

Munich, December 2023

Instructions to candidates concerning the conduct of the European qualifying examination

The Examination Secretariat, having regard to the Regulation on the European qualifying examination for professional representatives (REE) which entered into force on 1 January 2009 (OJ EPO 2009, 9), and in particular Article 9(2)(b) thereof, has decided with effect from 1 January 2024 as follows:

I. General

1. These instructions apply to both the pre-examination and the main examination, which consists of the four papers (A, B, C and D), and to each part of these papers.
2. The European qualifying examination is conducted online using the WISEflow examination system in conjunction with the corresponding lockdown browser. The examination is invigilated using online proctoring based on video and audio recordings, with the help of artificial intelligence combined with human invigilation.
3. Candidates must enter the online examination environment as stipulated in point IV below at the official start time.
4. Candidates who enter the online examination environment after the official start time of a particular examination paper or paper part may not make up the lost time at the end.
5. Candidates will not be allowed to enter the online examination environment more than 15 minutes after the official start of each examination part (flow).
6. Candidates must submit their answer in the dedicated interface in WISEflow.
7. Candidates must not use their name or initials in their answers.
8. Candidates wishing to lodge a complaint concerning the conduct of the examination must do so at the latest by the end of the day on which the paper concerned takes place, by filling in the dedicated form made available by the Examination Secretariat.

II. Examination environment

1. The examination may be taken at any suitable location chosen by the candidate.
2. The room must be suitable for an examination in terms of light, temperature and noise. The room's doors must remain closed during the examination. Candidates must be alone in the room. No other person is allowed to be in or enter the room during the examination.
3. Any see-through wall or door in the room through which another person might be able to see the candidate's screen must be covered. Any window, mirror or other shiny or glossy surface or parts of these which are located behind the candidate (i.e. facing the screen) must also be covered.
4. There must not be any light source pointed at the camera from behind the candidate to ensure that the image is clean. Likewise, the background behind the candidate must not contain any portraits with faces visible to the camera.
5. Listening to the radio or playing any other sound or music is not allowed.
6. Candidates are allowed food, drinks and medication as well as standard, non-electric/non-electronic desk accessories (notepaper, pens, pencils, etc.).
7. Candidates may use any printed materials, e.g. books, and any documents they consider useful for answering the examination papers.

III. Technical requirements

1. To sit the examination, candidates require the necessary technical equipment and set-up as described in the WISEflow documentation available on the WISEflow website and in the FAQ section on the EQE website.
2. Candidates are free to run WISEflow on either a Windows operating system or macOS. However, there cannot be any claim of being disadvantaged by using one or other system. The use of iPads for the EQE is not allowed.
3. Candidates are recommended to use a private (not company) computer and to sign in to the WISEflow system outside a corporate environment to ensure unhindered network access and to avoid affecting the applications/configurations on the computer as much as possible.
4. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that the EQE can be sat in full, that their computer or laptop can be monitored at all times and that their microphone and camera are fully functional.

5. Specifically, candidates are responsible for:
 - (a) the internet connection
 - (b) the power supply
 - (c) the proper functioning of hardware and software
 - (d) the correct, stable positioning of the camera to ensure their face is visible in the camera image throughout the examination
 - (e) the computer/laptop they are using, in particular, the computer should not be disrupted by any background routines such as automatic updates or other programs during the examination
6. The hardware used by candidates must comply with the following requirements:
 - (a) The microphone must capture the sound around the candidate and must be connected and active throughout the examination.
 - (b) The camera should be positioned centred above or below the frame of the active screen, but not more than 5 cm away from it. The camera is to be oriented to show a frontal portrait image of the candidate when looking at the screen. It must not be covered at any time.
 - (c) Speaker audio settings must be adjusted to pick up sounds from the internet browser at audible volume levels.
7. Candidates are not allowed to use shortcuts (Alt+Tab, Ctrl+P or the like), key combinations and touchpad gestures in the lockdown browser, except the ones mentioned hereafter. Using shortcuts is seen as an unauthorised action and will cause in the lockdown browser to stop your examination.
8. Where supported, the following Windows shortcuts and corresponding Mac shortcuts are allowed: Ctrl+C, Ctrl+V, Ctrl+Shift+V, Ctrl+F.

IV. Preparation and start of the examination

1. Candidates must activate their user profile in WISEflow. Candidates are not permitted to edit their personal information, i.e. name and email address, in the WISEflow profile.
2. Candidates must ensure that they are correctly using the WISEflow software. The lockdown browser is the only software candidates are allowed to run on their computer during the EQE. Candidates must ensure that they are running the same version as the one that is available online on the WISEflow website by clicking "Guide to lockdown browser".
3. When opening any of the flows for the first time, candidates must verify the installation of the lockdown browser and, if needed, download and install/update to the latest version by clicking "Guide to lockdown browser" on the flow information page. The WISEflow software must be verified at least once before the first flow on the examination day, even if it was already verified previously.
4. Candidates should prepare their desk with books and any further material they might want to use. They should log on to WISEflow at least 30 minutes before the start time of the first flow on each examination day.

5. Where possible, candidates wishing to print any parts of an examination paper must do so as soon as the relevant parts are available. To see the printable parts, candidates must refresh the page before launching the lockdown browser.
6. Candidates must have a valid official photographic ID (identity card or passport) and keep it within easy reach. For the purpose of verifying their identity, candidates must hold their ID next to their face for a reference photo to be taken each day at the beginning of the examination paper. When prompted by the system, candidates must take a reference photo ensuring that their entire face is visible. In addition, invigilators can ask candidates to hold their identity card or passport up to the camera at any time during an examination.
7. Candidates will also be prompted to perform audio verification before they can access the flow.
8. After completing the above steps, candidates must immediately launch the lockdown browser. The lockdown browser launch procedure should be run at the start of the examination but must be completed no later than 15 minutes after the examination start time. Otherwise, candidates will not be able to enter the flow and sit the respective paper or part thereof.
9. Candidates must ensure that their workstation is well lit and that there is no prohibited equipment (see section IV, point 11, of these instructions) within reach. In addition, candidates are responsible for ensuring that any permitted equipment they use is used only in the permitted manner.
10. Candidates must have the examination monitoring equipment (camera and microphone) activated throughout the entire examination.
11. Other than the computer system required for the examination (PC or laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc.) and routers and printers, no other electronic equipment (calculators, digital watches, tablets, smartphones, smart watches, etc.) are permitted. Candidates may not use headphones, headsets or any other non-electronic noise-cancelling items such as earplugs.
12. Candidates must also ensure that the examination is not disrupted by other people, pets, noise, etc.

V. Exam invigilation

1. Candidates must take all steps stipulated in WISEflow to ensure that the software can properly monitor the examination online.
2. Throughout the examination, invigilators will monitor camera and microphone activity. Accordingly, invigilators may perform further checks to inspect the candidates' examination environment.
3. Candidates will have their identity verified in WISEflow. Candidates must work on each examination paper independently with no outside help. They must not share their WISEflow login details with anyone else or otherwise give another person access to them.

4. Candidates must refrain from speaking during the examination, including reading examination papers aloud.
5. Candidates must not copy or photograph the examination questions or otherwise share them during the examination time in writing or orally.
6. Candidates must be seated facing the computer/laptop/camera. Their face and ears must be clearly discernible and should not be covered by caps, scarves, sunglasses, other body parts, etc. Eyeglasses with clear lenses are permitted but only where used as vision aids.
7. Candidates sitting the pre-examination must not close the lockdown browser, leave the room or leave the camera's field of view, irrespective of whether they wish to submit their answers or end the examination.
8. Within the first 60 minutes of any main examination paper or a part (flow) thereof, candidates must not close the lockdown browser, leave the room or leave the camera's field of view, irrespective of whether they wish to submit their answers or end the examination.
9. Candidates should not move away from their desk during the examination; they must remain in the camera's field of view apart from during the specified breaks.
 - (a) During the examination, candidates may take unscheduled breaks only if absolutely necessary and only in paper A, paper B, both parts of paper C and part D2 of paper D; unscheduled breaks may only be taken once 60 minutes have passed from the official examination start time.
 - (b) Unscheduled breaks should take no longer than three minutes. Candidates must inform the invigilator via the chat widget when taking an unscheduled break and when they return to their seat. However, candidates need not wait for authorisation from the invigilator before leaving their seat. Candidates must not take any material or documents from their desk with them during an unscheduled break.
 - (c) During an unscheduled break, the examination clock is not stopped.
10. To contact the invigilator, candidates must use the integrated chat widget that appears in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen once they are in the lockdown environment. The invigilator can also contact candidates via this chat widget.
11. Candidates must not ask any questions on the content of the paper or how it should be interpreted. Such questions will not be answered.
12. Candidates must not contact any other person during the examination except the invigilator where necessary.
13. Instructions given by the system or invigilators must be followed in full and at all times. Invigilators will take the names of candidates who do not comply with these instructions and report to the Examination Board any other relevant circumstances. The Examination Board will take any appropriate measures under Rules 19 and 20 IPREE.

14. Candidates of the main examination can finish the examination before the end time (see also section V, point 8, of these instructions) by submitting (handing in) their answer. Once the examination end time is reached, candidates will no longer be able to write and/or edit their answer. They must then immediately submit their answer and close the lockdown browser.

VI. Misconduct

1. The following is a non-exhaustive list of what will or might be considered fraudulent behaviour or misconduct:
 - (a) impersonation – when a candidate attempts to deceive by pretending to be someone else or has another person take the examination for them
 - (b) having a second person in the room (or the appearance of having same)
 - (c) using unauthorised material or electronic or other equipment that is not permitted (see section IV, point 11, of these instructions)
 - (d) failing to follow invigilators' instructions
 - (e) receiving, swapping or passing on information that could be related to the examination, whether orally or in writing using paper/notes/online materials on a computer or other electronic equipment
 - (f) copying from another candidate and discussing or working together with others
 - (g) disruptive behaviour, including using offensive language
 - (h) tampering with the examination system
 - (i) tampering with the equipment used for invigilation, e.g. camera and audio device.
2. The video and audio recordings and, if necessary, the chat logs will be used to check for attempts at cheating and breaches of the EQE regulations and instructions.
3. Suspicious events during the examination pointing to potential cheating, , that are detected during the retrospective review of the video and audio recordings can be punished by the Examination Board under Rules 19 and 20 IPREE. The Examination Board may do so even after the examinations have been marked and the results published. The same applies to any disruptions that candidates cause either recklessly or intentionally, in particular by not complying with the instructions.
4. Other breaches of the instructions may also lead to consequences for candidates and may attract further consequences under Rules 19 and 20 IPREE.