Hong Kong QMAS to PR: Visa Validity vs. 7-Year Ordinary Residence Requirements

Holding a QMAS visa for 7 years doesn't guarantee Hong Kong permanent residency. Learn the actual continuous ordinary residence requirements for applicants.



Establishing genuine work and lifestyle ties in Hong Kong is an essential requirement for QMAS applicants transitioning to permanent residency.

SG, SINGAPORE, September 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Many applicants under the Hong Kong Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) often equate maintaining a valid visa with meeting the requirements for Hong Kong permanent residency. In reality, holding a QMAS visa for seven years does not automatically satisfy the criteria of "continuous ordinary residence for seven years" required for permanent resident status. The assessment also considers the applicant's residence arrangements, absences from Hong Kong, habitual residence, and the location of principal family members, such as a spouse and minor children.

Founded in 2002 and headquartered in Singapore, Globevisa Group is an international consulting firm with over 20 years of experience in cross-border identity planning. Based on the processing of nearly 30,000 QMAS family applications and services provided to over 120,000 clients globally, Globevisa notes that many QMAS applicants overlook the continuity of their actual residence during the seven-year period. This article analyzes the ordinary residence standards and settlement arrangements for transitioning from a QMAS visa to permanent residency, based on current Hong Kong requirements.

Visa Renewal Standards vs. Permanent Residence Standards
The renewal of a QMAS visa and the application for permanent residency are two distinct stages with different evaluation focuses.

Visa Renewal: For applicants approved under the General Points Test, upon the expiration of

their initial 36-month stay, they must demonstrate to the Hong Kong Immigration Department that they have taken steps to settle in Hong Kong, such as by securing employment or establishing a business. For subsequent extensions, they must prove continuous settlement and contribution to Hong Kong.
Permanent Residency: After ordinarily residing in Hong Kong for seven years, applicants can apply for verification of eligibility for a permanent identity card. The Immigration Department evaluates not only the duration of the visa or stay but also the applicant's overall residence status and actual ties to Hong Kong over the seven-year period.

Consequently, two common misconceptions require clarification. The first is the belief that maintaining visa validity through periodic entries guarantees compliance with the seven-year ordinary residence requirement. The second is the assumption that a lack of ties during the initial years (due to living and working outside Hong Kong) can be offset by abruptly establishing connections in the final two to three years.

The Immigration Department does not use rigid metrics such as "must enter once every six months" or "single absences exceeding six months automatically disqualify." Individual cases are assessed based on the reasons, duration, and frequency of absences, alongside the applicant's overall ties to Hong Kong.

Three Main Factors Determining Ordinary Residence
According to public information provided by the Immigration Department, "ordinary residence" is not merely a calculation of days spent in Hong Kong. Instead, it is a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's actual residence status.

1.Travel Records: The reasons, duration, and frequency of absences from Hong Kong are primary factors. If an applicant maintains their principal place of work and life in another region and treats Hong Kong only as a short-term destination, it may negatively impact the assessment of ordinary residence.
2.Employment and Living Ties: Stable employment, a permanent residential address, and other practical living arrangements reflect the applicant's ties to Hong Kong. For QMAS applicants, these elements are also critical focus areas during the visa renewal process.
3.Family and Settlement: The Immigration Department considers whether the applicant has a habitual residence in Hong Kong and whether principal family members (such as a spouse and minor children) reside there. Assessments may vary based on individual family structures.

Based on its experience managing QMAS family applications, Globevisa Group notes that some applicants fail to establish continuous employment, lifestyle, or family ties in Hong Kong during the early years, attempting to consolidate these ties only as the seventh year approaches. A lack of continuity in residence patterns often requires the submission of additional supporting documents during the permanent residency application, which can weaken the application's persuasiveness and delay the process.

Key Focus Areas for a 7-Year Residence Plan
For applicants aiming for long-term settlement via the QMAS, the seven-year residence plan should focus on the following three aspects:

1.Continuously Establish Genuine Ties: Travel records are only one part of the residence assessment. Applicants should continuously maintain documentation that verifies Hong Kong as their place of work, life, or family residence, in accordance with their actual situation.
2.Retain Residence Documentation Promptly: Ordinary residence is an ongoing process. Instead of compiling documents right before applying for permanent residency, applicants should systematically retain records related to housing, employment, taxation, business operations, and family matters year by year to ensure a complete reflection of the seven-year residence history.
3.Ensure Consistency Between Actual Status and Submitted Documents: All documentation regarding employment, business, or family settlement must accurately reflect the applicant's real-life circumstances. Applicants with prolonged absences should also retain documents that explain the reasons for leaving and detail their actual arrangements.

Recommended Documentation for the 7-Year Residence Period
When applying for permanent residency, in addition to standard application forms, applicants must provide documentation that illustrates their residence status over the past seven years, tailored to their individual circumstances.

Housing Arrangements: Tenancy agreements, property purchase contracts, stamp duty certificates, and utility bills serve as primary evidence of maintaining a stable residence in Hong Kong.
Employment and Economic Ties: Employment contracts, Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) records, salary slips, tax documents, and business records demonstrate the applicant's professional and economic connections to the city.
Absences from Hong Kong: For absences exceeding six months, applicants should retain relevant records such as overseas assignment notices, business trip logs, or project certificates, depending on the actual reason for departure.
Family Ties: School records for children studying in Hong Kong, evidence of a spouse or other principal family members residing in the city, local insurance policies, and medical records act as supplementary proof of overall residence.

Publicly available information from the Immigration Department confirms that verifying permanent resident status may require proof of employment, school documents, official receipts, bank statements, and income tax receipts. The emphasis is not on the quantity of documents, but on their ability to authentically and continuously reflect the applicant's actual residence status, maintaining consistency with their stated claims.

Globevisa Group's Insights on the QMAS to Permanent Residency Transition
Based on the processing of nearly 30,000 QMAS family applications and the service experience of its local Hong Kong team, Globevisa Group concludes that the key to transitioning to

permanent residency is not merely calculating a seven-year timeline. Rather, it requires continuously fulfilling the "ordinary residence" criteria and providing authentic, coherent documentation that proves actual ties to Hong Kong.

The progression from QMAS approval and visa renewal to the permanent residency application is a continuous settlement process. For applicants planning long-term development in Hong Kong, it is more effective to systematically retain records of genuine employment, lifestyle, and family arrangements starting from the day the QMAS visa is granted. This approach is more beneficial for presenting a complete seven-year residence history than attempting to establish connections as the deadline approaches.

As an international consulting firm specializing in cross-border identity planning, Globevisa Group views the QMAS program and subsequent residence arrangements within a unified, long-term framework. The firm continuously monitors changes in Hong Kong's immigration policies and practical evaluation requirements, providing applicants with a reliable reference for understanding the residence standards necessary for achieving permanent resident status.

About Globevisa Group
Established in 2002 in Singapore, Globevisa Group is a premier wealth management and cross-border identity advisor for HNWIs. With 50+ global branches and 800+ in-house experts, the firm ensures institutional-grade risk control. Globevisa has successfully delivered citizenship, residency, and relocation solutions to 120,000+ clients across 120+ countries, ensuring barrier-free global mobility.

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