

Singapore Employers, Are Your Hiring Practices in Order for the Next TAFEP Request?

Article By:

Shirin Aboujawde

Since its formation in 2006, Singapore's Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) has slowly gained traction with employees and applicants alike as an avenue for redressing concerns regarding harassment and discrimination in the workplace, and TAFEP has issued an increasing number of notifications to employers identifying potentially discriminatory hiring processes related to the failure to give fair consideration to Singaporeans.

Quick Hits

- The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) was set up in 2006 by the Ministry of Manpower, the National Trades Union Congress, and the Singapore National Employers Federation, to promote the adoption of fair, responsible, and progressive employment practices in Singapore.
- Since its inception, TAFEP has slowly gained traction with employees and job seekers alike as an avenue for redress of concerns regarding harassment and discrimination in the workplace.
- Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, notifications to employers from TAFEP about potentially discriminatory hiring processes related to the failure to give fair consideration to Singaporeans have been on the rise.

TAFEP is an alliance of three partners—the Ministry of Manpower, the National Trades Union Congress, and the Singapore National Employers Federation—to promote the adoption of fair, responsible, and progressive employment practices in Singapore.

Rules for Hiring Foreigners in Singapore

Under Singaporean law, employers are expected to make reasonable efforts to attract and consider Singaporeans for positions based on merit and to train and develop their potential and careers. This includes ensuring that:

- jobs advertised are open to Singaporeans;
- educational institutions, career centers, and recruitment agencies are actively engaged to recruit and attract Singaporean employees; and

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- Singaporean employees develop the skills and expertise for higher-level jobs.

Employers that wish to hire foreign nationals to work in Singapore must first advertise the jobs on MyCareersFuture, posting a position for at least fourteen days and thoroughly reviewing and considering all applicants. The only exception to this requirement is that employers with fewer than ten employees do not have to post on the MyCareersFuture job portal, but they still have to follow the fair consideration framework.

Employers may apply for work visas only after reviewing all candidate submissions on the MyCareersFuture portal during the minimum posting period.

Common Types of Work Visas

When an employer is unable to find a Singaporean for a particular role, only then may the employer recruit a foreign worker, usually via an S Pass or Employment Pass visa.

The S Pass is a type of Singapore work visa reserved for mid-level skilled foreign workers. Employers may apply for an S Pass if they are unable to find Singaporean for the position (after posting on MyCareersFuture as described above), and the foreign-recruited candidate meets certain criteria including meeting the qualifications and work experience of a highly-skilled worker and having a job offer in Singapore of no less than SGD \$3,150 per month (for non-finance roles where the candidate is at least twenty-three years old) increasing progressively up to SGD \$4,650 per month (for non-finance roles where the candidate is at least forty-five years old). (The minimum threshold for S Pass applications is expected to increase on September 1, 2025, to at least SGD \$3,300 per month.)

The Employment Pass is a type of visa reserved for foreign professionals who are generally categorized as managers and executives. An employer may apply for an E Pass if unable to find a Singaporean for the position (after posting on MyCareersFuture as described above), and the foreign-recruited candidate passes a points-based system (which requires candidates to achieve at least forty points awarded based on certain criteria including salary, qualifications, and diversity) and receives a job offer in Singapore of no less than SGD \$5,000 per month (for non-finance roles where the candidate is at least twenty-three years old), increasing progressively up to SGD \$10,500 per month (for non-finance roles where the candidate is at least forty-five years old). In addition, certain candidates can be exempted from the points-based criteria for the Employment Pass if they:

- have offers of employment for a fixed monthly salary of SGD \$22,500 or more;
- are overseas intra-corporate transferees; or
- are filling roles for less than one month.

What Is a TAFEP Request?

Candidates and employees who believe they have been discriminated against in the hiring process are able to file reports with TAFEP. More and more employers in Singapore are now receiving requests from TAFEP in relation to reports filed against them regarding possible discriminatory practices specifically as they relate to failures to consider Singaporean applicants fairly.

Employers that receive information requests from TAFEP may be requested to provide:

- a detailed list of candidates who applied for the position;

- a comprehensive summary of how far each candidate progressed;
- a shortlist and selection criteria for the position; and
- an explanation of the approval process used to select the successful candidate.

Employers that fail to respond to TAFEP requests in a satisfactory manner can be subject to penalties, such as a suspension of the ability to apply for S Pass and Employment Pass visas for up to one year and remediation training for human resources personnel.

Singapore employers may want to ensure their processes are updated accordingly to document hiring decisions in detail if they intend to make an S Pass or Employment Pass application.

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