

Instructions to candidates concerning the conduct of the European patent administration certification (EPAC) examination

Having regard to the decision of the President of the European Patent Office dated 14 April 2022 adopting rules concerning the establishment of a European patent administration certification, and in particular Articles 7 and 9, the instructions are as follows:

I. General

1. These instructions apply to all parts of the EPAC examination with immediate effect.
2. The EPAC 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 who fail to log on to the lockdown browser by the official start time of the examination may not make up the lost time at the end.
4. Candidates sitting the examination must write and submit their answers in the dedicated text editor and interface in WISEflow. The answer must be written in the language selected when enrolling.
5. Candidates must not use their name or initials in their answers.
6. Candidates wishing to lodge a complaint concerning the conduct of the examination can do so at the latest by the end of the day of the examination by filling the online form provided by the EPO.

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 questions.

III. Technical requirements

1. To sit the examination, candidates require the necessary technical equipment as set out in the WISEflow documentation available on the WISEflow website (<https://wiseflow.zendesk.com/hc/en-gb/categories/4405644298386-Participation>). Candidates should follow the WISEflow recommendations for configuring their environment. Candidates should also follow the recommendations in the FAQs at <https://www.epo.org/learning/european-patent-administration-certification/faq.html>.
2. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that the online EPAC examination 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.
3. 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 external 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 automatic updates or other programs during the examination).
4. The hardware used by candidates must comply in particular 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.

IV. Getting started with 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 EPAC examination. 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**” on the flow information page.

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.
4. Candidates should prepare their desk with books and any further material they might want to use well before the start of the examination. They should log on to WISEflow 30 minutes before the start time of the examination.
5. 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 at the beginning of the examination. 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 the examination.
6. Candidates will also be prompted to perform audio verification before they can access the flow.
7. After completing the above steps, candidates must immediately launch the lockdown browser. The lockdown browser launch procedure must be completed no later than 15 minutes after the examination start time. Otherwise, candidates will not be able to sit the EPAC examination online.
8. Candidates must ensure that their workstation is well lit and that there is no prohibited equipment (see below point 10 of this section) within reach. In addition, candidates are responsible for ensuring that any permitted equipment they use is used only in the permitted manner.
9. Candidates must have the examination monitoring equipment (camera and microphone) activated throughout the entire examination.
10. Other than the computer system required for the examination (PC or laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc.) and routers, no other electronic equipment are permitted (calculators, digital watches, tablets, smartphones, smart watches, etc.). Candidates may not use headphones, headsets or any other non-electronic noise-cancelling items such as earplugs.
11. 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 part 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 should refrain from speaking during the examination since this will be picked up and recorded by the audio monitoring. The recordings will be reviewed to check for any breaches of these instructions.
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. Within the first 45 minutes of each part of the examination, 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.
8. 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.
9. 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. The chat widget is present in the first tab of the lockdown browser (where the answer is given) and it remains active when candidates are on another tab.
10. Candidates must not ask any questions on the content of the paper or how it should be interpreted. Such questions will not be answered.
11. Candidates must not contact any other person during the examination except the invigilator where necessary.
12. Instructions given by the system or invigilators must be followed in full and at all times.
13. Candidates can finish the examination before the end time (see Section V, point 7 above) by submitting 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 thereof)
- (c) using unauthorised material or electronic or other equipment that is not permitted (see Section IV, point 10 above)
- (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) speaking during the examination
- (g) copying from another candidate and discussing or working together with others
- (h) disruptive behaviour, including using offensive language
- (i) tampering with the examination system
- (j) 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 EPAC Rules 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 EPAC Board. The EPAC Board may do so even after the examination has 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.