

Cultural sensitivity training, orientation programme to integrate Employment Pass holders

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The number of Employment Pass holders in Singapore has grown from 177,100 in December 2020 to 201,200 in June 2025.

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Summary

- Singapore will introduce orientation programmes and resources to help foreign professionals understand local culture and integrate into the community.
- New initiatives include a workplace integration playbook for firms and cultural sensitivity training for HR, fostering inclusive

workplace practices.

- These measures, by AfA-IFP, aim to enhance foreign professional integration, crucial for Singapore's unity and global competitiveness.

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SINGAPORE - New initiatives, including orientation programmes and a workplace course on cultural sensitivity, will be introduced in the coming months to integrate foreign professionals into Singapore.

Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth, and Manpower Dinesh Vasu Dash said these are part of efforts to improve integration, describing it as a “two-way street” which requires locals to be receptive, and newcomers to make the effort to understand Singapore’s culture, values and norms.

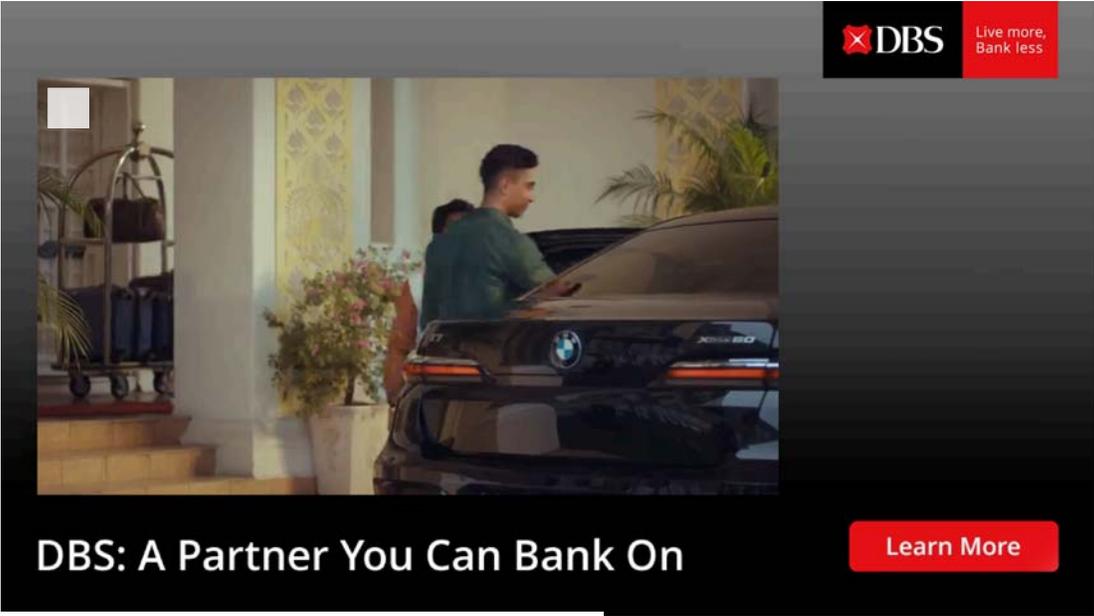
“The workplace is a natural space for this interaction to take place, meaningfully,” he said during the debate on his ministry’s budget on March 5.

To this end, the [Alliance for Action on Integration of Foreign Professionals](#) has come up with new initiatives under two focus areas, to help Employment Pass (EP) holders understand living and working norms in Singapore and support firms in adopting inclusive workplace practices.

The number of EP holders in Singapore has grown from 177,100 in December 2020 to 201,200 in June 2025, according to data from the Ministry of Manpower.

Mr Dinesh said the new orientation and onboarding programmes for EP holders will complement existing programmes for new citizens and permanent residents.

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He noted that Singapore’s ability to foster unity and inclusivity amid diversity is a competitive advantage that attracts international businesses and talent.

“But... our model of multiculturalism is unique, and some newcomers may take more time to adapt to it,” he added.

The alliance was formed in 2025 by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, the Singapore National Employers

Federation (SNEF), and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) to explore ways to better integrate foreign professionals into the workplace and community in Singapore.

It is co-chaired by Mr Dinesh and Mr Marcus Lam, SNEF's honorary treasurer and SBF's deputy honorary treasurer, and includes representatives from trade associations and chambers, and corporate leaders.

A voluntary orientation programme, called the EP Journey, will give EP holders a basic understanding of local norms and culture. It will be piloted in the second quarter of 2026, before being progressively opened to all EP holders.

The ministry and SBF will also partner with five trade associations and chambers to organise orientation day programmes for new EP holders, to acquaint them with the norms of the local professional community and allow them to network with local professionals.

For a start, the programmes will be run by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Singapore International Chamber of Commerce, the American Chamber of Commerce, SGTech and the Singapore Semiconductor Industry Association, for their member firms from the third quarter of 2026.

Next, SNEF will develop a workplace integration playbook to help firms build inclusive workplaces, along with running workshops on adopting the playbook.

SBF Business Institute, in partnership with the Institute of Policy Studies, will launch a new course for HR practitioners and people managers to provide cultural intelligence and sensitivity training on local-foreigner integration issues.

Pilots are under way for the playbook and training course, which are both targeted to be launched in the second quarter of 2026.

Lastly, SBF has published a repository of integration resources for foreign professionals on its website. It includes guides on local customs and etiquette, as well as living and working in Singapore.

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