

# Job Coach: Tips for working in Macau

**Alan Chan**

With the Macau job market booming, there is a wealth of opportunities for Hongkongers from all trades to work there. Nevertheless, the decision to work in Macau should not be taken lightly.

There are several pros and cons for relocating. On the positive side, the tax is lower in Macau and, instead of being taxed at the end of the financial year as you are in Hong Kong, it is deducted every month from your paycheque. Salaries tax only applies to those who earn more than HK\$120,000 a year. Employees in Macau are taxed from 7 to 12 per cent on a progressive scale, while in Hong Kong the maximum rate is 17 per cent.

There is also no need to worry about paying double taxes. If you are on a work permit from Hong Kong, you are not subjected to Hong Kong tax as you would have been hired by a business in Macau, and are only required to pay tax there.

A Hong Kong resident will need a visa to work in Macau. It takes four to six months to get a work permit. Your employer will handle the process for you.

If you are working for a large organisation, you may find that it is a lot quicker to get a work visa as these companies have a quota of permits at their disposal and all they need to do is register your name.

This can speed things up and may only take one to two months. However, some companies are sending in employees as consultants from overseas to work on short-term projects without applying for a permanent work permit. This is only advisable when proper advice is sought from Macau's immigration authorities.

If you are planning to work in Macau, think clearly about what you really want, the field you want to work in and your capabilities. Many companies are fairly new to the city, so working hours will likely be longer and more irregular.

As for the standard of living, it is worth remembering that the pace of life is a lot slower in Macau when compared with Hong Kong. Housing is becoming more expensive, but employers often provide housing allowances. Packages and benefits are not at the premium that they used to be due to the steady influx of people moving to the city and the

increase in property prices. It is rare to get 100 per cent housing allowance. The range is divided into different categories. For example, mid-level executives can expect HK\$3,000 to HK\$7,000 a month for housing, whereas top-level executives may receive full reimbursement for their housing expenses.

Other staff benefits can include free or discounted ferry tickets for employees who travel frequently between Hong Kong and Macau. And, if you work in industries such as hospitality and casinos, meals are sometimes provided.

For the ambitious, there is huge potential to carve out a successful career. More big-name companies are moving to the city and are looking for quality staff who are prepared to take on the challenge.

Thriving industries, which offer candidates a real break, include hospitality, with an emphasis on hotels, meetings, incentives, conferences and events, and sales and marketing, and banking.

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