

# Mobility: Immigration alert

August 2022



## China Mainland

Border reopens for APEC Business Travel Card holders and foreign students

### Executive summary

Effective 24 August 2022, foreigners holding valid Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Travel Cards (BTCs) and foreign students holding valid Chinese Study-type Residence Permits issued before 28 March 2020 may now enter China Mainland using these documents.

### Background

On 28 March 2020, to restrict the spread of COVID-19, the Chinese government imposed a ban on the entry of most foreign nationals, including holders of APEC BTCs and Chinese Study-type Residence Permits issued before that date. The government has repeatedly updated the entry requirements for travelers over the past few years in line with China's "Zero-COVID" policy.

### Key issues

Foreigners must hold valid APEC BTCs that have been approved by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to enter China Mainland. These travelers do not need to apply for new BTCs. Holders of APEC BTCs that were not approved by the Ministry are still prohibited from entering China Mainland.

In addition, several Chinese Embassies (including those in India, Germany, Japan, Canada, the US, Thailand, Vietnam, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, Australia, Malaysia, the UK, South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Greece, Brazil, Spain, Uruguay, Ireland, Romania and Mexico) recently announced that foreign students who hold Study-type Residence Permits issued before 28 March 2020 do not

need to apply for new Permits to enter China Mainland, provided their Permit has not yet expired. Foreign students with expired documents can apply for X1 Visas at a Chinese Embassy and convert them to Study-type Residence Permits after arrival in China Mainland.

Currently, the following travelers may enter China Mainland, provided they meet all COVID-19-related requirements:

- ▶ Chinese nationals and residents
- ▶ Holders of diplomatic, service, courtesy or C visas
- ▶ Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan residents who enter with a valid China Mainland Travel Permit
- ▶ Holders of valid Residence Permits for Work, Private Affairs or Family Reunification
- ▶ Holders of valid Chinese visas issued on or after 28 March 2020

The following remain suspended until further notice: policies governing port visas, 24/72/144-hour visa-free transit through China Mainland, 30-day visa-free travel to Hainan, 15-day visa-free entry for foreign cruise members and 144-hour visa-free entry to Guangdong.

### Impact on employers

The new policies enacted by the Chinese government are a boon to employers as well as educational institutions that attract foreign students, and an important step toward reopening the Chinese economy to international business travel.

## Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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EYG no. 007330-22GbI

2101-3682263  
ED None

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