

Mobility: Immigration alert

October 2022



Hong Kong

New immigration policies to attract overseas and mainland Chinese talent

Executive summary

On 19 October 2022, the Hong Kong Chief Executive announced plans to introduce several changes to local immigration policies, including the creation of a new pass for top talent, and a relaxation of existing visa programs and the rules governing the entry of short-term business visitors. While further details are expected to be released in the coming months, currently there are no indications as to when the changes and the new Scheme will be implemented.

New Top Talent Pass Scheme

The Chief Executive announced the introduction of a new Top Talent Pass that will enable qualifying candidates to enter Hong Kong for an initial period of up to two years for the purpose of exploring professional opportunities. The following categories of overseas and mainland Chinese residents will be eligible to apply for the Pass:

- ▶ Individuals who earn an annual salary of at least HKD 2.5 million (or its equivalent) at the time of filing their application.
- ▶ Individuals who graduated from one of the top 100 global universities and have at least three years of professional experience in the five years immediately preceding the filing of their application.
- ▶ Individuals who graduated from a top-100 university in the five years preceding the filing of their application but do not yet have three years of professional experience. Applicants under this third category will be subject to an annual quota of 10,000.

Changes to several immigration schemes

The Chief Executive also touched upon the following expected changes to the employment schemes below:

- ▶ *Employment visas*: The validity period of employment visas will increase to three years, up from two years currently.
- ▶ *General Employment Policy and Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals*: Employers that seek to hire overseas and Mainland Chinese talent in any of the professions contained in Hong Kong's [Talent List](#) or in vacancies with an annual salary of at least HKD 2 million (or its equivalent) will benefit from relaxed local recruitment requirements.
- ▶ *Quality Migrant Admission Scheme*: The annual quota under this scheme will be lifted for two years. Currently, the annual quota for this scheme is 4,000.
- ▶ *Technology Talent Admission Scheme*: Technology firms will no longer be required to hire local employees whenever they sponsor overseas and mainland Chinese residents under this scheme.
- ▶ *Immigration Arrangement for Non-local Graduates (IANG)*: The validity of visas granted under this scheme will be increased to two years, up from one year currently. In addition, the IANG Scheme will be expanded on a pilot basis for a period of two years, during which it will be open to graduates of Hong Kong universities located in the [Greater Bay Area](#).

More lenient rules for business visitors

The Chief Executive stated the local authorities' intention to expand the list of permissible business visitor activities in Hong Kong (i.e., activities that may be performed lawfully without the need to obtain a work authorization document). This policy change is expected to reduce the number of instances where short-term travelers will be required to apply for employment visas.

Impact on employers

The upcoming changes in Hong Kong's immigration policies are expected to stimulate the local economy and empower local employers to attract overseas and mainland Chinese talent and foreign direct investment.

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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