



Immigration Department
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Guidebook for Entry under
Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme

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I. Introduction

This guidebook sets out the entry arrangements for persons who wish to enter the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (hereafter “HKSAR”) for employment as imported workers under the Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme (hereafter “ESLS”) (formerly known as the Supplementary Labour Scheme or “SLS”)¹.

2. The Government of the HKSAR implements the ESLS to handle applications for importation of labour at technician level or below². Administered by the Labour Department (hereafter “LD”) of the Government of the HKSAR, the ESLS allows employers with genuine difficulties in recruiting suitable workers locally to import workers from outside the HKSAR.

3. Employers intending to import workers under the ESLS need to first apply to the Supplementary Labour Division of the LD for an approval-in-principle³. Upon the grant of the approval-in-principle, the employer shall arrange for his/her prospective worker(s) to each submit a visa/entry permit application to the Immigration Department (hereafter “ImmD”) within the period specified in the approval-in-principle letter. The approval-in-principle will automatically lapse if no visa/entry permit application is submitted within the aforementioned period.

4. Imported workers admitted under the ESLS are not allowed to bring in their dependants.

5. The entry arrangements of the ESLS do not apply to nationals of Afghanistan, Cuba, Laos, Korea (Democratic People’s Republic of), Nepal and Vietnam.

II. Eligibility Criteria

6. An application for a visa/entry permit to enter the HKSAR for employment as an imported worker under the ESLS may be favourably considered if:

- (a) the employer has been granted an approval-in-principle for importing worker(s) by the LD and the approval-in-principle is still valid;
- (b) the applicant is suitably qualified and experienced for the job in question;
- (c) the terms and conditions of employment are comparable to those in the local

¹ With effect from 4 September 2023, the “Supplementary Labour Scheme” was renamed as the “Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme”, which is a labour importation scheme under section 14(3) of the Employees Retraining Ordinance (Cap. 423) and a Government importation of labour scheme under section 2(4)(a)(v) of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115). Save as otherwise provided in this Guidebook, applications for visa/entry permit to enter the HKSAR for employment as an imported worker under the SLS or ESLS shall be handled in accordance with this Guidebook.

² For details of the ESLS, please visit the LD’s website at www.labour.gov.hk.

³ The approval-in-principle previously granted under the SLS remains valid for the purpose of application for employment in the HKSAR under the ESLS within the period specified in the approval-in-principle letter.

market, including that the wage level of the applicant must be no less than the median monthly wage of relevant post in Hong Kong;

- (d) the applicant will remain under the direct employment of the same employer as stipulated in the Standard Employment Contract (LD 294) to perform specified duties for the specified job in the specific workplace(s) as prescribed in the approval-in-principle letter (including the Annex attached thereto) and stipulated in the Standard Employment Contract (LD 294), and will not be employed by other companies or sub-contractors;
- (e) there is no adverse record to the detriment of the applicant or the employer; and
- (f) the employer is financially capable of employing the applicant, providing him/her with suitable accommodation and guaranteeing his/her maintenance and repatriation upon termination of his/her contract.

III. Application Procedures

Application Forms

7. Applicant should complete the application form (ID 1001A). The employer should complete the application form (ID 1001B). The application forms can be obtained free of charge from the following offices:

- (a) ImmD Headquarters; and
- (b) Immigration Branch Offices.

The application forms can also be downloaded from the ImmD's website at www.immd.gov.hk.

Supporting Documents

8. Please refer to the table of forms and documents in Part VII.

Submission of Application

Online Submission

9. Applicants can submit their applications online and upload all supporting documents through the designated GovHK website at www.immd.gov.hk/applyesls_en.html.



Online Application for
the ESLS

Other Means of Submission

10. Applicants can also submit their completed application forms (i.e. ID 1001A & ID 1001B), and all supporting documents by post directly or through the employer in the HKSAR to the following address. All the forms must be duly completed and signed.

Receipt and Despatch Unit
G/F, Administration Tower
Immigration Headquarters
61 Po Yap Road
Tseung Kwan O, New Territories

Underpaid mail items will not be accepted by the ImmD. For proper delivery of your mail items, please ensure your mail items bear sufficient postage with return address before posting.

11. The employer shall enter into a Standard Employment Contract (LD 294) with the applicant. The contract period will be for a maximum period as specified in the approval-in-principle letter (including the Annex attached thereto) with the longest being 24 months. The Standard Employment Contract (LD 294) shall be completed in quadruplicate and submitted together with the application forms (ID 1001A and ID 1001B) to the ImmD. The Standard Employment Contract (LD 294) can be obtained free of charge from the ImmD Headquarters.

Imported Workers from the Mainland

12. For Chinese residents of the Mainland wishing to come to work in the HKSAR under the ESLS, applications must be submitted to the ImmD through their prospective employers. Direct applications by Chinese residents of the Mainland will not be accepted. Furthermore, employers must recruit the imported workers through Mainland labour service enterprises. Mainland labour service enterprises mean enterprises approved by the relevant competent commerce department of the Mainland and acquired the business qualification for labour service cooperation with the HKSAR.

IV. Travel Documentation Requirement

Mainland residents

13. Upon approval of the application, the applicant will be issued with an entry permit (in the form of “e-Visa”). Successful applicant should obtain an Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (hereafter “EEP”) and a relevant exit endorsement from the relevant Mainland authorities. Upon immigration arrival clearance in

the HKSAR, the applicant holding an EEP bearing the relevant exit endorsement should also present the “e-Visa” saved on a personal mobile device or printed on a sheet of A4 white paper, and scan the encrypted QR code on the “e-Visa” with the optical reader at an immigration counter.

Non-Mainland residents

14. Upon approval of the application, the applicant will be issued with a visa/entry permit (in the form of “e-Visa”). Upon immigration arrival clearance in the HKSAR, the applicant should present his/her valid travel document and the “e-Visa” saved on a personal mobile device or printed on a sheet of A4 white paper, and scan the encrypted QR code on the “e-Visa” with the optical reader at an immigration counter.

V. Conditions of Stay

15. The visa/entry permit for the imported worker is normally granted for a period of 24 months or the full term of the employment contract, whichever is shorter.

16. After entry into the HKSAR, the imported worker admitted on employment condition must remain under the direct employment of the same employer to perform specified duties for the specified job in the specific workplace(s) as stipulated in the Standard Employment Contract (LD 294) and cannot be employed by other companies or sub-contractors. Change of the employer, post or place of work is not permitted.

17. The imported worker is required to return to his/her place of origin on completion or termination of his/her employment contract. If the contract is prematurely terminated, the imported worker is permitted to remain in the HKSAR only for two weeks from the date of termination of contract or for the balance of permitted stay, whichever is the shorter period.

18. The imported worker under the ESLS shall not be treated as ordinarily resident in Hong Kong during any period in which he/she remains in Hong Kong while employed as a contract worker, who is from outside Hong Kong in accordance with section 2(4)(a)(v) of Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115). In other words, no person will acquire the right of abode in Hong Kong by virtue of his/her stay in Hong Kong as an imported worker.

VI. Other Information

19. In general, unless a person has the right of abode or right to land in the HKSAR, he/she requires a visa/entry permit to work in the HKSAR. While each application is

determined on its individual merits, an applicant should meet normal immigration requirements (such as holding a valid travel document with adequate returnability to his/her country of residence or citizenship; be of clear criminal record and raise no security or criminal concerns to the HKSAR; have no likelihood of becoming a burden on the HKSAR, etc.) as well as the relevant specific eligibility criteria detailed above before he/she may be considered for the grant of a visa/entry permit. It should be noted that the eligibility criteria may be subject to change from time to time without prior notice. Please check the ImmD's website at www.immd.gov.hk for up-to-date information.

Levy

20. Successful employers are required to pay the Employees Retraining Levy (hereafter "levy") that goes to the Employees Retraining Board for funding its provision of retraining courses and services for local workers, so as to encourage a larger latent labour force to receive training and enter into the employment market. The levy shall be payable in a lump sum in respect of each imported worker, and the payment amount is HK\$400 multiplied by the number of months covered by the employment contract up to a maximum of 24 months. The employer shall pay the levy to the ImmD after the approval for the application for visa/entry permit for an imported worker and before the issue of visa/entry permit by the ImmD. The levy paid is not refundable under any circumstances.

Termination of Contract prior to its Expiry

21. The employer or the imported worker may terminate the employment contract prior to its expiry by giving to the other party notice in writing or wages in lieu of notice as stipulated in the employment contract. The employer shall send a copy of the Notification of Termination of Employment Contract (ESLS-13) to the LD (fax number: 2542 2742) and to the Admission of Labour Section of the ImmD (fax number: 3902 3167) within seven days before the date of termination. The employer may also submit the Notification of Termination of Employment Contract to the ImmD through the ImmD's online service system at www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/nonpermanent/terminatecontractorstudies.htm. If the contract is terminated without prior notice, the employer shall send a copy of the Notification of Termination of Employment Contract (ESLS-13) to the above two departments within one working day after the termination. The Notification of Termination of Employment Contract should bear the name of the imported worker in English and Chinese (if applicable), his/her Hong Kong identity card number, the date of termination, the application reference number of the ImmD and the reference number of the LD. It should also indicate whether application for replacement of the imported worker is required by the employer. The Notification of Termination of Employment Contract (ESLS-13) can be downloaded from the website of the LD at www.labour.gov.hk. For details of replacement of imported worker, please refer to paragraph 22 below.

Application for Replacement of Imported Worker

22. Following the submission of the Notification of Termination of Employment Contract (ESLS-13), a Notification for Application for Replacement of Imported Worker will be issued to the eligible employer. The eligible employer shall arrange for his/her prospective worker to be imported to submit a visa/entry permit application to the ImmD within the period specified in the Notification for Application for Replacement of Imported Worker by following the application procedures as stipulated in paragraphs 7 to 12 above.

Contract Renewal with Same Employer

23. Employers who wish to renew the employment contract with an existing imported worker shall make a fresh application to the LD. Upon the grant of the approval-in-principle, the employer shall arrange for his/her imported worker whose contract is to be renewed to submit a visa/entry permit application to the ImmD within the period specified in the approval-in-principle letter by following the application procedures as stipulated in paragraphs 7 to 12 above.

Extension of Stay

24. Where the validity of the imported worker's travel document is shorter than the duration of the employment contract, a shorter limit of stay having regard to the validity of the travel document may be granted upon arrival of the imported worker. After renewal of the imported worker's travel document, an application should be made, within the limit of stay granted, for an extension of stay for completing the remaining period of the current contract, provided that the employer confirms to continue the employment of the imported worker. Extension of stay will not normally be granted to the imported worker upon completion or termination of his/her employment contract. A new application for a visa/entry permit should be submitted for a new employment contract.

Re-entry into the HKSAR

25. Non-permanent residents of the HKSAR (including imported worker admitted under the ESLS), irrespective of their nationality and type of travel document held, do not require a re-entry visa/entry permit to enter the HKSAR provided that they return within the currency of their permitted limit of stay and that the circumstances upon which they have acquired their residential status remain unchanged.

Payment of Fees

26. Upon approval of the applications, the notification of the application result issued by the ImmD will include a webpage link for payment. Payment of relevant fees could be made through the said webpage link or the GovHK website or the ImmD Mobile Application by credit cards (VISA, Mastercard, UnionPay and JCB only), Payment by Phone Service (PPS), Faster Payment System (FPS) or Mainland e-wallets (Alipay, WeChat Pay and UnionPay App only). After payment, applicants could instantly download or print the “e-Visa” by themselves.

27. If the applicant or his/her authorised representative attend the relevant Immigration office in person to pay, the relevant fees could be settled by cash, EPS, Octopus, FPS, Mainland e-wallets (Alipay, WeChat Pay and UnionPay App only) or cheque. The cheque should be crossed, made payable to “The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”, properly dated and signed. After payment, the applicant or his/her authorised representative will be issued with an “e-Visa” printed on a sheet of A4 white paper on the spot. The applicant can then download or print the “e-Visa” through the GovHK website or the ImmD Mobile Application.

Processing Time

28. It normally takes six weeks to process a visa/entry permit application for employment as an imported worker upon receipt of all the required documents. The ImmD will not be able to start processing the application unless all the required documents and information have been received. Please refrain from making enquiries about the progress of the application unless it is absolutely necessary, as it may delay the processing of the application.

29. All visa/entry permit applications are processed and determined by the ImmD. Approval of applications is entirely discretionary and is subject to changes in government policies. The Director of Immigration reserves absolute discretion to refuse any application even if the application meets all eligibility criteria.

Warning

30. It is an offence to make false statements or representations to an immigration officer. To verify the authenticity of the information and documents submitted with a visa/entry permit application, field visits may be conducted. A person who knowingly and wilfully makes a statement or gives information which he/she knows to be false or does not believe to be true

shall be guilty of an offence under the Laws of Hong Kong and any such visa/entry permit issued or permission to enter or remain in the HKSAR granted shall have no effect.

Disclaimer

31. The information in this guidebook serves as reference only. The ImmD of the HKSAR is not responsible for any loss or damage whatsoever arising out of or in connection with any information in this guidebook. The ImmD reserves the right to omit, suspend or edit any information in this guidebook at any time in its absolute discretion without giving any reason or prior notice. The ImmD further reserves the right to change the eligibility criteria and details of the arrangements set out above from time to time without prior notice.

Enquiries

32. For more information about the entry arrangements for imported workers, please contact the ImmD by enquiry hotline at (852) 2824 6111, by fax at (852) 2877 7711, by email to enquiry@immd.gov.hk, or visit the ImmD's website at www.immd.gov.hk.

VII. Table of Forms and Documents to be Submitted

(A) Forms and Documents to be Submitted by the Applicant

S/N	Forms/ Documents Required	Type of Application	
		Visa/Entry Permit (for a contract with a new employer/ contract renewal with the same employer/ replacement of an imported worker)	Extension of Stay (for completion of the remaining period of the current contract)
1.	Application Form for Visa/Entry Permit/ Extension of Stay under Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme (to be completed by the applicant) (ID 1001A)	✓	✓
2.	The applicant's recent photograph (affixed on page 1 of the application form ID 1001A)	✓	
3.	Copy of the applicant's valid travel document containing personal particulars, date of issue, date of expiry and/or details of any re-entry visa held (if applicable). For an applicant who is currently staying in the HKSAR, Copy of his/her travel document page containing the latest arrival stamp/landing slip/extension of stay label/"e-Visa" (if applicable) in the HKSAR. A Chinese resident of the Mainland who has not been issued with a travel document may submit a Copy of his/her People's Republic of China resident identity card.	✓	✓
4.	Copy of the applicant's Hong Kong identity card (if any)	✓	✓
5.	Copy of proof of academic qualifications and relevant work experience	✓	
6.	Declaration and Authorisation Form completed by the applicant (ESLS-11)	✓	
7.	Copy of the applicant's Macao identity card [<i>for Macao residents only</i>]	✓	✓
8.	Copy of the applicant's household registration in Taiwan and Taiwan identity card [<i>for Taiwan residents only</i>]	✓	✓

(B) Forms and Documents to be Submitted by the Employer

S/N	Forms/ Documents Required	Type of Application	
		Visa/Entry Permit (for a contract with a new employer/ contract renewal with the same employer/ replacement of an imported worker)	Extension of Stay (for completion of the remaining period of the current contract)
1.	Application Form for Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme (to be completed by the employer) (ID 1001B)	✓	
2.	Four original copies of the Standard Employment Contract (LD 294) signed between the employer and the imported worker	✓	
3.	Copy of the Standard Employment Contract (LD 294) signed between the employer and the imported worker		✓
4.	Copy of the Business Registration Certificate	✓	
5.	Copy of the approval-in-principle letter issued by the LD (including the Annex attached thereto) [<i>for a contract with a new employer/contract renewal with the same employer</i>] Copy of the Notification for Application for Replacement of Imported Worker [<i>for replacement of an imported worker</i>]	✓	
6.	Copy of the Joint Declaration Form on Importing Workers from the Mainland to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (ESLS-12) [if the worker to be imported is a Mainland resident] [<i>for a contract with a new employer/replacement of an imported worker</i>]	✓	
7.	Employer's supporting letter to confirm continuous employment (stating the job title, the employer's name, the total monthly remuneration and the period of employment of the imported worker)		✓

Important Notice

1. Notwithstanding that the documents and information required have been furnished, applicants and employers may still be required to submit further supporting documents and information in connection with the application when necessary.
2. Where a document is not in Chinese or English, it must be accompanied by a Chinese or English translation certified as a true translation by a sworn translator, court translator, authorised public translator, certified translator, expert translator or official translator.