

# Conditions for participation in the Candidate Support Programme for the EPAC 2026

## 1. Introduction

**1.1** The **European Patent Organisation** is a not-for-profit, public, intergovernmental organisation<sup>1</sup> legally underpinned by the European Patent Convention (EPC), presently comprising 39 member states.

EPC-related protocols form an integral part of the EPC, in particular the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of 5 October 1973 (PPI)<sup>2</sup>. On the basis of the EPC and the PPI (Article 3), the European Patent Organisation, including its executive body, the European Patent Office (EPO), has immunity from jurisdiction and execution within the scope of its official activities in its member states.

**1.2** The European patent administration certification (EPAC) has been designed to enable professionals dealing with patent procedures to demonstrate that they have the required knowledge and skills to deal independently and autonomously with the procedures associated with the filing, prosecution, grant and maintenance of European and international patent applications before the EPO, as well as post-grant procedures.

**1.3** The EPO runs the Candidate Support Programme (CSP) as part of a co-operation with its member states. The aim of the programme is to increase efficiency, quality, competence and in-depth knowledge of paralegals, patent administrators and formalities officers. To achieve this, the CSP helps selected candidates prepare for a successful completion of the EPAC examinations. Support is provided in the form of a comprehensive training and financial assistance.

**1.4** These Conditions describe the support offered to students under the CSP as well as the duties of those students and the EPO's expectations.

## 2. The programme

**2.1** The CSP is offered for approximately six months preceding the EPAC examinations and aims to prepare students for the following modules of the EPAC:

EPAC Module 1: General aspects of patent law, EPC and PCT

EPAC Module 2: EPO procedures in filing, search and examination

EPAC Module 3: EPO procedures in post-grant, appeal, validation and UPC

EPAC Module 4: PCT procedure and entry into national/regional phase after PCT

**2.2** Students' progress will be continuously monitored, providing for personalised advice and support. All aspects of participation in the CSP are governed by the principles of good will and good faith, in particular when assessing students' results and potential situations described in point 5 below.

**2.3** The CSP is provided to candidates aiming at obtaining the full EPAC certificate or at least two modules in 2026. The EPAC CSP will begin with an online kick-off meeting in the second half of March 2026 and will end on the day following the EPAC examinations. Details of the event and training programme are described in Annex 1 of these Conditions.

**2.4** All applicants and candidates, regardless of previous outcome, may reapply annually for the EPAC CSP.

## 3. Support provided by the EPO

**3.1** CSP students will be assigned a contact person at the EPO for the duration of their participation. That person will clarify any administrative CSP-related matters.

**3.2** Students will receive the following support:

### 3.2.1 Learning support

(a) Access to the online training courses of the European Patent Academy, offering a structured learning

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<sup>1</sup> The European Patent Organisation is *not* a non-governmental organisation.

<sup>2</sup> Both the EPC and the PPI are available at <https://www.epo.org/law-practice/legal-texts/epc.html>

itinerary with study materials, live tutored sessions, online chats with course instructors and fellow participants, and self-evaluation tests. Recordings of all tutored sessions will be made available for revision and review. Courses are delivered in English, but participants may interact with tutors in French or German.

(b) Online tutoring group sessions held on a bi-weekly basis, complementing the European Patent Academy's theory course. The sessions, provided by experience tutors, focus on methodology, navigating legal text efficiently, organising study notes and resources, managing time pressure during the exam, and use of online examination software. Five compulsory questions will be assigned at the end of each session and answered live in the next one.

### **3.2.2 Financial support**

(a) A lump sum of EUR 100 to cover expenses for learning material (preferably acquired in electronic form).

(b) A bursary of EUR 300 in total to cover some of the additional preparation-related expenses.

(c) Enrolment fees for the EPAC modules for which the student enrolls.

These costs will be borne by the EPO in cooperation with its member states.

The bursary and lump sum are not a remuneration, salary or payment in return for any specific service. It is the students' own responsibility to comply with any tax or social security regulation that may apply in their country.

No support will be provided to students who do not enrol for at least two EPAC modules in the relevant year.

## **4. Students' duties**

**4.1** By applying to CSP under these Conditions, students commit to:

(a) behave according to – and to uphold the principles of – good will and good faith

(b) enrol as soon as the enrolment portal opens and within 2 weeks of its opening. It is expected that students enrol for all four modules (highly recommended) or at least two modules in the same year

(c) prepare as best possible and do their utmost to pass all modules undertaken.

(d) follow the training programme and carry all related exercises, participate in the planned CSP events set out in Annex 1, and complete the tasks or assignments diligently by the deadlines set by the trainers and/or tutors.

(e) plan personal commitments and professional activities to keep up with the pace of the group training.

(f) participate in remote study forums/groups and blogs via electronic means that are fit for purpose.

(g) keep their contact data updated via the EQC web portal.

(h) provide feedback to the EPO on CSP-related matters when requested.

(i) inform the EPO contact person (point 3.1 above) without delay if

- i. they are unable for any reason to attend one of the scheduled CSP events
- ii. they need, are obliged or intend to cancel their participation in the CSP
- iii. they intend not to sit the EPAC examinations
- iv. they receive a bursary or other funding from any other body
- v. they take part in any EPO-organised activity (internship, Young Professional programme, Academy course, etc).
- vi. they have a relative employed at the EPO
- vii. they have a disability, impairment or special condition to allow the EPO or third parties to adapt planned training where necessary
- viii. any circumstance arises that may impact on their participation in the CSP.

**4.2** Students receiving CSP support are expected to contribute to the promotion of the EPAC, the CSP and

the development of the patent profession in the member states, in particular in their country of residence. The following activities could be considered beneficial to the development of the profession:

- (a) Encouraging paralegals, patent administrators and formalities officers from their country of residence to sit the EPAC exam as prospective candidates.
- (b) Support the promotion activities in cooperation with among others the EPO, national patent offices, professional associations, PATLIBs.

## **5. Discontinuation**

**5.1** The EPO may decide to suspend or terminate a student's participation in the CSP, or to reduce the support provided to the student, if

- (a) the information provided by the student is incomplete, inaccurate or misleading.
- (b) it has been proven that the student acted in serious breach of these Conditions or in breach of the EPAC Rules or of any other EPAC- and CSP-related framework
- (c) the student has acted in a manner that has brought the EPO into disrepute.

The EPO may resort to reclaiming payments made in the case of a serious breach.

**5.2** Any divergence in the interpretation or implementation of these Conditions will be the subject, over a two-month period of an exchange of views and mutual consultations. If no common understanding is reached, either party may record in writing the persistent divergence and discontinue participation in the CSP.

## **6. Data protection and information sharing**

**6.1** Students' personal data will be collected, processed and stored in accordance with the [EPAC data protection statement](#) solely for the purpose of conducting and monitoring the CSP. The EPO unit in charge of managing the CSP and the personal data required about students is Department 5.4.2.1 Certifications. If necessary for carrying out tasks related to the CSP, relevant data may be passed on to other EPO departments.

**6.2** Students will give the EPO their bank account details payments/reimbursement purposes to students. These data will be stored confidentially for the duration of students' participation in the CSP only.

**6.3** Students' names and email addresses may be shared with other students who are, or will be, taking part in the CSP. The EPO may ask for information about students' experience and consult their EPAC results for assessment, statistical and publication purposes.

**6.4** Students may request access or correction to their personal data, or withdraw their consent by writing to [candidatesupport@epo.org](mailto:candidatesupport@epo.org)

## **7. Confidentiality**

**7.1** Students undertake to observe and maintain strict confidentiality regarding all aspects of the CSP and the EPO that have been classified as confidential or are recognisable as such.

**7.2** Except with the prior written approval of the EPO, students will abstain from issuing any statement concerning the CSP to third parties, in particular to the press and other communication/social media, or otherwise divulging information obtained during their participation in the CSP.

**7.3** Prior written approval of students will be required for the EPO to use and publish written material or other material drawn up or provided by students while taking part in the CSP.

## **8. Final provisions**

**8.1** Students agree to register using the EPO's SAP tool, where each of their financial requests will be processed.

**8.2** Students are participating in a study programme run by the EPO. This participation does not confer EPO-related status on students. Students may not consider themselves, or be treated as, EPO employees or auxiliary staff members. Students have to present themselves as being external to the EPO vis-à-vis any third parties. Likewise, they have to abstain from behaving or communicating in any way that may give the impression that they belong to, or are part of, the EPO. This provision complements Point 7.2 above.

**8.3** If, a part, term or provision of these Conditions is experienced and jointly recognised as "to be corrected or amended", the effectiveness and implementation of the remaining parts, terms or provisions will be unaffected.

**8.4** Amendments to these Conditions require an addendum issued in writing by the EPO.

## ANNEX 1 - TRAINING PLAN

### Course and event schedule for the CSP year 2026

- EPAC CSP 2026 kick-off meeting, organised as an on-line meeting (video conference), is planned for the second half of March 2026: This meeting includes an introductory session for all new CSP students. Details on exact date, time, agenda and required software will be communicated in due time.

- **EPO Academy courses**

#### **General aspects of patent law, EPC and PCT**

Intermediate level, Reference PV03-2026, Course I Q1-Q2 | 16 hr(s)

Live sessions:

- 11/03/2026
- 18/03/2026

#### **EPO procedures in filing, search and examination**

Intermediate level, Reference PV04-2026, Course I Q1-Q2 | 24 hr(s)

Live sessions:

- 15/04/2026
- 22/04/2026
- 29/04/2026

#### **EPO procedures in post-grant, appeals, validation and UPC**

Intermediate level, Reference PV05-2026, Course I Q2 | 16 hr(s)

Live sessions:

- 06/05/2026
- 20/05/2026

#### **PCT procedure and entry into national/regional phase after PCT**

Intermediate level, Reference PV06-2026, Course I Q2 | 24 hr(s)

Live sessions:

- 10/06/2026
- 17/06/2026
- 24/06/2026

- **Tutored sessions**

Two-hours sessions to start mid-April until end of June and they will resume in September. These are on a bi-weekly basis.

Detailed schedule to be made available beginning of April.