



Research Office  
Legislative Council Secretariat

## Fact Sheet

# Talent attraction policies

FS05/2022

### 1. Overview of and challenges for talent attraction

- Hong Kong relies mainly on high value-added service industries, and talents are a key factor in driving economic development. The Government has launched a number of **talent admission** schemes to enrich the talent pool in Hong Kong, with a view to enhancing Hong Kong's international competitiveness. The main features and the latest statistics of these schemes are outlined as follows:

#### Talent admission schemes in Hong Kong

Talent admission scheme	Key eligibility requirements	Number of applications approved		
		2019	2021	2021 vs. 2019 <sup>(1)</sup>
General Employment Policy ("GEP") (Professionals from overseas, Taiwan and Macao) <sup>(2)</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Secured a job relevant to his/her academic qualifications or work experience that <b>cannot be readily taken up by the local workforce</b></li></ul>	41 289	13 821	-27 468 (-66.5%)
Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals ("ASMTP") (Professionals from the Mainland)		14 053	9 065	-4 988 (-35.5%)
Technology Talent Admission Scheme ("TechTAS") (Engaged principally in conducting research and development in specific areas) <sup>(3)</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A degree-holder in science, technology, engineering or mathematics from a well-recognized university</li><li><b>Employing company with a valid quota approved by the Innovation and Technology Commission</b> at the time of application</li></ul>	75	60	-15 (-20.0%)
Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Obtained an undergraduate or higher qualification in a full-time locally-accredited programme in Hong Kong</li><li><b>Job offer not required upon entry</b> (for fresh graduates)</li></ul>	10 799	7 259	-3 540 (-32.8%)

## Talent admission schemes in Hong Kong (cont'd)

Talent admission scheme	Key eligibility requirements	Number of applications approved		
		2019	2021	2021 vs. 2019 <sup>(1)</sup>
Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aged 18-40</b> and born overseas</li> <li>• At least one parent holding valid Hong Kong permanent identity card upon application and was a Chinese national settled overseas at the time of applicant's birth</li> <li>• Good education background, technical qualifications or proven professional experience</li> <li>• <b>Job offer not required upon entry</b></li> </ul>	55	39	-16 (-29.1%)
Quality Migrant Admission Scheme ("QMAS") <sup>(4)</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfied the requirements under "Prerequisites" in respect of age (18 or above), financial status, character, language proficiency and basic educational qualification</li> <li>• Applicants may choose to be assessed either under the General Points Test ("GPT") or Achievement-based Points Test ("APT")</li> <li>• <b>Job offer in Hong Kong not required</b></li> </ul>	874	2 004	+1 130 (+129.3%)

Notes: (1) Figures in brackets represent percentage changes.

(2) Entrepreneurs from overseas, Taiwan and Macao who plan to establish or join in a business in Hong Kong may also apply under GEP.

(3) Including the areas of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, cybersecurity, data analytics, financial technologies, material science, robotics, 5G communications, digital entertainment, green technology, integrated circuit design, Internet-of-Things or microelectronics.

(4) The number of applications approved under QMAS denotes the number of quotas allotted. There are six point-scoring factors under GPT, including age, academic/professional qualifications, work experience, talent list, language proficiency and family background. As for the assessment under APT, points may be awarded only if the applicant satisfies one of the following criteria: (i) the applicant has received an award of exceptional achievement (e.g. Olympic medals, Nobel prize, national/international awards); or (ii) the applicant can show that his/her work has been acknowledged by his/her peers or has contributed significantly to the development of his/her field (e.g. lifetime achievement award from industry).

- **Cross-boundary people flow has seen a decline since 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.** For most of the talent admission schemes, the number of applications approved in 2021 has **dropped significantly, though to varying degrees**, when compared with the relevant figures in 2019.
- To qualify for **GEP and ASMTP**, the relevant person must have a confirmed offer of employment and is employed in a job that cannot be readily taken up by the local workforce. **The primary purpose of the schemes is, therefore, to supplement any shortage in the local labour force.**

- QMAS aims to **attract highly skilled or talented persons to settle in Hong Kong**. The number of quotas allotted under QMAS has risen sharply during this period, largely due to the Government’s initiative to increase the annual quota of QMAS from 1 000 previously to 2 000 in 2020, and to further double to 4 000 in 2021.
- As for TechTAS, a total of 275 quota applications have been approved since its launch in June 2018 till the end of 2021.
- Persons admitted under various talent admission schemes who have ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than seven years may apply for the right of abode in Hong Kong in accordance with the laws of Hong Kong.
- **Hong Kong’s talent admission schemes are diversified, offering a range of scheme types that is broadly similar to those of other places**, and can cover talents wishing to work in Hong Kong, persons with professional qualifications/work experience/outstanding achievements, young talents who are fresh graduates, as well as experts in innovation and technology (“I&T”) (see Section 3 for details). However, apart from visa or immigration arrangements, talents being sought after will **also take into considerations such as the the relevant industry’s development potential in the local arena and its international/regional connectivity**, as well as **culture, quality and cost of living, and availability of family-friendly practices**, when choosing a place to develop their career.
- According to the International Institute for Management Development’s World Talent Ranking, Hong Kong’s ranking in terms of the **“Appeal” factor has dropped a further eight places to 26th in 2021.**<sup>1</sup> **The mid-year population of Hong Kong has gradually decreased during the period from 2019 to 2022** owing to the drop in the number of talents admitted and the reduced inflow of One-way Permit holders, together with the outward movements of other persons from Hong Kong for various reasons. Analysed by age group, the cumulative decline in the number of people aged below 30 has widened in the past three years when compared with the corresponding figures during the period from 2016 to 2019, whereas the population of the age group of 30-49 has even turned from a rise to a decline.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2016, Hong Kong was ranked as high as fourth in the relevant ranking.

## Mid-year population by age in 2016 and 2019-2022<sup>(1)</sup> ('000)

	2016	2019	2020	2021	2022 <sup>(1)</sup>	Three-year cumulative changes <sup>(2)</sup>	
						2019 vs. 2016	2022 vs. 2019
<b>Population by age group<sup>(3)</sup></b>							
0-19	1 171.2	1 134.1	1 106.4	1 072.7	1 032.7	-37.1 (-3.2%)	-101.4 (-8.9%)
20-29	898.0	836.3	800.0	748.5	694.0	-61.7 (-6.9%)	-142.3 (-17.0%)
30-39	986.4	1 007.0	995.0	970.9	944.4	+20.6 (+2.1%)	-62.6 (-6.2%)
40-49	1 060.2	1 076.5	1 076.1	1 062.7	1 028.5	+16.3 (+1.5%)	-48.0 (-4.5%)
50-59	1 243.0	1 218.6	1 194.6	1 177.6	1 136.2	-24.4 (-2.0%)	-82.4 (-6.8%)
≥60	1 656.0	1 908.8	1 982.4	2 060.7	2 136.6	+252.8 (+15.3%)	+227.8 (+11.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 014.8</b>	<b>7 181.3</b>	<b>7 154.5</b>	<b>7 093.1</b>	<b>6 972.4</b>	<b>+166.5 (+2.4%)</b>	<b>-208.9 (-2.9%)</b>
<b>Population changes by component<sup>(4)</sup></b>							
Natural change <sup>(5)</sup>						+26.9	-39.0
Inflow of One-way Permit holders						+141.1	+54.3
Net movement of others						+3.1	-231.5

Notes: (1) The figure for 2022 is on a provisional basis.

(2) Figures in brackets represent percentage changes. These percentage changes are calculated by rounding the mid-year population figures of each year to the nearest hundred, and there may be a slight discrepancy from the percentage changes calculated using the exact figures.

(3) Foreign domestic helpers are excluded from the population figures. The relevant data are provided by the Census and Statistics Department upon the request of the Research Office.

(4) The figures for population changes by component include foreign domestic helpers.

(5) Births less deaths.

## 2. Government policy measures on talent attraction: Latest development

- In view of some talents moving out of Hong Kong, coupled with the persistent trends of population ageing and the fertility rate dropping continuously, government measures for enhancing the recruitment of more non-local professionals to Hong Kong or retaining local talents can indeed brook no delay in order to maintain the labour supply and productivity of the Hong Kong economy. Apart from the various talent admission measures as briefly explained in Section 1, the Government has in the past year or so introduced/enhanced, among others, the following measures to attract talents:

- The Global STEM Professorship Scheme was launched in June 2021 to support local universities in recruiting more internationally renowned scholars to **conduct I&T-related research and teaching activities** in Hong Kong. More than 60 distinguished scholars are bringing their research teams to Hong Kong under the first two rounds of the Scheme;
- Upon consultation with stakeholders of relevant industries, the Government completed a review of the **Talent List** in October 2021 and decided to **increase the number of professions covered under the List from 11 to 13** (by adding to the list the professions of “professionals in compliance in asset management” and “financial professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance”), and also expanded the scope of some existing professions, with a view to reflecting Hong Kong’s latest demand for targeted talents and enhancing QMAS; and
- Through the network of the Economic and Trade Offices overseas and on the Mainland and InvestHK’s offices overseas and on the Mainland, the Government has been actively **using different means and channels to promote QMAS and various talent admission schemes** (including using online platforms and social media, introducing the development opportunities in Hong Kong in business seminars and talks organized at universities, etc.), in a bid to attract talents from around the world to come to Hong Kong.

### 3. Measures to attract talents in selected places

- Below lists out policies in selected places to attract professionals, target I&T talents specifically and/or attract graduates:

#### High-end professionals

- **Singapore:** The Singaporean government recently indicated its plan to launch the “Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass” scheme in **2023**, targeting **top talents who are earning/expect to earn a monthly salary of at least S\$30,000 (HK\$170,000) through working for an established company<sup>2</sup> and individuals with outstanding achievements in arts and culture, sports, science and technology, and academia and research.** The visa offers a validity of 5-10 years, and the holders do not need to reapply for a new pass if they change jobs.

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<sup>2</sup> For a company to be considered established under the scheme, it must have a market capitalisation of at least US\$500 million (HK\$3.9 billion) or an annual revenue of at least US\$200 million (HK\$1.6 billion).

- **Both Japan and Germany** rolled out schemes back in 2012 to attract high-end professionals:
  - **Japan: “Highly Skilled Foreign Professionals”** (“HSFPs”) is a points-based visa system that make working and living in Japan easier than before. Holders of the HSFP visas can apply for permanent residency after living in the country for 3 years or shorter instead of the usual 10 years for other visa holders.
  - **Germany: The EU Blue Card** is a work permit for **high-skilled non-EU citizens** to work and live within the European Union. In Germany, the EU Blue Card is valid for a maximum of 4 years, and Blue Card holders can apply for permanent residence permit there after at least 33 months.

### I&T talents

- **Australia** introduced two talent admission schemes that target I&T talents specifically:
  - Global Talent Visa Program, introduced in 2021, covers 10 target sectors, including Agriculture Technology, Health Industries, Defence, Advanced Manufacturing and Space, Digital Technology, and Financial Technology. To be eligible for the visa, individuals must “prove they are internationally recognised with evidence of outstanding achievements” or be recent doctoral degree graduates, **nominated by an Australian citizen/permanent resident/organization (or eligible New Zealand citizen)**, have the ability to attract a salary at or above AUD162,000 (HK\$830,000), and be able to **promote innovation and create jobs**. In 2021-2022, there are 15 000 places available under the program.
  - Global Talent Employer Sponsored Program, launched in 2018 as a pilot scheme, facilitates established businesses and STEM- and technology-based startups to recruit **highly skilled global talent**. Approved work visa under the scheme lasts for 4 years and the holder can apply for permanent residency after 3 years of employment in Australia.

### University graduates

- **The United Kingdom** (“UK”): The UK just launched the High Potential Individual Visa in May 2022, targeting individuals who have been **awarded a qualification from any of the 30-plus eligible universities<sup>3</sup> in the last 5 years**. The visa usually lasts for 2 years (validity will be longer at 3 years for applicants with doctoral degrees or other doctoral qualifications), though the visa cannot be extended so holders would need to switch to a different visa for continual stay.

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<sup>3</sup> Universities from top 50 rankings which appeared on 2 or more lists.

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Note: ^ Internet resources listed in this section were accessed in October 2022.

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