The pass system

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Nobody lives and works in Singapore without a pass. The pass system is in practice a filter that decides which founders and employees Singapore wants. The passes relevant to a digital-asset business are the Employment Pass, the Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass, the Tech.Pass and the EntrePass.

The Employment Pass is the standard work pass for professionals. Since 1 January 2025 the qualifying salary is S$ 5,600 a month for new applicants, rising with age to S$ 10,700 for applicants in their mid-forties, with a higher floor of S$ 6,200 for the financial services sector. From 1 September 2023 every application must also score at least 40 points under the Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS). Points are awarded for salary relative to local peers, qualifications, the diversity of the employer's workforce and the employer's support for local employment, with bonus points for skills in shortage and for strategic economic priorities.[1] A crypto start-up with an all-foreign engineering team scores badly on diversity and local employment and may find that its engineers fail COMPASS even on good salaries. The usual remedy is to hire local staff early.

The Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass (ONE Pass), introduced on 1 January 2023, is a five-year pass for individuals earning at least S$ 30,000 a month or with outstanding achievements in their field. The holder may work for several employers

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at once, may start a company and need not satisfy COMPASS. The spouse may work on a letter of consent.[2] A founder who draws a salary of S$ 30,000 from his own Singapore company qualifies. The ONE Pass has become the pass of choice for senior crypto executives relocating from Europe and Hong Kong. The Tech.Pass, administered by the Economic Development Board, serves established technology entrepreneurs and leaders with a salary of at least S$ 22,500 a month or a track record at a technology company of scale. It also permits multiple roles and company formation.[3] The EntrePass serves founders of venture-backed or innovative start-ups and is assessed on the business plan and the backing instead of salary.

Pass	Who	Key condition	Duration	Suited to
Employment Pass	Employees	S$ 5,600+ monthly (S$ 6,200 financial services), COMPASS 40 points	2 years, renewable 3	Engineers, compliance staff
ONE Pass	Senior talent	S$ 30,000 monthly or outstanding achievement	5 years	Founders drawing salary, senior executives
Tech.Pass	Tech leaders	S$ 22,500 monthly or scale track record	2 years	Founders of established tech firms
EntrePass	Start-up founders	Innovative business, venture backing or accelerator	1 year, then 2	Pre-revenue founders
Permanent residence	Long-term residents	Discretionary; GIP for investors	Indefinite with re-entry permit	Settled families

Notes

1. Ministry of Manpower, Employment Pass qualifying salary from 1 January 2025 and the Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS) in force since 1 September 2023. ↩

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2. Ministry of Manpower, Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass, eligibility (fixed monthly salary of S$ 30,000 or equivalent achievements), five-year validity, multiple concurrent employers. ↩
3. Economic Development Board, Tech.Pass, eligibility criteria (monthly salary of S$ 22,500, or five years in a leading role at a technology company with valuation or market capitalisation of at least US$ 500 million or funding of at least US$ 30 million). ↩

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