

# Support the Next Generation of Patent Professionals in Europe via CSP

## ◆ What is CSP?


The Candidate Support Programme (CSP) by the European Patent Office (EPO) aims to build a skilled and gender balanced patent profession across Europe by **supporting candidates for**

- **the European Qualifying Examination (EQE)** (starting in 2025) and
- the European Patent Administration Certification (EPAC) (for 2026).

CSP helps candidates study efficiently and thoroughly, offering guidance on materials, structured learning, and access to expert coaching. It is especially impactful for those facing challenging life situations, enabling them to make the most of limited study time.



The programme has consistently produced well-prepared, highly motivated professionals, many of whom have gone on to become active contributors to the profession.

Beyond exam success, CSP fosters cross-border networks and a strong sense of community, enriching the European patent landscape with dedicated and collaborative practitioners.

 **Intense Personalized Coaching by experienced European patent attorneys**

 **Access to courses**

 **Bursary for books and other needs**

  **Cross-border network and a strong sense of community**

## Background and Evolution

Launched in 2012, the CSP originally supported candidates from underrepresented countries—those with fewer than five EQE-qualified EPAs. Between 2012 and 2025, around 130 candidates from 18 countries successfully passed the EQE with CSP support.

Now, the **2025 relaunch** opens the doors even wider: The new CSP can support candidates from all EPC contracting states, **provided that their national patent offices opt to participate in the programme.**

2012



2025



2026

## ✓ Eligibility Criteria for the candidates

To join the CSP, candidates must:

- Reside and be employed in an EPC contracting state participating in CSP
- Be enrolled for EQE 2026 papers F, M1, or M2

Two routes for eligibility per country:

- Quality criterion: Countries with fewer than half of their EPAs who are EQE-qualified – up to 2 candidates/year
- Gender parity criterion: Countries with fewer than half of their EPAs being women – up to 2 candidates/year
- 4 candidates/year in total if both criteria apply



## **Role of the National Patent Office (NPO)**

National Patent Offices (NPOs) **are central to the CSP's success.**

Each participating office is responsible for:

- Managing the national application process
- Selecting and nominating eligible candidates

For the application, each candidate should submit:

- CSP application form (provided by EPO)
  - Proof of permanent residency
  - Motivation letter
  - Employer support letter
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## **How is the selection of candidates performed by NPOs?**

The CSP defines core eligibility criteria, based on EQE qualification ratios and gender parity. However, if the number of applicants exceeds the number of available slots for eligible candidates, NPOs may define, in addition, their own internal selection criteria to suit national circumstances.

Examples of how candidate selection may be carried out:

- Some NPOs collaborate with national chambers of patent attorneys to assess the pool of applicants.
- Others consult with their country's representative in the **epi** Professional Education Committee (PEC) for expert input.

Some criteria that may be considered to differentiate between candidates:

- Challenging personal circumstances (e.g. caregiving, health, young children)
  - Financial hardship
  - High motivation to qualify as a patent attorney
  - Demonstrated commitment to study
  - Intention to contribute to the profession post-qualification (e.g. awareness, mentoring)
  - Likelihood of remaining in the profession and in the country
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## **Key Dates for EQE CSP 2026**

- Applications open: 8 July 2025
  - Applications close: 15 August 2025
  - Candidate selection by NPOs: September 2025
  - Training begins: October 2025
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## **Is it still possible for an NPO to join the CSP?**

**28 EPC contracting states have already committed to CSP.** National offices that have not yet joined may still have an opportunity to participate by expressing their interest to the EPO. However, it is ultimately the EPO's decision whether participation is still possible for the current or upcoming cycle.

**epi strongly encourages all national offices to contact the EPO**, as this is a unique opportunity to:

- Offer high-quality training and support to candidates in your country
- Strengthen the national patent profession
- Contribute to building a truly European professional community
- Contribute to broader European goals of inclusivity, gender parity, and quality in patent examination.