



Foreign Buyer? Check if LDAU Approval Comes First

Description

A foreign person who intends to acquire restricted residential property in Singapore must first obtain approval from SLA's Land Dealings Approval Unit. Restricted property includes vacant residential land, terrace, semi-detached and detached houses, certain strata landed homes, townhouses and residential shophouses.

This guide is for a non-Singapore citizen or entity considering landed or other restricted residential property. Its purpose is to classify the property and put LDAU approval before an irreversible purchase commitment. The answer comes first because the costliest mistake is usually taking the next irreversible step before the controlling condition is known.

Choose the branch that matches your situation

Situation	Practical next step
The property is a standard condominium unit	Confirm that it is not a restricted strata-landed or other controlled interest
The property is landed or vacant residential land	Treat LDAU classification and approval as an early condition
The buyer is a Singapore entity with only citizen controllers	Check whether a clearance certificate rather than foreign-person approval applies
Existing approval conditions need changing	Use the variation route instead of assuming the condition has lapsed

The table is a triage tool, not a substitute for the underlying authority. It separates the reader's situation from the action, so a general rule is not applied to the wrong person, property, business, journey or account.

Classify the asset precisely

Marketing labels such as cluster house can conceal a different legal form. The controlling position was checked against [SLA LDAU FAQs](#).

Do this: Obtain title and development particulars before relying on an advertisement. This turns the rule into a dated record that another person can review, instead of leaving the outcome to memory or an informal message.

Identify every acquirer

Individuals, foreign entities and some Singapore entities use different routes.

Do this: Map purchaser, beneficial interest and ownership structure. This turns the rule into a dated record that another person can review, instead of leaving the outcome to memory or an informal message.

Apply before commitment

Approval is case-specific and should not be treated as a post-completion formality.

Do this: Make the OTP or contract subject to proper legal advice and approval. This turns the rule into a dated record that another person can review, instead of leaving the outcome to memory or an informal message.

Prepare contribution evidence

The FAQ lists economic contribution and roots in Singapore among assessment factors.

Do this: Submit truthful, current supporting documents without embellishment. This turns the rule into a dated record that another person can review, instead of leaving the outcome to memory or an informal message.

Read every condition

Approval can carry use, disposal or other conditions. The related operating detail was also checked against [SLA LDAU e-Applications](#).

Do this: Create a condition register with owner, deadline and evidence. This turns the rule into a dated record that another person can review, instead of leaving the outcome to memory or an informal message.

Separate approval from tax and finance

LDAU approval does not settle ABSD, loan or conveyancing treatment.

Do this: Run the tax, funding and legal workstreams separately. This turns the rule into a dated record that another person can review, instead of leaving the outcome to memory or an informal message.

Use a Singapore property lawyer

A title classification error can invalidate the transaction plan.

Do this: Have counsel confirm the route before money becomes non-refundable. This turns the rule into a dated record that another person can review, instead of leaving the outcome to memory or an informal message.

Two original tools for this decision

a title-to-LDAU classification matrix covering individual, entity, restricted asset and approval route

This LBRD analysis applies each branch above to the reader's actual role, timing and evidence. Write the facts in separate columns, mark unknowns, and do not convert an estimate into a confirmed eligibility result.

a condition register that separates LDAU, tax, financing and conveyancing evidence

Keep the source, date checked, decision owner, deadline and supporting document in the same record. The value of this tool is not the template itself; it is the visible connection between the official condition and the action taken.

Stress-test the plan

A permanent resident considering a terrace house remains a foreign person for this approval question. The buyer should not assume PR status makes landed property unrestricted, and should have the title and intended ownership reviewed before exercising an option.

The example is an analysis, not a promise that an authority, operator, provider or professional will reach the same result. Change one material fact at a time and re-run the decision. If the route depends on a date, amount, pass type, legal form, age, location or approved drawing, verify that field at the point of action.

Before acting

1. Confirm that it is not a restricted strata-landed or other controlled interest.
2. Treat LDAU classification and approval as an early condition.
3. Check whether a clearance certificate rather than foreign-person approval applies.
4. Use the variation route instead of assuming the condition has lapsed.

5. Run the tax, funding and legal workstreams separately.
6. Have counsel confirm the route before money becomes non-refundable.

Save the two official pages with the date checked. If an online form, price, timetable, clinic network or approval condition changes, the current official service must take priority over this explainer.

Recheck the evidence before the final step

Read the official material in the order the decision occurs. First confirm who or what is covered. Next confirm the effective date, threshold, location or document requirement. Then record any exception and the evidence for using it. Finally, verify the live submission, booking, payment or approval channel. This sequence prevents a valid rule from being attached to the wrong case.

A second reviewer should be able to reproduce the conclusion from the saved facts. If they cannot, the file is not ready: identify the missing field, return to the primary source and label any remaining uncertainty plainly.

Do not combine separate controls into one yes-or-no answer. Eligibility, cost, timing, approval, suitability and service availability can each have a different source and owner. A favourable answer on one field does not cure a failed condition on another. Keep the branches separate until every consequential field is confirmed.

Also distinguish the date a rule was announced, the date it takes effect and the date the reader must act. Where a future change is involved, write both the present process and the transition point. That makes it clear which instruction applies today and what must be checked again later.

Limits and escalation

SLA assesses applications case by case. Legal advice is essential before signing or paying non-refundable sums.

Where the facts are disputed or the consequence is material, pause and ask the controlling authority or an appropriately qualified professional. Keep the answer with the documents used to make the decision.

Related LBRD guides

For the next adjacent task, read [Buyer's Stamp Duty: Calculate the Residential Property Cost](#). You may also need [Move a Foreign Company to Singapore: Test Re-Domiciliation First](#).

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Author

rachelng