

# Learning path for patent administrators

International publication:  
**EPAC – entry level**

Version: June 2025



## Introduction

This publication, "International publication, EPAC – entry level", is part of the "Learning path for patent administrators" series is edited and published by the European Patent Academy. The series is intended for patent administrators who are taking part in training and certifications organised by the European Patent Office (EPO). It is also freely available to the public for independent learning.

Topics covered include: general aspects of the patent system; the European patent system and the European patent granting procedure; the International Patent System (PCT) and the PCT procedure; European and international publications; filing a European patent application and filing an international application; the formalities during the European and during the international search; the formalities during the European examination and during the international preliminary examination; the formalities during the appeal procedure after refusal (EPC), during the opposition procedure (EPC); national validation (EPC); entry into national/regional phases and entry into the European phase (PCT).

Each chapter focuses on one topic at entry, intermediate or advanced level, as appropriate. The series will be revised annually to ensure it remains up to date.

## Disclaimer

This publication is for training and information purposes only. Although it has been prepared with great care, it cannot be guaranteed that the information it contains is accurate and up to date; nor is it meant to be a comprehensive study or a source of legal advice. The EPO is not liable for any losses, damages, costs, third-party liabilities or expenses arising from any error in data or other information provided in this publication.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the EPO.

This publication may be used and reproduced for non-commercial purposes, provided that the EPO and the contributors are appropriately acknowledged. Reproduction for commercial purposes is not permitted.

All references to natural persons are to be understood as applying to all genders.

## Contents

1.	Learning objectives	4
2.	International publication: general information	4
3.	Early, late or no international publication	4
4.	International publication: languages	4
5.	International publication: contents and form	5
6.	Beyond the course	5

## 1. Learning objectives

Participants in this course will learn about:

- who takes care of the international publication
- deviations from the standard procedure
- the contents of the international publication

## 2. International publication: general information

- The International Bureau (IB) is in charge of the international publication.
- Every international application (IA) is subject to international publication.
- International publication will take place 18 months after the priority date has expired, usually on the Thursday following that date.
- The IB stops working on the international publication two weeks before the projected publication date and freezes the database on Wednesday evening at 18.00 hrs.
- Earlier international publication is possible at the applicant's request.
- Later international publication is possible in exceptional circumstances.

### Legal references:

Art. 21 PCT

Rule 48 PCT

## 3. Early, late or no international publication

- The applicant may request early international publication at any time before the regular date for international publication.
- The IB may decide to postpone international publication in exceptional cases.
- There will be no international publication in the following cases:
  - The applicant withdraws the IA before completion of the technical preparations for international publication.
  - The receiving office (RO) declares the IA withdrawn before completion of the technical preparations for international publication.
  - The RO never accorded an international filing date.
  - The only designated states left at the time of international publication have declared that international publication is not required.

### Legal references:

Art. 21 PCT

Rule 48 PCT; Rule 90bis PCT

## 4. International publication: languages

- Arabic
- Chinese
- English
- French

- German
- Japanese
- Korean
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish

RO/IB accepts more than 400 different languages for the filing of IAs.

#### Legal references:

Art. 21 PCT

Rule 48 PCT

## 5. International publication: contents and form

- International publication takes place electronically on PATENTSCOPE.
- The main elements of the international publication are:
  - a standardised front page containing:
    - data including the international filing date and priority date(s)
    - the title of the invention
    - the abstract in English and another language, if applicable
    - figure(s) characterising the invention, accompanying the abstract
  - the description, the claims and the drawings, if any
  - the ISR, if available
  - amended claims under Art. 19 PCT and the corresponding statement
- Further information that may be found in the international publication:
  - a reference to a declaration of non-establishment of an international search report (ISR)
  - a request for restoration of right of priority, which has been filed but is still pending
  - a request for rectification of an obvious mistake, which has been authorised
  - an indication that the ISR was not available at the time of international publication
  - an indication that the time limit for amending claims under Art. 19 PCT is still running

#### Examples

- Example international publication on [PATENTSCOPE](#)

#### Legal references:

Art. 19 PCT; Art. 21 PCT

Rule 26bis.3 PCT; Rule 48 PCT

## 6. Beyond the course

You can deepen what you have learned during this course with the following further reading:

- [PCT Applicant's Guide, Chapter 9: international publication](#)

European Patent Academy  
European Patent Office  
Munich  
Germany  
© EPO 2025

Responsible for the content  
European Patent Academy  
[academy@epo.org](mailto:academy@epo.org)