

Frequently Asked Questions: Strengthening HR Standards and Organisational Capabilities

The [Tripartite Workgroup on Human Capital \(TWG-HC\) recommendations](#) announced on 24 September 2026 have set out several measures to strengthen HR professionalism and capabilities.

IHRP has prepared the following FAQs to provide greater clarity on what the recommendations mean for HR professionals, employers and the wider workforce.

The FAQs cover the proposed HR certification requirement for larger organisations, as well as initiatives to build people-centred AI capabilities, expand access to strategic HR expertise for SMEs, and strengthen people leadership. They address common questions on the rationale, implementation, support available and how the different initiatives work together to raise the quality and capability of the HR profession.

TWG-HC Recommendations: Requirement for HR Certification in Larger Firms

1. Why are organisations with more than 200 employees required to have at least one certified HR professional? Why the 200-employee threshold?

HR professionals make important decisions on hiring, development, progression and workforce transformation, which can have a direct impact on employees' careers and livelihoods. Requiring larger organisations to have at least one certified HR professional helps establish a common professional baseline and gives businesses and workers greater confidence in the quality of HR practices and workforce decisions.

The 200-employee threshold follows through on the 2020 NTUC-SNEF PME Taskforce recommendation. It is a pragmatic starting point as it covers a significant proportion of workers, while adopting a calibrated approach focussed initially on larger firms.

Organisations with 200 or fewer employees, while not subject to the prevailing requirement, are encouraged to support their HR professionals in pursuing IHRP Certification voluntarily. This gives HR teams access to a common and trusted professional baseline, and enables business leaders to work with certified HR professionals to strengthen human capital practices as their organisations grow and evolve.

Ultimately, the aim is not simply to meet a requirement, but to build stronger HR capabilities that can support better workforce practices and business outcomes across organisations of all sizes.

2. What is the IHRP Certification?

The Institute for Human Resource Professionals (IHRP) Certification is Singapore's nationally recognised HR credential, designed to validate capabilities, raise professional credibility, and set HR professionals apart in a competitive workforce.

3. What are the benefits of obtaining the IHRP Certification?

Taking up the IHRP Certification demonstrates commitment to professional excellence and helps HR professionals stand out in a competitive job market. Certified HR professionals gain access to best practices and playbooks, mentorship opportunities and training resources*, and join a growing community of HR leaders and professionals across many fields and sectors. These contribute to the professional development of HR professionals and their effectiveness in their organisations.

The key benefits of being IHRP Certified include:

- **Professional Credibility** – Gain recognition as a trusted HR professional benchmarked against Singapore's national HR standards, demonstrating the knowledge and competencies needed to practise effectively across key areas of HR.
- **Career Advancement** – Strengthen your professional profile and demonstrate your commitment to continuous development, supporting career progression and mobility across HR roles and organisations.
- **Continuous Growth** – Stay current with evolving HR practices, policies and legislation through Recertification, professional resources and ongoing learning opportunities. Over the past three years, IHRP has organised an average of 20 CPD and professional development events each year for the community.
- **Networking & Community** – Be part of a growing community of HR professionals and leaders, creating opportunities to exchange practical insights, learn from peers and build professional connections.
- **Value to Businesses** – Certified HR professionals bring recognised standards and capabilities into the workplace, supporting organisations in areas such as workforce planning, talent and skills development, people leadership, employee relations and workforce transformation. This can help businesses build more consistent HR practices and strengthen their ability to respond to changing workforce and business needs.
- **Curated Skilling & Upskilling Opportunities** – Skill and/or upskill with over 40 curated courses accredited and aligned to IHRP's professional and standards requirements. Refer [here](#) to access the list of accredited courses.

**Training resources are provided through IHRP's partnerships with IHLs and training providers*

There is strong evidence on the value of IHRP Certification. MOM's 2026 study titled 'Impact of IHRP Certification on Worker-level Outcomes'[^] found that IHRP Certified Professional (IHRP-CP) certification was associated with sustained wage and employment gains - wages increased by 1.9% in the certification year and by up to 6.5% over the following three years. The findings indicate that IHRP Certification has measurable returns for certified HR professionals, reflecting their increased value-add to their organisations.

Beyond supporting professional and career development, certification provides a trusted benchmark of HR capability. This gives employers and workers greater confidence in the quality of HR advice and people decisions, helping organisations make better workforce decisions and deliver stronger workplace outcomes. MOM and tripartite partners will continue to work with IHRP to deepen the evidence-base on the impact of IHRP Certification at the firm-level.

[^]Published in the Annual economic Survey of Singapore 2025 Publication (10 Feb 2026)

4. Why move from encouraging certification to requiring it?

HR professionals make important decisions on hiring, development, progression and workforce transformation. As our workforce becomes more diverse and employment issues more complex, organisations need HR professionals who meet high standards, possess future-ready competencies and are committed to continuous professional development.

This need was already recognised back in 2020 when the NTUC-SNEF PME Taskforce recommended introducing HR certification for larger firms. However, as such a significant change could not happen overnight, we have spent the past five years laying the groundwork through a promotional approach to build mindshare around the value of certification.

Adoption has grown steadily— as of September 2026, more than 9,000 HR professionals (comprising 20% of the HR workforce) are certified, with around 45% of larger organisations (>200 employees) having at least one certified professional. This gives us a strong foundation to move from encouragement to setting a clearer baseline standard for HR practice.

Certification is not simply about meeting a baseline. For businesses, it provides greater confidence that their HR practices are supported by professionals who have demonstrated the required knowledge and competencies. For HR professionals, certification provides a structured pathway for professional development, including

ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and access to a network of HR professionals and leaders who can provide perspectives and support as new challenges emerge.

As the demands on businesses and the HR profession continue to evolve, having a common and trusted professional baseline helps strengthen the capability of HR to support both people and business outcomes. The requirement therefore anticipates the higher standards that the HR profession will need to meet as workplaces become more complex, while continuing to encourage organisations of all sizes to invest in the professional development of their HR teams.

More details on how requirement will be enforced, including how threshold is computed, will be released in due course.

5. Could a company with certified HR professionals still have poor employment practices?

Certification alone cannot guarantee good employment practices. Employers remain responsible for the decisions they make and how they manage their workforce.

However, certification provides assurance that HR professionals have met a recognised baseline of knowledge and competence and signals a commitment to professional standards and responsible HR practice.

6. Could this become a box-ticking exercise?

Certification is not intended to be an endpoint or a box-ticking exercise. It establishes a common professional baseline, but strengthening HR practices requires organisations and HR professionals to go further.

The recommendation is part of a broader effort to strengthen HR capabilities, people leadership and human capital practices across organisations. Initiatives mentioned within the TWG-HC recommendations such as **People-centred AI Transformation for HR (PATH)** and the **Singapore Opportunity Index (SOI)** are intended to help businesses and HR teams strengthen their practices, respond to changing workforce needs and build capabilities for the future.

Employers are encouraged to consider how these initiatives and other available resources can be applied to their own organisational needs. Ultimately, organisations remain responsible for building strong HR teams and putting sound people and human capital practices into action, while HR professionals should continue to keep their skills current and take ownership of their professional development.

7. When will the certification requirement take effect? How much time will employers have to comply?

The requirement will take effect from 1 July 2028, giving employers sufficient time to prepare and transition. This is also intended to complement the roll-out of the Workplace Fairness Act and changes to the Employment Act, giving firms time to strengthen their HR capabilities as they prepare for changes in the employment landscape.

8. Will experienced HR professionals without certification be disadvantaged?

The recommendation is not intended to disadvantage experienced HR professionals, many of whom have built deep expertise and made significant contributions to their organisations over the course of their careers.

Certification offers a consistent standard for the profession, while recognising that HR professionals bring diverse experiences and career pathways. Certification supports this journey by providing recognised professional standards, as well as a structured framework for professional development and lifelong learning.

More broadly, certification should be viewed as a mark of professional commitment and a shared standard for the profession, not a judgment of an individual's worth or prior experience. It is one way for HR professionals to demonstrate that they are keeping pace with the evolving demands of the profession while continuing to build on the valuable experience they have already accumulated.

9. Some employers may see this as an additional cost and regulatory burden. How will they be supported?

[IHRP certification](#) is already subsidised for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents. [SkillsFuture Credit](#) can also be used to offset eligible certification fees. From 1 October 2026 until 30 June 2028, eligible HR professionals can also tap on an additional \$100 subsidy, bringing certification fees to between \$163.50 (IHRP-Certified Professional) and \$272.50 (IHRP-Senior Professional) for a three-year certification.

Further support is planned, including allowing enterprises to use the redesigned SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit to offset certification costs under the Enterprise Workforce Transformation Package. More details will be shared in due course.

10. Is certification onerous or difficult to pass? What support will be provided to employers and HR professionals?

IHRP Certification is designed to be rigorous while remaining accessible to HR professionals with the relevant experience and competencies. The assessments are structured around practical HR knowledge and competencies, with formats that allow candidates to demonstrate their understanding and application of HR principles.

IHRP also provides support to help candidates prepare, including:

- Certification prep-materials: Sample questions and guides are available on [IHRP's LearnWorld platform](#) to help candidates prepare for the certification
- Monthly assessment preparation tutorials: [Boost Camps](#) are conducted monthly for the HR Competencies Papers for IHRP-CP and IHRP-SP candidates, covering the assessment format and helping candidates prepare for case-based questions. Training providers such as Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), NTUC LearningHub, Singapore Polytechnic and SHRI also offer preparatory programmes and courses for HR professionals.
- Ongoing [professional development](#): Certified professionals are encouraged to continue learning and developing their capabilities to maintain their professional standing.

The certification process is intended to provide a meaningful benchmark of professional competence, while giving candidates appropriate resources and support to prepare for the assessments.

11. Are non-HR professionals eligible to apply for HR certification for a career transition?

Yes. Non-HR professionals are eligible if they are applying for certification as part of a planned career transition into the HR profession, as IHRP certifications are intended for HR professionals.

Business leaders and other professionals who oversee HR functions or are meaningfully involved in HR decision-making and processes can also apply for IHRP certification. However, this group is only eligible for IHRP Certified Associate (CA) certification – Working Professionals.

12. Is there a minimum work experience requirement to apply for IHRP certification?

Yes. Applicants must meet the baseline eligibility criteria for the IHRP certification level they are applying for.

- [IHRP Certified Associate \(Working Professional\)](#)
- [IHRP Certified Professional](#)
- [IHRP Senior Professional](#)

IHRP is also exploring broadening qualification through alternative pathways. One such pathway is through HCLI's HR Leaders Programme (HRLP): individuals who have completed this programme will qualify for IHRP-SP certification through this route. For more information, visit HCLI's website [here](#).

If you are unsure whether your role or experience meets the requirements, or if your organisation has unique contexts or circumstances, you can write in to IHRP at hello@ihrp.sg for clarification and support.

13. Can employers apply for IHRP certification on behalf of their HR staff?

No. Employers cannot apply on behalf of their staff. HR professionals must submit their own application directly.

However, employers can work with IHRP through corporate partnership programmes to facilitate and streamline the application process for their HR teams. Enterprises will also be able to use their SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit to offset remaining out-of-pocket fees for their HR professionals. More details will be released when ready.

Employers interested in establishing a corporate partnership can connect with our Corporate Partnership team at corporatepartnership@ihrp.sg to find out more.

TWG-HC Recommendations – People-centred AI Transformation for HR (PATH)

1. How were the HR priority areas and consultants selected, and will there be more priority areas and consultants in the future?

The initial HR priority areas were identified based on where AI has the potential to deliver meaningful business impact while addressing common workforce and HR challenges. The first batch of consultants were selected from the Workforce Development Grant (Job Redesign+) pre-approved consultant panel, based on their relevant expertise, experience and capabilities in supporting organisations through job and HR transformation.

As PATH develops, we expect more AI use cases in HR priority areas to be supported by expanding the pool of consultants to cater to evolving business needs and the changing nature of work. The priority areas will also be aligned with relevant AI Fluency Skills Badges, giving organisations a clearer understanding of the skills and capabilities needed to adopt AI thoughtfully and sustain AI-enabled HR practices over time.

Ultimately, PATH is intended to give organisations a practical starting point for exploring where AI can add value in HR, while ensuring that adoption is grounded in business needs, workforce considerations and the capabilities required to make the change sustainable.

More details on the PATH initiatives will be provided and periodically updated on IHRP's website when ready.

2. What other resources/ support can organisations tap on for workforce transformation?

Businesses undertaking enterprise-wide and worker transformation may also tap National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) Company Training Committee (CTC) Grant, to support projects that enable productivity, business capability and worker outcomes. Interested businesses can approach NTUC or Employment and Employability Institute (e2i) to scope their project.

3. What are the 12 AI Fluency Skills Badges at Proficient level, and how do they differ from existing SkillsFuture credentials?

The [AI Fluency Skills Badges](#) (Proficient) are industry-recognised micro-credentials developed by IHRP to validate how HR professionals apply AI effectively, responsibly and productively in real workplace contexts. Designed around the capabilities of an AI-Fluent Worker, the badges span 12 HR domains and recognise practitioners who can integrate AI into their work, solve business challenges, critically evaluate AI-

generated outputs, and apply sound judgement, governance and human oversight in decision-making.

Unlike traditional credentials that primarily recognise course completion or knowledge acquisition, the AI Fluency Skills Badges recognise demonstrated capability and workplace impact. Badge earners must show evidence of applying AI within their HR specialisation to achieve tangible outcomes such as increased productivity, improved decision-making, stronger workforce insights, or more effective HR processes.

To support this, IHRP has launched 2 Proficient-level badge programmes and is progressively curating and accrediting additional training pathways to expand coverage across the remaining AI Fluency domains, strengthening a growing ecosystem of industry-relevant AI capability development for HR professionals.

The badges differ from existing credentials in three key ways:

- Workplace application over knowledge acquisition: Individuals must demonstrate the practical use of AI rather than solely completing training or passing knowledge assessments.
- HR-specific contextualisation: The competencies are tailored to HR functions and workflows, enabling professionals to develop AI capabilities relevant to their roles and specialisations.
- Alignment to national AI fluency goals: The badges translate IMDA's AI-Fluent Worker requirements into observable and assessable AI competencies in the HR domain, providing employers with a practical way to identify HR professionals who can leverage AI responsibly and effectively in the workplace.

4. Who are the trainers for such AI fluency programmes? How do we ensure that they are suitable for training for AI on HR?

Trainers form part of IHRP's course accreditation process where we look at both the trainer profiles and their qualification(s)/experience to conduct the course. For AI fluency courses, the trainers would need both AI and HR domain expertise. Naturally, we have the IHRP-certified preferred requirements, but we are cognizant that not every topic has IHRP-certified trainers.

Therefore, we do offer a level of exemptions that will depend heavily on their experiences and assurance that the trainer has subject matter expertise.

TWG-HC Recommendations – Targeted support for SMEs to access strategic HR expertise

1. Is the model proven, and what happens after the pilot?

Fractional leadership is an established model used across many markets and functions. The pilot provides an opportunity to test and refine a structured model for HR professionals, tailored to meet the Singapore SMEs and our workforce transformation needs.

The six-month pilot will also provide insights into SME demand, the delivery and matching model, practitioner standards, pricing considerations and overall effectiveness. Following the pilot, IHRP and its programme delivery partner, co:grow, will consolidate the findings and assess the viability of scaling the model.

Any longer-term expansion will be guided by the pilot findings and discussions with ecosystem stakeholders, with the aim of ensuring the model remains relevant, sustainable and impactful for SMEs.

2. How will HR professionals be matched to SMEs? How are both HR professionals and SMEs selected for this pilot?

The pilots used a structured framework which includes a structured assessment and a matching approach ensure that SME would be connected to suitable HR support. Interested SME could first go through discovery conversation, and diagnostic assessment to identify their workforce priorities, business challenges and HR needs. This allows the team to determine the nature of support is required and if fractional HR engagement is the most appropriate solutions. The matching process then considers factors such as business needs, growth stage and expertise required.

The pilot is also drawing experienced HR professionals with experience associated with the IHRP Senior Professional (IHRP-SP) level. HR professionals are also required to complete a 3-week structured training and assessment under the pilot before being matched to participating SMEs.

3. How will the model deal with confidentiality and conflict of interest where one practitioner serves several SMEs, possibly competitors?

Professional standards, confidentiality and conflict management are important considerations in the design of the pilot. The pilot is supported by clear governance arrangements, including confidentiality, professional conduct and conflict management requirement, to support a trusted and sustainable ecosystem.

TWG-HC Recommendations – People Leadership

1. What will the proposed Business Acumen Role Badge cover?

The Business Acumen Role Badge is intended to help HR professionals strengthen their ability to connect people priorities with business strategy and transformation.

The final badge requirements, including the precise combination of Skills Badges and assessment requirements, will be released at a later date.

2. Will badges stack towards IHRP certification? How do the two fit together?

[Skills Badges](#) and IHRP Certification serve different purposes. Skills Badges currently do not lead to or replace IHRP Certification; and are not a prerequisite for certification.

Certification provides the professional foundation. It recognises an HR professional's broader capability, experience and application of the IHRP Body of Competencies.

Skills Badges provide more granular recognition. They allow professionals to demonstrate specific areas of capability, such as AI Fluency, People Analytics, Strategic Workforce Planning, HR Technology or Business and Financial Acumen. This allows professionals to build more targeted capabilities as the needs of HR and organisations evolve.

For the proposed 2028 requirement, the requirement is for an organisation with more than 200 employees to have at least one suitable HR professional who is IHRP-CP or higher. A Skills Badge on its own would therefore not satisfy the certification requirement.