ZE practical guide

Arrival & settling-in guide

The arrival priority is not only housing or a SIM. It is confirming that the procedure you follow matches why you entered: study, professional employment, foreign work, or long-term residence.

For: For individuals or families preparing to arrive in Malaysia after defining their residence, study, or work purpose.

Last reviewed: 2026-08-27 **4 official sources**

Do you have an approval or letter matching your arrival purpose, and a clear appointment for the next regulatory step after entry?

Decision brief: the first week in Malaysia differs by your pass and reason for arrival

The guide focuses first on the correct pass, then offers a realistic arrival and settlement schedule with clear warnings that student, expatriate, and foreign-worker rules differ.

MDAC

Pre-travel check[1]

Add Malaysia Digital Arrival Card to the checklist, then check the official Immigration page to see whether it applies to your nationality and status.

7 days

International student after arrival[2]

Immigration states the post-arrival medical examination must be completed within seven days before pass endorsement.

Up to 60 months

Published Employment Pass duration[3]

Linked to the employment contract and committee discretion, and valid in Peninsular Malaysia according to the ESD page.

Separate route

Foreign worker[4]

Quota, sector, health, and entry processes are not the Employment Pass route; Sabah and Sarawak have separate state procedures.

Choose your route before arranging daily-life details

Route	Suitable for	Key point	First move
International student	A person with admission arranging Student Pass steps through the institution, EMGS, and Immigration.	After entry, the seven-day medical examination and endorsement step link to institution instructions and application status.	Keep offer, eVAL, insurance, medical appointment, and institution contact details.[2]
Employment Pass professional	An expatriate employee with a company holding an ESD route and clear eligibility to submit.	The pass is tied to the named company; changing company requires a new application.	Align start date, travel, and temporary housing with company confirmation and the official pass stage.[3]
Foreign worker	A case that falls under employer-led sector, quota, and immigration procedures.	It uses a separate entry, medical, VP(TE), and employer-obligation pathway, not an alternative Employment Pass.	Rely on the employer and official authority in the source country and confirm the route before arranging personal travel.[4]

A 30-day plan: from pre-travel to organised settlement

1 **Before travel** Traveller and responsible party

Match passport, visa or eVAL or employment letter to arrival purpose, and check MDAC where applicable plus current airline or Immigration instructions.[1][2][3]

Output: Travel file aligned to route

2 **Arrival day** Traveller

Keep regulatory documents, contacts, and temporary address accessible. Do not treat purchasing daily services as a substitute for entry or pass status.[1]

Output: Documented arrival and temporary address

3

First seven days

Student, employer, or institution

Complete the next regulatory appointment: student medical, Employment Pass confirmation, or foreign-worker procedure by route; record date, authority, and reference.[2][3][4]

Output: Completed regulatory step

4

Following two weeks

Traveller and family

Organise housing, connectivity, transport, accounts, or registrations under responsible-party guidance. Review contracts before a long-term commitment.[2][3]

Output: Initial life plan

5

By day 30

Status holder or company

Collect confirmations for pass, medical, registration, and housing, and record renewal dates or remaining actions. When circumstances change, return to the authority that owns the file.[2][3][4]

Output: Settlement and follow-up record

Arrival pack: separate status evidence from daily-life support

Status and travel evidence[1][2][3]

Show entry purpose and current stage

- Passport and visa or eVAL or approval letter matching the purpose.
- Offer or employment letter, and institution or employer correspondence.
- MDAC evidence or travel confirmations where applicable.

Appointments and first procedures[2][3][4]

Protect regulatory deadlines

- Medical, registration, or endorsement appointment and responsible-party contact details.
- Health insurance and documents likely to be re-requested at endorsement or registration.
- Date, outcome, and receipt log for every step.

Housing and connectivity[1]

Manage daily life without confusing it with the pass

- Clear temporary address and contract or proof when committing to longer-term housing.
- Backup contact and airport-to-institution or office plan.
- Service receipts and agreements needed for daily life only.

Changes not to delay reviewing

Changing employer[3]

- ESD states that changing company requires a new Employment Pass application; a new offer or internal change alone is not enough.
- **Action:** Do not start work or travel on the basis of a confirmed transfer before company and authority verify the new route.

Sabah or Sarawak[4]

- Immigration states that foreign-worker processes in Sabah and Sarawak are subject to state-government jurisdiction under established procedures.
- **Action:** Ask the responsible authority specifically about the state before arranging a move or signing housing or employment commitments.

Missed appointment or medical issue[2][4]

- The procedure can be deadline-led, such as post-arrival student medical or foreign-worker medical checks.
- **Action:** Contact the institution, employer, or file-owning authority immediately, and retain written evidence and the replacement appointment.

The purpose of arrival determines the entry plan

Start by confirming the pass or procedure that matches the reason for arrival. Do not use student guidance for work, Employment

Pass guidance for foreign workers, or short-visit guidance for long-term residence.

Different pathways not to mix[1][2][3]

- International student: starts with admission, EMGS, and eVAL, then visa arrangements where applicable, followed by post-arrival medical examination and Student Pass endorsement under the official process.
- Expatriate professional: the employer submits an Employment Pass through the company ESD account after checking company eligibility; the pass is tied to the named company.
- Foreign worker: a separate route for quotas, sectors, approvals, health checks, and entry. Immigration also confirms distinct procedures for Sabah and Sarawak.

Travel documents and digital checks[1][4]

- Check passport validity, visa need, and approval or admission documents before final travel booking. An intermediary message does not replace an official approval or instruction.
- Add the MDAC link to the pre-travel checklist, then confirm on the official Immigration page whether it applies to your nationality and entry status on the travel date.
- Keep non-editable copies of the passport, approvals, admission or employment letter, insurance, temporary address, and institution or employer contact information.

Split settling into administrative and practical tasks

Put regulatory tasks first because they are deadline-led. Then move to housing, connectivity, banking, and transport according to

your status and the responsible organisation's instructions.

Priority regulatory actions[1][2][3]

- For a student: arrange the post-arrival medical examination within the deadline and follow the institution's instructions for Student Pass endorsement and academic registration.
- For an expatriate professional: confirm Employment Pass status with the employer and do not work for a company other than the one named on the pass; ESD states that changing company requires a new application.
- For a foreign worker: the employer handles arrival, medical, and pass procedures under the official route, including published timelines and FOMEMA requirements where applicable.

Practical settling tasks[1][2][3]

- Secure a safe temporary address and retain clear housing proof before a long commitment. Review lease, utilities, and notice terms in writing.
- Arrange local connectivity and an airport-arrival plan, and keep backup contacts. Do not hand over an original passport except to an authority that lawfully requires it, with a receipt or documented instruction.
- Separate commercial services from regulatory steps: opening an account, getting a SIM, or choosing housing does not itself prove immigration status or a right to work or study.

Review your status before every move or change

Use the following list so important deadlines are not lost among daily-life arrangements. Where nationality, state, or reason for stay

differs, official authority instructions take priority over any general guide.

First-week checklist[1][2][3][4]

- The pass or approval letter matching the arrival purpose, and visa or eVAL status where needed.
- Required medical or registration appointment, plus copies of insurance, passport, and official correspondence.
- Temporary address, receiving party, institution or employer details, and an emergency communication plan.

Changes that need immediate verification[1][2][3][4]

- Changing employer, institution, state, or address is not handled the same way for every pass. Start by reading the instructions for the current pass and its responsible authority.
- If an appointment cannot be attended or a medical or document problem arises, contact the institution, employer, or file-owning authority immediately rather than waiting for the deadline.
- Do not base onward travel, work start, or study registration on a status still under review; retain the official confirmation or message that proves the current stage.

Final checklist

- ✓ Correct pass for arrival purpose
- ✓ Valid passport, visa, and approvals
- ✓ MDAC confirmation where applicable
- ✓ Required medical or registration appointment
- ✓ Safe address and contact plan

Official sources

[1] Student Pass — Immigration Department of Malaysia
https://www.imi.gov.my/index.php/en/main-services/pass/student-pass/

[2] Employment Pass — Expatriate Services Division — ESD
https://esd.imi.gov.my/portal/expatriates/myxpats/key-services/employment-pass/

[3] Foreign worker pathway — Immigration Department of Malaysia
https://www.imi.gov.my/index.php/en/main-services/foreign-worker/

[4] Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) — Immigration Department of Malaysia
https://imigresen-online.imi.gov.my/mdac/main

This guide does not replace Immigration, employer, or institution instructions. Do not start work or study, change employer, or travel based on a general guide alone; verify your status from the official source first.