

## **EQE 2022 – survey summary**

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## 1. Executive summary

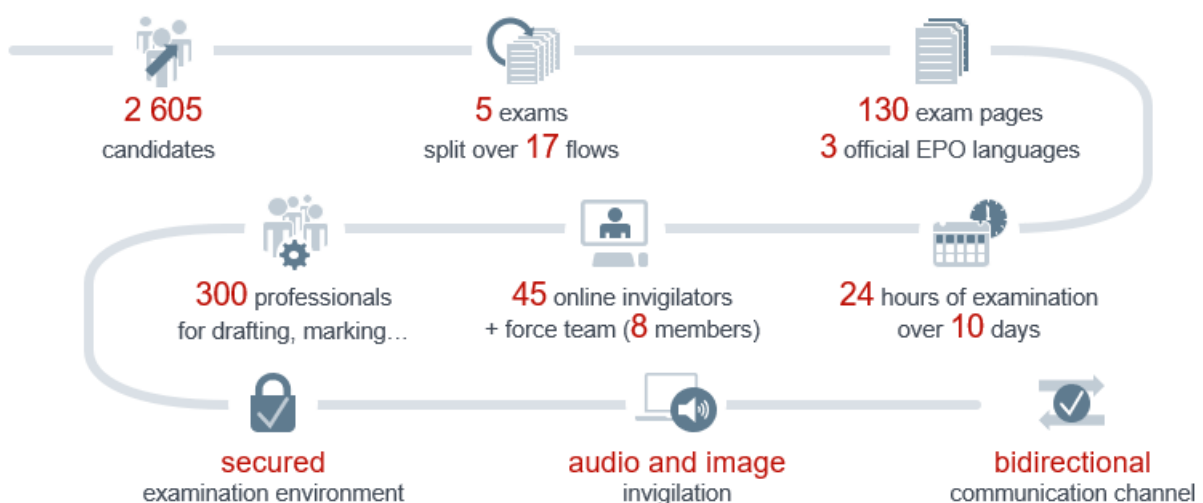
The European qualifying examination (EQE) took place from 8 to 18 March 2022, digitally for the second time.

In order to better understand our users' needs and to improve forthcoming editions, we asked 2.605 candidates to share their experiences of sitting the exam in a survey, running from 23 March until 5 April 2022. This report sets out the main outcomes of the survey and includes a compilation of comments received from individual candidates.

Overall, candidates are quite experienced with taking exams online. Both the advantages of holding the examination online, evaluation of improvements compared to the EQE 2021 and proposals for further improvement were addressed in the survey and in participants' feedback and will be taken into account in our efforts to further improve the EQE.

## 2. Introduction to the EQE 2022

- the EQE 2022 was prepared for 2.605 enrolled candidates
- five exams split over 17 flows
- 130 exam pages in each of the three official EPO languages
- 24 hours of examination over five days
- 45 online invigilators and a deployment force of 8 members for first- and second-level support
- 300 people involved in drafting the papers and marking the answers
- secure examination environment
- audio and image invigilation
- bidirectional invigilator/candidate communication channel



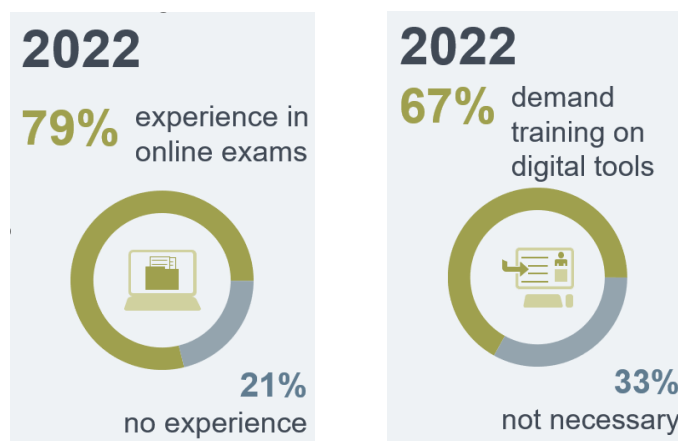
### 3. Assessment of the EQE 2022<sup>1</sup>

#### 3.1. Preparation of candidates

Several steps were taken and documents created to prepare and assist candidates in the transition to the consolidation of the online EQE, including:

- Enabling the platform to be tested with the first batch of mock exams available on WISEflow from mid-October 2021 onwards, where candidates were able to familiarise themselves with the examination environment without time constraints or other restrictions.
- After an updated version was made available for WISEflow, the system was ready for new mock exams in December 2021.
- Conducting mock examinations under near-real exam conditions on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6, 7, 8 and 10 December 2021.
- Offering a further mock on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 to test video, audio surveillance and test the new chat widget.
- Providing supporting documentation, including:
  - a comprehensive dedicated EQE web page with extensive FAQs
  - instructions for candidates
  - a code of conduct
- Conducting online EPO/epi info sessions.

While in 2022 candidates with experience in online exams (79%) increased and multiplied per four in comparison to 2021 (23%)<sup>2</sup>, near to 70% continue to demand training on digital tools to take the exam<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> These figures are based on the results of 682 candidates that replied to the survey.

<sup>2</sup> Question 12 of the survey.

<sup>3</sup> Question 15 of the survey.

Regarding preparation and training, three mock examinations under near-real exam conditions were set up between October 2021 and February 2022. An average of 88% of survey participants enrolled in one of the three mock examinations. While the majority of candidates participated in one of the mocks, 53% considered that such participation should not be compulsory (vs 62% in 2021).<sup>4</sup>



### 3.2. Time constraints

77,4% of respondents felt that having more time would have enabled them to perform better.<sup>5</sup> This did not apply to the breaks, which were considered adequate<sup>6</sup> by 65% and insufficient by 31% of survey participants, but rather to the time allotted for the papers.

#### Candidates expressed that time was for:

	too much	enough	borderline	not enough	by far not enough
Pre Exam	18%	33%	32%	12%	5%
Paper A	12%	19%	34%	27%	9%
Paper B	2%	8%	25%	29%	35%
Paper C	2%	11%	27%	32%	29%
Paper D	2%	10%	32%	41%	15%

<sup>4</sup> Question 25 of the survey.

<sup>5</sup> Question 10 of the survey.

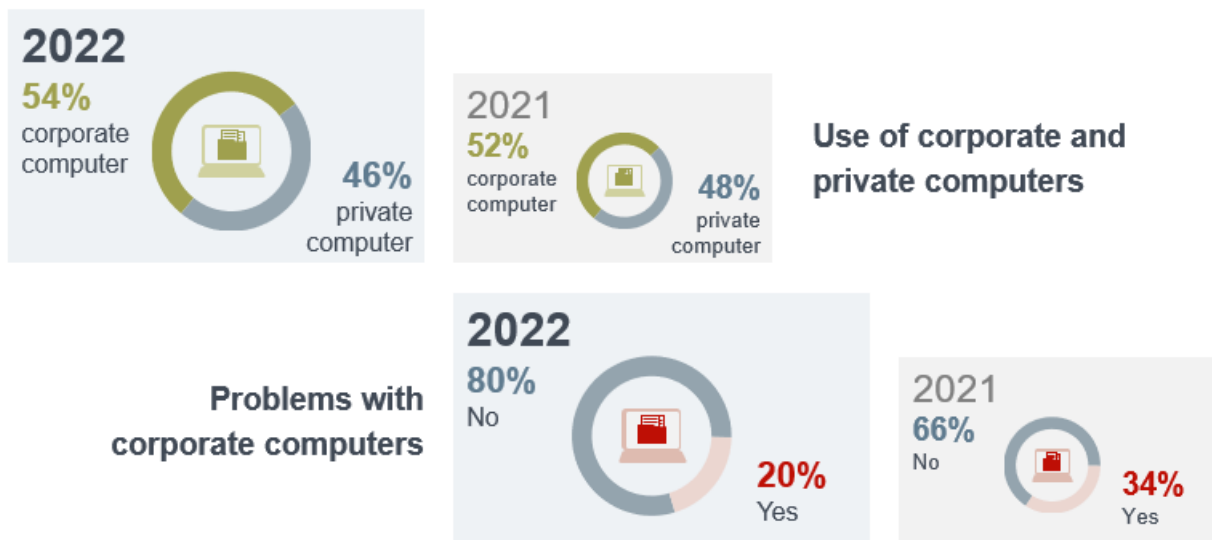
<sup>6</sup> Question 23 of the survey.

### 3.3. Infrastructure

Candidates marked better all indicators of evaluation regarding the setting of the EQE 2022 vis-à-vis 2021. This is clearly indicated as follows:



Prior to the exam, it was explained that some corporate environments might include security features that could affect the performance of the system. Candidates were asked to test the system in advance and where necessary to ask their IT department to disable those features. The alternative option to avoid any risk was to take the exam in another environment, e.g. from home on a different computer. When candidates who took the exam in a corporate environment were asked whether they experienced problems due to corporate firewalls and security features, 20% of respondents indicated they believed this could have been the cause, while 80% of participants indicated it was not.<sup>7</sup> The deployment force noted that the majority of individual issues experienced during the exam were reported by candidates who took the exam in a corporate environment or who had not taken the mock examinations.



<sup>7</sup> Question 26 of the survey.

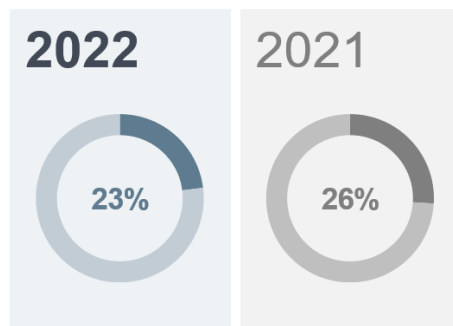
### 3.4. Service

The EPO set up a bidirectional communication channel to address candidates' situations and to establish contact whenever support was needed or suspicious situations arose. Three lines of support were set up:

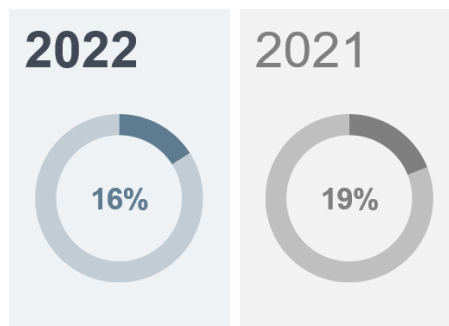


In 2022 there was a general decrease in the number of candidates contacting support services via invigilators when compared to 2021.<sup>8</sup>

Contacted invigilators:



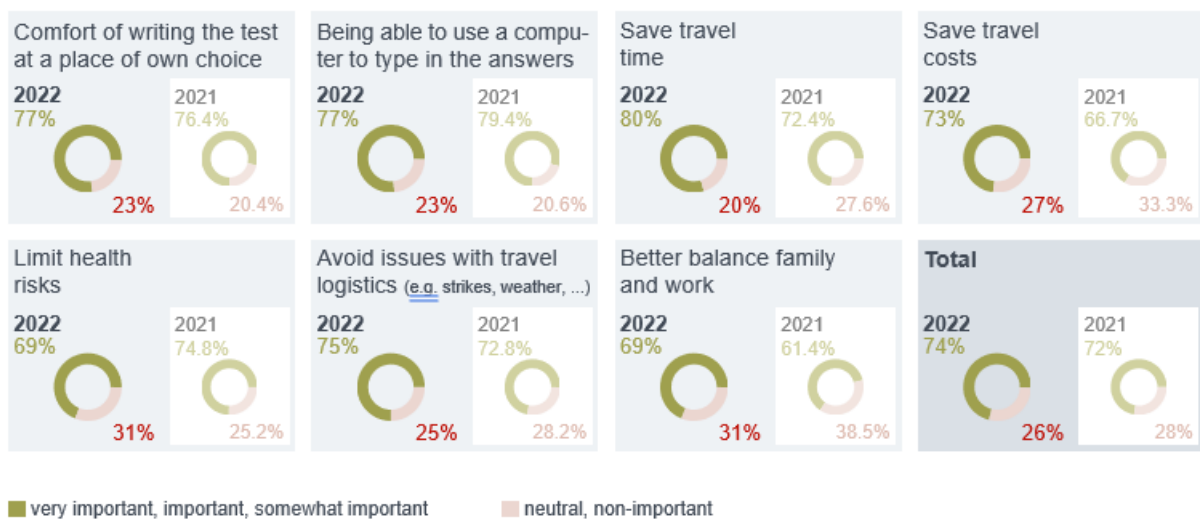
Contacted second line of support:



<sup>8</sup> Question 28 of the survey.

#### 4. General advantages of online examinations as indicated by survey participants

Survey participants were also asked for their personal assessment of online examinations in general terms and in terms of the potential advantages: the comfort of sitting the papers at a place of one's choice, being able to use a computer to type the answers, saving travel time, saving travel costs, limiting health risks, avoiding issues with travel logistics (e.g. strikes, weather) and enabling a better balance between family and work.



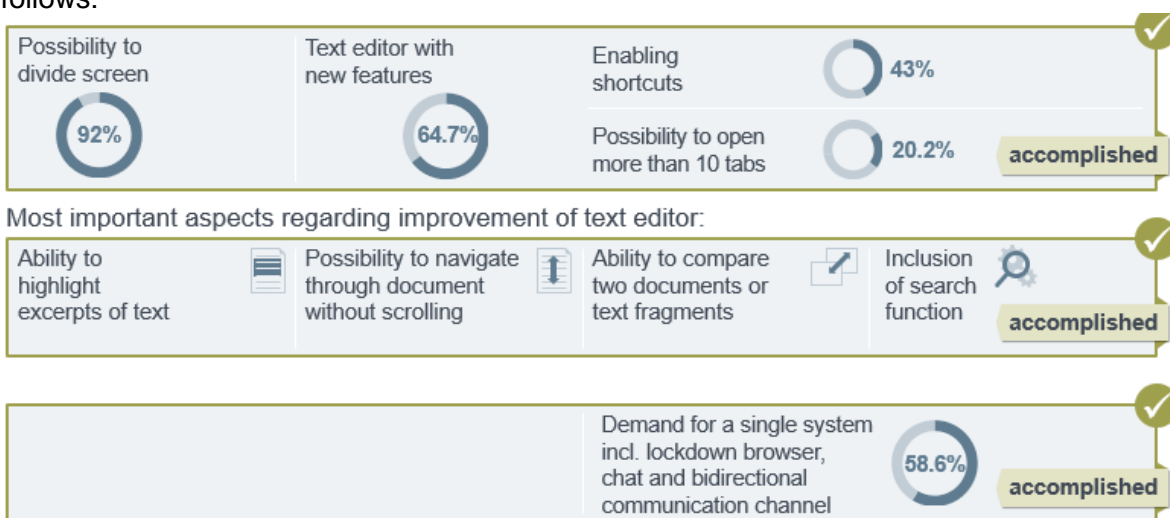


## 5. Improvements

From a technical perspective, a new chat widget (LA desk) was introduced to facilitate invigilator-candidate interaction. This new feature is partially integrated in the lockdown browser and requires less steps by the candidate than before.

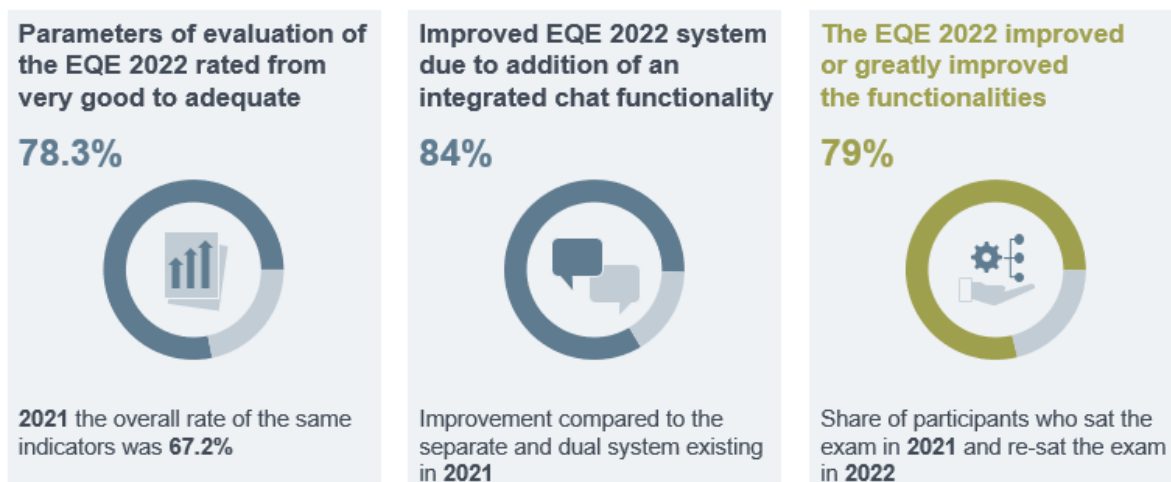
In 2022 the EQE took place across 2 weeks instead of one as was previously the case. This was well received by the candidates.

Several enhancements compared to the EQE 2021 were also included for the candidates' as follows:



Among the features that candidates felt should be improved after the EQE 2022, the duration of papers (45%), the text editor (52%) and the format of the papers (92%) stand out. Other improvements which candidates were asked to rate were communication with the invigilators, printing, the scheduling of papers and training.<sup>9</sup>

The general overview of the EQE 2022 assessment is reflected as:



<sup>9</sup>Question 31 of the survey.