

## Conditions for participation in the Candidate Support Programme for the EQE journey 2027 – 2029

### 1. Introduction

**1.1** The **European Patent Organisation** is a not-for-profit, public, intergovernmental organisation legally underpinned by the European Patent Convention (EPC).

EPC-related protocols form an integral part of the EPC, in particular the [Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of 5 October 1973 \(PPI\)](#). On the basis of the EPC and the PPI (Article 3), the European Patent Organisation, including its executive body, the European Patent Office (EPO), has immunity from jurisdiction and execution within the scope of its official activities in its member states.

**1.2** The European qualifying examination (EQE) is designed to establish whether an individual is qualified to practise as a professional representative and to represent applicants before the EPO. The legal basis for the EQE is Articles 134(2)(c) and 134a(1)(b) EPC. The Regulation on the European qualifying examination (REE) and its Implementing provisions (IPREE) are published in the [Supplementary publication 3 – Official Journal EPO 2024](#).

**1.3** The EPO runs the Candidate Support Programme (CSP) as part of a co-operation with its member states. The aim of the programme is to build a more inclusive and diverse patent profession by improving geographical representation and gender balance. To achieve this, the CSP helps selected candidates prepare for a successful completion of all five EQE papers and qualify as a professional representative before the EPO.

**1.4** These conditions describe the support offered to students (selected candidates) under the CSP as well as the duties of those students and the EPO's expectations of them.

### 2. The programme

**2.1** The CSP aims to prepare students for all examination papers of the EQE, i.e. paper F and main examination papers M1, M2, M3 and M4. The programme follows the progressive EQE schedule and is therefore delivered over three consecutive years. In the first year, students will prepare for the foundation paper F. In the second year, they will prepare for papers M1 and M2 and in the third year for M3 and M4.

**2.2** Students' progress will be carefully monitored. All aspects of participation in the CSP will be governed by the principles of good will and good faith, in particular when assessing students' results and potential situations described in point 5 below.

### **3. Support provided by the EPO**

**3.1** CSP students will be assigned a contact person at the EPO for the duration of their participation in the CSP. That person will clarify any administrative CSP-related matters.

**3.2** Students may receive two types of support:

- a comprehensive support package as described under points 3.2.1 and 3.2.2

or

- full EQE fee support as described under point 3.2.3

The financial support is not a remuneration, salary or payment in return for any specific service. It is students' own responsibility to comply with any tax or social security regulation that may apply in their country.

#### **3.2.1 Learning support**

(a) Access to the online training course(s) and materials provided by the EPO Patent Academy.

(b) Online training courses, cramming courses and mock examinations provided by EQE tutors from renowned training institutions.

(c) Dedicated coaching from an EQE-qualified professional representative to support the preparation process with the aim to pass the EQE exams; this includes answering substantive questions, helping with assignments, giving advice and monitoring students' progress. Students and their coaches will have videoconference consultations on a regular basis.

#### **3.2.2 Financial support - provided per examination year**

(a) A lump sum of EUR 300 to cover expenses for learning material (preferably acquired in electronic form)

(b) A bursary of EUR 600 to cover some of the additional preparation-related expenses.

(c) Enrolment and examination fees for the paper(s) for which the candidate is receiving support.

(d) Students must request this financial support according to the details communicated by the contact person.

#### **3.2.3 Full EQE fee support**

Selected candidates will receive full EQE fee support (without training, coaching, or bursary). This one-off payment of 1 600 EUR will cover 100% of enrolment fee and examination fees for first sitting of the examination papers.

This full EQE fee support is only available once per selected candidate.

### **3.3 Re-sitters**

If students fail paper F, they must re-sit paper F the following year. They must follow the training for M1 and M2 in the second year. No support will be offered for the papers they re-sit.

If students fail paper M1 and/or paper M2, they must follow the training for M3 and M4 in the third year and may re-sit the paper(s) they failed. No support will be offered for the papers they re-sit.

By the end of the three years of CSP journey, students are expected to have sat all five EQE papers.

## **4. Students' duties**

**4.1** By applying to CSP under these Conditions, students commit to:

- (a) enrol to and sit any EQE paper(s) in the current CSP year.
- (b) behave according to and uphold the principles of good will and good faith.
- (c) prepare as best as possible and do their utmost to pass the relevant EQE examination(s).
- (d) follow the training programme and carry out the related exercises, participate in the planned CSP events set out in Annex 1, and complete the tasks or assignments diligently by the deadlines set by the trainers and/or coaches.
- (e) plan personal commitments and professional activities to keep up with the pace of the group training.
- (f) participate in remote study forums/groups and blogs via electronic means that are fit for purpose.
- (g) regularly and actively report to their coach on the progress of their studies, training sessions or EQE preparation work.
- (h) provide feedback to the EPO on CSP-related matters when requested.
- (i) inform the EPO contact person (point 3.1 above) without delay if
  - i. they are unable for any reason to attend one of the scheduled CSP events
  - ii. they need, are obliged or intend to pause or cancel their participation in the CSP
  - iii. they intend not to sit EQE paper(s) for which they have enrolled
  - iv. they receive a bursary or other funding from any other body
  - v. they take part in any EPO-organised activity (internship, Young Professional programme, Academy course, etc).
  - vi. they have a relative employed at the EPO
  - vii. they have a disability, impairment or special condition to allow the EPO or third parties to adapt planned training where necessary
  - viii. any circumstance arises that may impact on their participation in the CSP.
- (j) keep their contact data updated via the EQC web portal.

**4.2** Once students have passed the EQE and have been entered on the list of professional representatives pursuant to Article 134 EPC, they commit to support the development of the profession in the EPO member states, in particular in the country of the NPO by which they were selected.

The following activities in coordination with the CSP contact person fall under the CSP "giving-back" principle:

- (a) Contributing 20 hours to a twinning scheme.
- (b) Raising awareness about the patent profession.
- (c) Support promotion activities in cooperation with, inter alia, the EPO, NPOs and professional associations.

## **5. Discontinuation**

The EPO may decide to suspend or terminate a student's participation in the CSP, or to reduce the support provided to the student, if

- (a) the information provided by the student is incomplete, inaccurate or misleading.
- (b) it has been proven that the student acted in serious breach of these Conditions or in breach of the REE or any other EQE- and CSP-related framework
- (c) the student has acted in a manner that has brought the EPO into disrepute.

The EPO may resort to reclaiming payments made in the case of a serious breach.

## **6. Data protection and information sharing**

**6.1** Students' personal data will be processed and stored in accordance with the [EPO data protection statement](#) solely for the purpose of conducting and monitoring the CSP. The EPO unit in charge of managing the CSP and the personal data required about students is Department 5.4.2.1 Certifications. If necessary for carrying out tasks related to the CSP, relevant data may be passed on to other EPO departments.

**6.2** Students agree to register using the EPO's SAP tool, where each of their financial requests will be processed. They will also give the EPO their bank account details and agree to the EPO storing said data confidentially for the sole purpose of making payments/reimbursements to students and solely for the duration of students' participation in the CSP.

**6.3** Students' names and email addresses may be shared with other students who are, or will be, taking part in the CSP. The EPO may ask for information about students' experience and consult their EQE results for statistical and publication purposes.

**6.4** Students may at any time request correction of their personal data or withdraw their consent by writing to [candidatesupport@epo.org](mailto:candidatesupport@epo.org).

## **7. Confidentiality and final provisions**

**7.1** Students undertake to observe and maintain strict confidentiality regarding all aspects of the CSP and the EPO that have been classified as confidential or are recognisable as such.

**7.2** Except with the prior written approval of the EPO, students will abstain from issuing any statement concerning the CSP to third parties, in particular to the press and other communication/social media, or otherwise divulging information obtained during their participation in the CSP.

**7.3** Prior written approval of students will be required for the EPO to use and publish written material or other material drawn up or provided by students while taking part in the CSP.

**7.4** Students are participating in a study programme run by the EPO. This participation does not confer EPO-related status on students. Students may not consider themselves, or be treated as, EPO employees or auxiliary staff members. Students have to present themselves as being external to the EPO vis-à-vis any third parties. Likewise, they have to abstain from behaving or communicating in any way that may give the impression that they belong to, or are part of, the EPO.

## ANNEX 1

### TRAINING PLAN

#### Course and event schedule for the CSP year 2026/2027

- The EQE CSP 2026 kick-off meeting, is planned for October 2026. This meeting includes an introductory session for all new CSP students. The details on exact date, time, agenda and required software will be communicated in due time.
- **Paper F training courses**
  - Five-day preparatory seminar between mid-October and end of November 2026
  - Two-day mock examination training January/February 2027

- **Coaching**

Coaching will start in October 2026

#### Provisional courses schedule for the CSP years 2027/2028

- **Papers M1 and M2 training courses**
  - Three-day online training courses between mid-October and end of November 2027
  - Two-day mock examination training in January/February 2028

- **Coaching**

Coaching will start in October 2027

#### Provisional courses schedule for the CSP years 2028/2029

- **Papers M3 and M4 training courses**
  - Four-day online training course for paper M3 and three-day online training course for paper M4 between mid-October and end of November 2028
  - Two-day mock examination training in January/February 2029

- **Coaching**

Coaching will start in October 2028