The Common Law in English: Contracts, Courts and Legal Services: summary

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Singapore received English law through the Charter of 1826 and the Civil Law Ordinance of 1878, then gave its common law a fixed and sovereign basis through the Application of English Law Act 1993 and the abolition of Privy Council appeals with effect from 8 April 1994. Since the Practice Statement of July 1994, the Court of Appeal has developed a Singapore common law that remains close to English law while answering to local circumstances and protecting existing contracts. Singapore law has become a regular choice in regional contracts, governing more than half of the cases filed with SIAC in 2023 and 2025, and is offered together with Singapore arbitration, the SICC and enforcement through the New York and Hague Conventions. A fused local profession of about 6,500 lawyers, three law schools and a regulated opening to foreign firms through the QFLP scheme since 2008 have turned legal services into an export sector with S$1.40 billion of exports in 2023. Compared with Swiss law, which attracts parties through codified neutrality and its

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links with Europe, Singapore law attracts parties who want a common law administered in English within Asia, so that the two centres serve different clients and meet mainly in commodity trading and private wealth.

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