

# **Decision of the President of the European Patent Office dated 18 March 2026 adopting rules concerning the establishment of a European patent administration certification**

The President of the European Patent Office,

Having regard to Article 10(2)(a) of the European Patent Convention,

Having regard to the decision CA/D 7/21 of the Administrative Council of the European Patent Organisation dated 13 October 2021 on modernising the structures of the European Patent Academy,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

## **Article 1**

The rules concerning the establishment of a European patent administration certification as contained in the annex to this decision are herewith adopted.

This decision enters into force on 01.04.2026.

Done at Munich, 18.03.2026.

António Campinos

President

## **Annex**

### **Rules concerning the establishment of a European patent administration certification**

#### **Article 1**

##### **European patent administration certification**

(1) The European patent administration certification (EPAC) is a professional certification for patent administrators and IP professionals. It is organised by the European Patent Office (EPO) and delivered in modular format, with each module requiring a separate exam.

(2) EPAC certifies the mastering of procedural administrative tasks relating to the patent granting procedures under the European Patent Convention (EPC) and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) as further specified in the syllabus defined in Article 8(2) below.

(3) The EPO issues a diploma to candidates on the successful completion of each module.

(4) The EPO issues a certificate to candidates on the successful completion of all modules.

#### **Article 2**

##### **Responsibility**

(1) Responsibility for the organisation and administration of the EPAC lies with the EPO.

(2) The President of the EPO (hereinafter "the President") nominates the members of the various EPAC bodies as specified in Article 3(2) and (3). These bodies are certification support groups within the meaning of Article 5 of CA/D 7/21 of the Administrative Council of the European Patent Organisation.

(3) The President sets the fees related to EPAC.

#### **Article 3**

##### **Organisation and conduct**

(1) A dedicated EPO unit is responsible for the organisation and conduct of the modular exams.

(2) The EPAC Board is tasked with drafting and marking the exams for the individual EPAC modules.

(3) The EPAC Review Board is tasked with handling individual requests for review of decisions concerning the conduct or the result of individual modular exams and the overall certification.

(4) The modular exams are conducted in an online format.

#### **Article 4**

##### **EPAC Board**

(1) The EPAC Board is composed of four EPO employees (hereinafter "EPO members") and four external experts. All members of the EPAC Board have successfully completed either the EPAC or the European qualifying examination (EQE) for professional representatives before the EPO.

(2) The EPAC Board is chaired by one of its EPO members. The deputy chairperson is also an EPO member. The chairperson has a casting vote.

(3) The President appoints the four EPO members to the EPAC Board, including the chairperson and their deputy, for a renewable term of two years. An EPO member ceases to be a member of the EPAC Board on the date of their retirement or resignation from the EPO. The President may allow the member to complete their ongoing term and to be re-appointed for one further term.

(4) The President appoints the four external experts to the EPAC Board for a renewable term of two years.

(5) The chairperson of the EPAC Board decides on the number of individual modules that comprise the EPAC, as defined under Article 1(1) above.

(6) The EPAC Board drafts a proposal for each module's syllabus. The syllabi are approved by the chairperson of the EPAC Board and published on the EPO website at least four months before the EPAC exam date(s).

(7) The EPAC Board drafts a proposal for each module's marking scheme. The marking scheme is approved by the chairperson.

(8) The EPAC Board drafts the examiners' report for each module, including providing a model answer. The chairperson approves the examiners' report for publication.

## **Article 5**

### **EPAC Review Board**

(1) The EPAC Review Board is composed of a legally qualified member as chairperson and two members of the EPAC Board, each appointed by the chairperson of the EPAC Review Board.

(2) The President appoints the chairperson and their deputy from among EPO members for a renewable term of two years. The chairperson and their deputy may not be members of the EPAC Board.

## **Article 6**

### **Enrolment**

(1) The certification is open to anyone.

(2) Candidates must submit a request for enrolment for one or more modules via the electronic means provided on the EPO website. The request for enrolment is not deemed filed until the enrolment fee has been paid.

(3) Upon enrolment, candidates must indicate the official EPO language (English, French or German) in which they wish to sit the exams and submit their answers.

(4) Candidates are informed if their enrolment is successful.

## **Article 7**

### **Information on EPAC exams**

The EPO publishes the exam date(s), the deadline for filing the request for enrolment, the fee structure, instructions for candidates and any other information pertaining to the EPAC exams on its website.

## **Article 8**

### **Syllabus**

(1) The certification demonstrates that candidates have the required knowledge and skills to deal independently and correctly with the procedures associated with the filing of international patent applications and their subsequent handling in the international phase, up to entry into the regional European phase, the filing, prosecution, grant and maintenance of European patent applications, as well as the grant and post-grant procedures.

(2) The syllabus includes:

- (a) general aspects of patent law under the EPC and the PCT
- (b) EPO procedure from filing to search results and publication, and from entry into examination to grant, refusal or withdrawal
- (c) EPO post-grant procedure, including national validation and Unitary Patent; EPO opposition procedure; EPO general legal provisions and *inter partes/ex parte* appeal procedures
- (d) PCT Chapter I and Chapter II procedures; entry into the national/regional phase following the PCT phase.

## **Article 9**

### **Conduct of candidates**

(1) Candidates sitting the modular exams must comply with the instructions published prior to and given during the exams.

(2) Candidates must not engage in fraudulent behaviour. Fraudulent behaviour is any behaviour by a candidate with the aim of obtaining an undue advantage. Such behaviour may involve, *inter alia*, using prohibited equipment or seeking or accepting assistance from third parties.

(3) If a candidate fails to comply with the instructions given or engages in fraudulent behaviour, the following measures in respect of that candidate may be taken by the chairperson of the EPAC Board upon consultation of the EPAC Board:

- (a) deduction of marks
- (b) disqualification from one or more present module(s)
- (c) disqualification from one or more future module(s).

(4) The chairperson of the EPAC Board takes a reasoned decision on any case of non-compliance with the instructions or fraudulent behaviour upon consultation of the EPAC Board and notifies the candidate concerned in writing.

## **Article 10**

### **Special arrangements for candidates**

(1) Candidates who have a condition that significantly affects their ability to take the exams under standard conditions may request special arrangements.

(2) The request must be submitted at the time of enrolment, or as soon as possible thereafter, but no later than three months before the exam. The request must include a medical certificate issued by a competent national health service or a certified medical practitioner.

(3) Depending on the severity and degree of the disability, specific measures may be granted to compensate as far as possible for the consequences of the condition. Any measure granted will be limited to what is strictly necessary to ensure equal access while maintaining the integrity and uniformity of the exam conditions.

#### **Article 11**

##### **Passing modular exams and certification**

(1) Each module's exam can be sat independently; exams can be sat either in a single session or separately in different sessions.

(2) The chairperson of the EPAC Board defines the pass threshold for each module upon consultation of the EPAC Board and approves the individual results for each candidate.

(3) European patent administration certification is awarded to candidates having successfully completed all individual modules at least once.

#### **Article 12**

##### **Request for review**

(1) A candidate may request the review of an adverse decision taken on the basis of these rules.

(2) The request must be filed within two weeks following notification of the decision.

(3) The request is not deemed filed until the review fee has been paid.

(4) The EPAC Review Board decides on the request and informs the candidate of its decision in writing by electronic means.

(5) Any member of the EPAC Board who was involved in the impugned decision may not be a part of the EPAC Review Board deciding on the corresponding request for review.

(6) The decision of the EPAC Review Board is not subject to any further means of redress.

#### **Article 13**

##### **Announcement of the results**

(1) Each candidate is informed individually of their result(s).

(2) A list of successful candidates is published on the EPO website.

#### **Article 14**

##### **Communications**

Any organisational enquiries must be filed via the official contact form available on the EPO website or the EPAC candidates' portal.

#### **Article 15**

##### **Anonymity**

The marking is conducted in such a way as to preserve the anonymity of candidates.

**Article 16**  
**Professional secrecy**

All persons carrying out official functions within the framework of the EPAC programme within the meaning of Article 3 are bound by professional secrecy during and after their term of office in all matters concerning the exams and the candidates.

**Article 17**  
**Entry into force**

The present rules enter into force on 1 April 2026 and supersede any previous rules concerning the establishment of EPAC.