



European Qualifying Examination (EQE)

In 2012, the EQE will have its first major change since the first examination in 1979. With effect from 2012 there will be a pre-examination which is designed to act as a filter to reduce the number of candidates sitting the full examination without sufficient preparation. The “main” examination in its new form will be held for the first time in 2013. Candidates must pass the pre-examination before being allowed to sit the main examination. The pre-examination may be taken after two years full-time training.

Those candidates who started in the profession before March 2009 will be able to sit the last of the “old” style EQE examinations in 2012 and will be able, if necessary, to resit the main examination in its new form and any accumulated passes in papers will be carried over into the new system.

The structure of the pre-examination is almost certain to be a combination of law questions and questions about aspects of claim analysis as in the mock pre-examination paper which is available for download from the EPO web site under the EQE Announcements section. The mock paper contained 10 law questions and 10 claim analysis questions in a multiple choice format with five possible answers to each question but only one correct answer; marking of the mock paper was on the basis of 5 marks for a correct answer, minus 2 points for an incorrect answer and minus 1 point for no answer. The time allowed for the paper is four hours and it is an open book examination. The candidates should make certain they have all the necessary books with them when they sit the examination, preferably annotated to make them easy and familiar to use.

The main examination with effect from 2013 will be slightly different to that in previous years to acknowledge the pre-examination. The paper A (drafting) will last 3.5 hours but paper B (amendment) will be shorter in time at 3 hours as will paper C (opposition) at 5 hours; the paper C will almost certainly no longer include the tricky legal questions previously included. Papers D1 and D2 will be combined into a single paper D similar in form to that in the early years of the examination. The time available for the paper D will be reduced from a total of 7 hours to 5 hours and the number of questions of the part 1 type is expected to be reduced accordingly as will the complexity of the part 2; the balance of marks between part 1 and part 2 is currently not decided.

Candidates and their supervisors need to carefully watch the EPO web site to ensure they are aware of possible changes in format to the examinations in the light of discussions following the release of the mock pre-examination paper.

RJB, 24 September 2010

The IP Federation is the operating name of the Trade Marks, Patents and Designs Federation
Registered Office 5th floor, 63-66 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8LE

Email: admin@ipfederation.com | Tel: 0207 2423923 | Fax: 0207 2423924 | Web: www.ipfederation.com

Limited by guarantee Registered company no: 166772