Singapore Employment Pass Requirements and COMPASS Explained

Globevisa Group analyzes Singapore's Employment Pass (EP) and COMPASS framework, detailing compliance standards, salary benchmarks, and structuring insights.



Singapore's iconic Marina Bay Sands and financial district, representing a premier jurisdiction for international entrepreneurs.

SG, SINGAPORE, September 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Singapore, with a 17% corporate income tax rate, a territorial tax principle, and a bilingual education system, is a destination considered by some companies for international business expansion and by international individuals for work and residency planning. Its tax framework, transparent business environment, and education resources continue to attract foreign professionals and entrepreneurs.

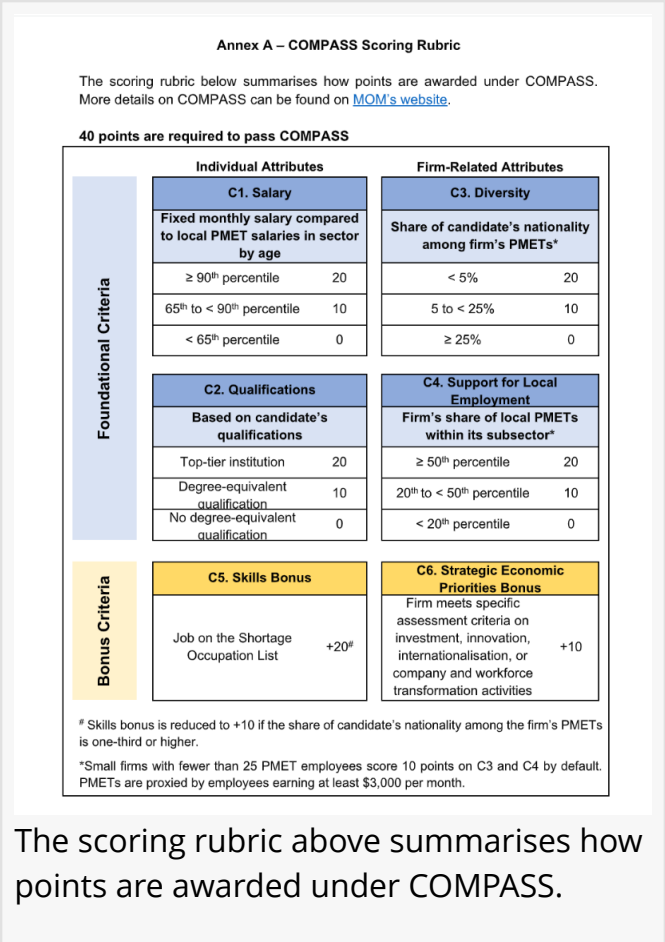
As a Singapore-headquartered global wealth and identity planning consultancy, Globevisa Group has observed through its work with international clients seeking to establish themselves in Singapore that the Employment Pass (EP) is one of the main work passes available to eligible foreign professionals and business executives.

Key Structures and Features of the Singapore Employment Pass

The Singapore Employment Pass (EP) is a work pass reviewed and issued by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) for eligible foreign professionals and managers. In practice, Singapore EP applications may involve several common structures:

Self-Employed EP: The applicant establishes a company in Singapore and takes on a management role. This structure is generally used by entrepreneurs with a defined business plan. Once the company has been incorporated in accordance with applicable requirements, the EP application process can begin.

PIC Model (Private Investment Company): The applicant establishes a private investment company in Singapore and takes on a management role. This structure is commonly used for investment management and corporate holding arrangements, while still being subject to relevant employment and business operation requirements.
Employer-Sponsored EP: A locally operating Singapore company acts as the employer and sponsors the application. This structure is applicable to professionals who already have a defined employment opportunity in Singapore.



Annex A – COMPASS Scoring Rubric

The scoring rubric below summarises how points are awarded under COMPASS. More details on COMPASS can be found on MOM's website.

40 points are required to pass COMPASS

	Individual Attributes		Firm-Related Attributes	
Foundational Criteria	**C1. Salary**		**C3. Diversity**	
	Fixed monthly salary compared to local PMET salaries in sector by age		**Share of candidate's nationality among firm's PMETs***	
	≥ 90th percentile	20	< 5%	20
	65th to < 90th percentile	10	5 to < 25%	10
	< 65th percentile	0	≥ 25%	0
	C2. Qualifications		**C4. Support for Local Employment**	
	Based on candidate's qualifications		**Firm's share of local PMETs within its subsector***	
	Top-tier institution	20	≥ 50th percentile	20
	Degree-equivalent qualification	10	20th to < 50th percentile	10
	No degree-equivalent qualification	0	< 20th percentile	0
Bonus Criteria	**C5. Skills Bonus**		**C6. Strategic Economic Priorities Bonus**	
	Job on the Shortage Occupation List	+20#	Firm meets specific assessment criteria on investment, innovation, internationalisation, or company and workforce transformation activities	+10

Skills bonus is reduced to +10 if the share of candidate's nationality among the firm's PMETs is one-third or higher.

*Small firms with fewer than 25 PMET employees score 10 points on C3 and C4 by default. PMETs are proxied by employees earning at least $3,000 per month.

The scoring rubric above summarises how points are awarded under COMPASS.

Based on Globevisa's experience with Singapore EP applications, the current framework primarily considers the applicant's salary, position, qualifications, and the sponsoring company's circumstances. Subject to the applicable requirements, the main applicant may apply for Dependant's Passes for an eligible spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21, and may subsequently apply for Singapore Permanent Residence (PR) if the relevant requirements are met.

Understanding Singapore's COMPASS Assessment Framework

To further refine the criteria for foreign professionals, Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM) introduced the Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS) for new Employment Pass applications from September 1, 2023. The EP assessment consists of the applicable minimum salary requirement together with a points-based framework.

Under the current COMPASS framework, the assessment comprises four foundational criteria (C1-C4) and two bonus criteria (C5-C6). In general, applicants must obtain at least 40 points.

1.C1 Salary — Maximum 20 points
The applicant's fixed monthly salary is assessed against the salary benchmarks for local Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs) in the same sector and age group. A salary at or above the 90th percentile receives 20 points; a salary at or above the 65th percentile but below the 90th percentile receives 10 points; a salary below the 65th percentile receives no points.
2.C2 Qualifications — Maximum 20 points
Points are awarded based on the applicant's qualifications or eligible professional credentials.

Qualifications from top institutions recognised under the MOM framework may receive 20 points; an eligible bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification or professional credential may receive 10 points; qualifications that do not meet the relevant requirements receive no points.

3.C3 Diversity — Maximum 20 points

This criterion assesses the proportion of PMET employees in the company who share the applicant's nationality. A share below 5% receives 20 points; a share of 5% to below 25% receives 10 points; a share of 25% or above receives no points. For companies with fewer than 25 PMET employees, the criterion is assigned 10 points by default.

4.C4 Support for Local Employment — Maximum 20 points

This criterion assesses the company's proportion of local PMET employees against its industry. A share at or above the 50th percentile receives 20 points; a share at or above the 20th percentile but below the 50th percentile receives 10 points; a share below the 20th percentile receives no points. For companies with fewer than 25 PMET employees, the criterion is assigned 10 points by default.

5.C5 Skills Bonus — Maximum 20 points

Applicants working in occupations listed on Singapore's Shortage Occupation List (SOL) may receive additional points. Applicants who meet the relevant requirements and the prescribed nationality-share threshold may receive 20 points; otherwise, 10 points are awarded.

6.C6 Strategic Economic Priorities — Maximum 10 points

Companies participating in eligible government-supported programmes may receive an additional 10 points.

Compliance Considerations for Different Applicant Profiles

Under COMPASS, Employment Pass applications are assessed on multiple criteria rather than a single factor. Based on Globevisa's experience with Singapore EP applications, applicants from different backgrounds may consider the following areas:

- Addressing qualification gaps: Applicants who do not receive points under C2 may take their company's workforce size and actual operations into account when assessing other criteria, such as C3 and C4, together with a salary arrangement that meets the C1 requirements.
- For experienced professionals at a later career stage: Applicants who are older but have experience in specific fields should clearly present their career history, professional expertise, and suitability for the proposed position, while ensuring that the position and salary arrangement meet the relevant requirements.
- Preparing for additional review: Where business contracts, office arrangements, local employment, or other supporting documents are involved, applicants should maintain clear, complete, and consistent business and application records.

Compliance and Risk Management in Singapore EP Applications

As the policy framework evolves, Singapore has introduced clearer requirements concerning the salary, position, and corporate circumstances of Employment Pass applicants. Incomplete

documentation or inconsistencies between the application and the company's actual circumstances may result in requests for additional information and affect the processing of an application.

As an international consultancy, Globevisa Group assesses Singapore EP applications based on the applicant's corporate structure, position, salary, and long-term residency objectives, while reviewing documentation against the relevant requirements. Its services cover company incorporation, application documentation, and subsequent residency planning, with the aim of ensuring consistency between the proposed application structure and the company's actual circumstances.

Policy Outlook and Compliance Considerations

From the minimum salary requirement to the COMPASS points framework, Singapore's Employment Pass system now follows a more structured assessment process. Salary benchmarks, the Shortage Occupation List, and COMPASS criteria may change as labour market conditions and related policies evolve.

For individuals planning to develop a business and live and work in Singapore, it is important to assess their personal qualifications, proposed position, and corporate circumstances against the latest requirements published by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and prepare the relevant documentation in advance.

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