying family members. The pass is typically granted for a one-time five-year period and is not renewable.

### Singapore Permanent Residence (SPR)

Certain categories of foreigners are eligible to apply for SPR, including existing Employment Pass holders and their families. Investors or entrepreneurs may also be eligible under the Global Investor Programme or the Financial Investor Scheme. These may include investment of funds into recognised Singapore bank accounts or business start-ups or expansion. Options to buy property for residential purposes can also form part of such investment.

### Employment Pass Eligibility Certificate (EPEC)

The EPEC enables eligible foreigners, who have not worked in Singapore previously, to remain for up to one year to seek job opportunities. Those making an application must either hold selected university qualifications or be a current/former holder of selected skilled migrant visas.

### EntrePass

Foreign entrepreneurs seeking to establish a business in Singapore may be eligible to apply for the EntrePass via the MoM. A business plan is required to be submitted as part of the application process.

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## Non-compliance

Non-compliance or falsely declaring salary, academic qualifications, or submitting forged documents with the application is an offence. Upon conviction, the person or company would be liable to a fine and/or a jail term.

## Contact

This Guide is intended to provide a general overview of the immigration requirements and options for foreigners seeking to reside and work in Singapore. For advice relating to a specific immigration matter please contact:

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*Last updated: July 2010*