

Overview of the Candidate Support Programme (CSP)

1. Introduction

1.1 The CSP is part of the EPO co-operation plan with the member states. With the CSP the EPO actively supports the member states in further developing their national Industrial Property (IP) infrastructure, such as to provide to their national industry improved access to patent attorneys offering qualified services to reach appropriate patent protection.

1.2 The CSP aims at preparing the Student for all examination papers of the EQE, i.e. pre-examination and main examination papers A, B, C and D. It follows the EQE schedule and therefore is provided in different stages spanning usually over three CSP years.

In the first year the Students will prepare for the EQE pre-examination. After having passed the pre-examination, the Students will prepare for papers A, B and D in the second year and for paper C in the third year. However, on request and on a case-by-case basis, a different schedule may be allowed.

1.3 Throughout the programme progress of the CSP Students will be carefully monitored allowing individual advice and support to be given as soon as possible. The examination results will be assessed and monitored during the whole programme. Individual adjustments of the training plan and other reasonable measures may be implemented by the EPO to further support the Student.

If a candidate fails any examination paper his/her situation will be assessed in order to decide how the programme may be continued at best.

All aspects of the participation in the CSP will be governed by the principles of good will, good faith and fair dealing. This will apply in particular when assessing and monitoring the CSP Student's results all along the time.

1.4 The programme will start with a written communication from the EPO informing the Student that he/she has been accepted into the programme.

For all new CSP students the CSP year **2021/22** will start with a kick-off meeting at the beginning of September 2021.

Any CSP year will end on the first day after the last EQE examination day for which the student has enrolled, that is, for the CSP year 2021/2022, at the latest on 19 March 2022.

2. Support provided by the EPO

The CSP Students will be assigned a contact person at the EPO to whom they may address any administrative CSP-related questions or problems during the whole period of their participation in the CSP.

Students who are sitting the pre-examination or any main examination paper for the first time will receive the following support.

- (a)** Access to the on-line training courses organised by the EPO Patent Academy (presently available only for the EQE pre-examination), comprising knowledge exchange amongst the students, virtual classroom training, assignments and homework with feedback.
- (b)** Training courses, cramming courses and mock examinations provided by qualified tutors from renowned international companies. All courses and meetings will take place on dedicated on-line platforms to which the Students will be invited to log-in. The courses will start early September and protract until February. Depending on the EQE paper, the total course duration will be between 30 and 60 hours per paper. Dates of the courses and timing will be communicated at a later stage.
- (c)** An EQE qualified patent representative as personal coach to answer substantive questions, help with assignments, give advice and monitor the learning progress of the Student. Students and coaches

will have individual regular consultations via suitable electronic communication means on a weekly basis. Moreover, at several instances video conferences in small groups will be organised.

- (d) Learning material in printed or digital form, as deemed necessary for the preparation for the EQE.
- (e) A small bursary to cover some of the additional expenses.
- (f) In some cases a language course in the language in which the Student intends to take the EQE.

3. What is expected of a CSP Student?

The CSP Student is expected to commit to the following.

- (a) To behave according to and to uphold the principles of good will and good faith.
- (b) To prepare to the best and do his/her utmost to pass the relevant EQE examination in accordance with the best practices commensurate to his/her ability.
- (c) To follow the training programme and carry out the related exercises, tasks or assignments diligently.
- (d) To plan his/her private time and professional activities such as to be able to follow the pace of the group training, and complete the assignments within the time delay given by the trainers and/or coaches.
- (e) To participate in remote study forums/groups and blogs via adequate electronic means.
- (f) To regularly and actively report to his/her coach on the progress of his/her studies, training sessions or EQE preparation work.
- (g) To give to the EPO feedback on any aspect of the CSP when requested.

4. What is expected once the student has become a Professional Representative?

The EPO would appreciate if the Student could work for at least three years as a professional representative in his/her country of origin and participate in further activities which could be beneficial for the development of the European patent system and the patent attorney profession in the member states.