

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES



A Visa for 'Top Notch Talent' to Live & Work in Hong Kong (Visitors)

VisaGeeza.Ai

Visiting Hong Kong & Exploring The Quality Migrant Admission Scheme?

Introduced in 2006, the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) is a visa program designed to attract highly talented individuals to reside in Hong Kong without a specific reason for being there. The program aims to compete with other developed economies' immigration programs and has been updated over time to allocate more points to graduates from well-known universities and those with international work experience. In August 2018, a Talent List was implemented to attract professionals needed for Hong Kong's economic development. The program has been successful in attracting professionals from various backgrounds, but it has faced criticism for its lack of transparency and inconsistent results in the selection process.

Prerequisites for the QMAS include meeting specific criteria to prequalify the applicant pool. These criteria are designed to ensure that only applicants with a strong background and potential to contribute to Hong Kong's economy are considered.

There are two types of points tests: the General Points Test (GPT) and the Achievement-Based Points Test (APT). The GPT assesses an applicant's background, awarding points for achievements and accomplishments across several desirability factors. The pass mark for GPT is 80 out of 225, but only the highest scores are considered during selection. APT is for applicants with outstanding achievements, such as Olympians or international prize winners. Successful APT applicants receive 225 points, while unsuccessful ones score 0 points and are refused further consideration. APT applicants receive an 8-year limit of stay, while GPT applicants receive a 2-3-3-year pattern of approval/extension.

The Talent List consists of myriad professions in high demand, including, inter alia, waste treatment specialists, asset management professionals, marine insurance professionals, actuaries, fintech professionals, data scientists, cybersecurity specialists, innovation and technology experts, naval architects, marine engineers, ship superintendents, creative industry professionals, dispute resolution professionals, and transactional lawyers.

The Talent List was expanded to 30+ professions in May 2023 so check out the Talent List website for ongoing updates. Moreover, the quota has been suspended until 2025 making the programme a little less competitive. Applicants whose professions are on the Talent List receive 30 bonus points under the GPT. Other applicants from industries not covered by the Talent List are still welcome to apply. The selection committee, comprising Chief Executive appointees, shortlists high-scoring applications, including those qualifying under the APT, and meets 3-4 times a year. They recommend successful applicants to the Director of Immigration. Selected applicants are invited to Hong Kong to present their original documents for verification, after which they are issued an entry visa under the QMAS program. Applications can be submitted to the Immigration Department via post or in person at the Quality Migrants and Mainland Residents Section of the Immigration HQ.

Despite its intentions and some successful outcomes, the QMAS has faced criticism, particularly from the Hong Kong Visa Geeza, a well-known immigration expert in Hong Kong. The main points of criticism are as follows: (1) Lack of transparency: The QMAS program has been criticized for its lack of transparency in the selection process, making it difficult for potential applicants to understand what it takes to get approved. This lack of clarity may discourage qualified individuals from applying or result in inconsistent outcomes, as there are no clear guidelines on how the selection committee evaluates applications. (2) Inconsistent results: The program has been known to produce inconsistent results, with some successful applicants coming from esoteric backgrounds. This inconsistency raises questions about the effectiveness of the QMAS in attracting the right talent to Hong Kong and the fairness of the selection process. (3) Limited impact on economic competitiveness: While the program was designed to enhance Hong Kong's economic competitiveness by attracting highly skilled professionals, there is limited evidence to suggest that it has significantly impacted the economy. Some critics argue that the QMAS may not be the most effective strategy to attract top talent and that other factors, such as Hong Kong's overall business environment and quality of life, play a more significant role in drawing skilled professionals to the region.

When applying for the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), applicants must submit a comprehensive set of documents, using the online submission portal, including, inter alia, a recent photograph, a copy of their passport details page, current visa or period of stay, PRC resident ID card (if applicable), proof of net worth, documentation of any immediate family members who are permanent residents of Hong Kong, copies of educational certificates and transcripts for both the applicant and their spouse, proof of achievements, professional qualifications, associated memberships, testimonials from

relevant employers, company documents, evidence of self-employment experiences, a detailed essay outlining the applicant's life plan and future goals, and proof of language proficiencies in English and/or Chinese. These documents represent the bare minimum requirements for a QMAS application, and applicants should create a structured argument in their application, tying these documents together to present a compelling case for their eligibility. Additional relevant supporting information and documentation may also need to be submitted to strengthen the application, ensuring all necessary documents are presented in a cohesive manner to increase the applicant's chances of success in the QMAS selection process.

As a current resident you can apply for this status and, if approved, be granted an entry QMAS visa to be activated by exiting Hong Kong and re-entering to commence your 2 year limit of stay. Your dependant family members' limit of stay will be updated to match that of the principal once the substantive QMAS visa has been activated. If your current residence visa look likes it will expire prior to formal grant of your QMAS visa it is recommended that you consult with the Immigration Officer tasked with your QMAS application to see how ImmD wish to manage your ongoing residence status in the event of expiry prior to QMAS approval.

Useful Resource 1	Quality Migrants
Useful Resource 2	The Talent List
Useful Resource 3	Policy Enhancements
Useful Resource 4	Limitations
Hong Kong Visa Handbook Contents	
Visa Information	
Preparing Your Case	
Pre-submission Checklist	
Application Templates	
Online Forms	
Completing The Forms	
How To Apply	
Apply Online	
Quick Summary	
Podcast Discussion	