

# Hong Kong: Technology Talent Admission Scheme enhancements

March 9, 2020

---

## In brief

---

The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) recently announced enhancements to the Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS), as introduced in the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address. These enhancements add six new technology areas to the existing seven technology areas covered by the scheme and extend coverage to all companies conducting research and development activities within the eligible technology areas.

---

## In detail

---

### Overview

TechTAS is a scheme providing expedited arrangements for employing foreign technology talents to work in Hong Kong on a quota-based system. See our previous [Insight](#) in May of 2018. The ITC launched enhancements to TechTAS on January 30, 2020 to further facilitate the innovation and technology sector in employing foreign talent in Hong Kong.

Initially launched as a pilot scheme two years ago, TechTAS covered tenants and incubates the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) and Cyberport Management Company Limited (Cyberport) conducting research and development (R&D) activities in seven technology areas:

- artificial intelligence
- biotechnology
- cybersecurity
- data analytics
- financial technologies
- material science
- robotics.

TechTAS offers significantly shorter processing time for employment visa applications, effectively fast-tracking immigration processing from the standard four to six weeks for employment visa applications to two weeks.

### Eligibility requirements

Eligible companies with substantive business in Hong Kong first apply to the ITC for a quota. The ITC aims to process the requests within two weeks. Once a quota is allocated (up to 100 persons a year), companies can sponsor eligible overseas or Mainland technology talents for an employment visa / entry permit within the 12-month quota validity period.

The non-local technology talent must be conducting R&D activities in the identified technology areas and hold a STEM degree from one of the well-recognised universities, as required by the ITC.

The sponsoring company must ensure that for every one-to-three non-local technology talents admitted under the scheme, they employ one new local full-time employee with a bachelor's degree or above and two new local interns at the undergraduate level or above.

### Key enhancements

The eligibility criteria remain the same for TechTAS; however, the enhancements broaden the scope of the scheme by allowing all eligible companies conducting R&D activities to apply for the enhanced scheme. That is, companies that have substantive business in Hong Kong, possess a valid Business Registration Certificate, and engage in eligible R&D areas are allowed to participate in TechTAS, regardless of whether they are residents of HKSTPC or Cyberport.

In addition to the existing technology areas, TechTAS also now extends to another six technology areas:

- 5G communications
- digital entertainment
- green technology
- integrated circuit design
- internet-of-things (IoT)
- microelectronics.

---

## The takeaway

---

The enhancements significantly widen the scope of TechTAS by adding key technology areas and opening to all companies undertaking R&D activities, which allows more companies to benefit from the certainty and streamlined procedures offered by the scheme. With markedly shorter processing time for employment visa applications, TechTAS places Hong Kong companies in a unique position in the market and gives competitive advantages in attracting global talents into Hong Kong, while also providing more local job opportunities and nurturing the growth of Hong Kong's local talent in the innovation and technology sector.

Compared to existing Hong Kong immigration schemes for employment visas (General Employment Policy and Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals), sponsoring companies are not burdened with local recruitment efforts for each visa application they sponsor. Under TechTAS, companies already will have demonstrated this at the quota application stage.

As with any immigration scheme, employers interested in benefitting from TechTAS must meet requirements (along with existing immigration rules for employment visas) specifically imposed under the scheme, such as applying for a quota allocation in the first instance and ensuring the local talent employment requirement is met. Therefore, employers should seek further advice if they are unsure which scheme is more appropriate in order to maximise their business strategies.

---

## Let's talk

---

For a deeper discussion of how this impacts your business, please contact your Global Mobility Services engagement team or the following professional from Hong Kong:

### **Global Mobility Services – Hong Kong**

James Clemence, *Asia Leader*  
+852 2289 1818  
[james.clemence@hk.pwc.com](mailto:james.clemence@hk.pwc.com)

### **Global Mobility Services – United Kingdom**

Leo Palazzuoli, *Global Leader*  
+44 7738 310312  
[leo.palazzuoli@pwc.com](mailto:leo.palazzuoli@pwc.com)

### **Global Mobility Services – United States**

John Shea, *US Leader*  
+1 (310) 809-9234  
[john.w.shea@pwc.com](mailto:john.w.shea@pwc.com)

© 2020 PwC. All rights reserved. PwC refers to the PwC network and/or one or more of its member firms, each of which is a separate legal entity. Please see [www.pwc.com/structure](http://www.pwc.com/structure) for further details.

This content is for general information purposes only, and should not be used as a substitute for consultation with professional advisors.

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We're a network of firms in 157 countries with over 276,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. Find out more and tell us what matters to you by visiting us at [www.pwc.com](http://www.pwc.com).