

What is the EQE Candidate Support Project (CSP)?

This is a European Patent Office (EPO) "Co-operation Roadmap" project. The goal is to support candidates from those member states having five or fewer EQE-qualified Professional Representatives (PRs) in their preparations for the European Qualifying Examination (EQE).

Currently^{1 2}, these 19 member states are: Albania (AL), Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Estonia (EE), FYR of Macedonia (MK), Greece (GR), Iceland (IS), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Malta (MT), Monaco (MC), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), San Marino (SM), Serbia (RS), Slovak Republic (SK), and Slovenia (SI).

Furthermore, EQE candidates from Hungary (HU), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), and Turkey (TR) may apply for "extended support" – please see the relevant information below.

What are the objectives of the project?

- Ensure a sufficient infrastructure of EQE-qualified Professional Representatives throughout Europe in the long term;
- Allow applicants to have access to EQE-qualified Professional Representatives in all member states;
- Achieve a higher pass-rate and increase the proportion of successful EQE candidates without lowering the quality of the qualification;
- Promote the role of national patent offices in developing and supporting the national Professional Representative infrastructure;
- Promote the European Patent Attorney profession as a whole.

What will be offered to students participating in the CSP?

The CSP provides registered EQE candidates with access to existing EQE training seminars and teaching materials, dedicated coaching, and financial support.

The activities provided over the three years will comprise:

- Participation by the students in a preparatory session to inform about the organisation of the examinations, and how to prepare for them;
- Classroom training and tutorials;
- distance learning (based on classical and modern media) comprising knowledge exchange amongst the students, virtual classroom training, assignments and homework with feedback given by EPO or epi tutors;
- A personal epi Coach who will be available to answer individual questions, and help with assignments;
- A bursary of EUR 150,- per month during the period they participate in the respective training. The bursary is provided as a gift to the student to cover additional costs incurred while studying for the EQE, such as local travel while attending training, and meals not included in seminar programmes.

¹ As of 1 January 2015.

² During the period 2012-2014, the CSP accepted 10 students each from Hungary, Poland, and Turkey. Furthermore, Norway and Poland have both achieved the objective of a minimum of five (5) EQE-qualified Professional Representatives. Therefore the EPO unfortunately cannot accept any further CSP applications from these four countries.

What are the eligibility criteria for students?

EQE candidates permanently residing and working in one of the EPO member states are eligible to apply to join the project. Candidates will enter the project in the year before they intend to sit the Pre-examination. This means that at the date of the Pre-examination they must have completed a full-time training period and have worked full-time, for a period two years, as defined in Article 11 (7) of the REE. This should ensure that the candidate has already committed to a long term career as a Professional Representative.

What are the prerequisites for participating in the CSP?

The prerequisite for participation in the CSP is that the candidate has successfully registered to sit the EQE Pre-examination 2016.

The registration for the EQE Pre-examination 2016 is open from 15 April to 2 June 2015. Full details are published on the EPO website and in the Official Journal (OJ) of the EPO.

I am not eligible to apply to the CSP, what other support is available?

In order to support those registered EQE Candidates who are not eligible to apply to the CSP, the EPO may provide extended support in the form of training materials.

These comprise:

- the European Patent Convention;
- the Annotated EPC, by Dirk Visser;
- the Cross-Referenced PCT, by Cees Mulder.
- For those candidates registered for the EQE Pre-examination 2016, the EPO may provide free access to its EQE-online service (normal price €350).

Support is provided on a case-by-case basis and interested candidate should apply to their respective national office, via e-mail, requesting this extended support.

How does a prospective EQE candidate apply to participate in the CSP?

Registered EQE candidates must complete a CSP Application Form, and send this together with a motivation letter to the national patent office (NPO) in the member state in which they reside and work. Furthermore, they should supply a letter from their company supervisor, stating that they will support the candidate's participation in the CSP, and allow them to participate in the training events provided.

Applicants will be invited to participate in a 5-10 minute telephone interview with a member of the Professional Education Committee (PEC) of the European Patent Institute (epi).

What is the deadline for applications to participate in the CSP?

For participation in the project starting in 2015, in preparation for the EQE Pre-examination 2016, applications should reach the respective national patent office by Friday 29 May 2015.

Applicants must ensure they have successfully registered for the EQE Pre-examination 2016. (EQE Registration & Enrolment: 15 April – 2 June 2015).
Applicants who have not registered cannot be considered.

Further details can be found in the FAQ document here:

<http://www.epo.org/learning-events/eqe/eqe-training/csp.html>