

## Report on the 2015 Patent Examination Board Student Survey

### Introduction

As part of its quality assurance remit, the PEB Governance Board undertakes an annual survey of the students taking the Qualifying Examination.

What follows is a summary of some of the main issues arising, with the report appended in full.

Of the 402 surveyed there were 161 responses. This is a pleasing response rate of 40% (27% in 2014).

Physics specialists represented 39% of the respondents (also the highest represented group last year at 24%). This was followed by Engineering at 26%, Chemistry 19.0%, Biochemistry 13%, Computer Science 1%, and Mathematics 1%.

### Resources on the PEB website

161 students answered the question about resources on the PEB website. Nearly all had referred to past question papers and mark schemes, examiners' reports, examination syllabi and sample good past scripts. About half had used the Final Diploma examination guidance. Overall, students found these resources very useful, and were keen for more to be added to the PEB website.

### Demonstrating knowledge and skills

When asked about the extent to which the examination(s) give students the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and skills the answers were as follows.

Answer option	Very poorly	Poorly	Satisfactory	Well	Very well	TOTAL
FC1 (P1)	0 (0.0%)	4 (12.5%)	9 (28.1%)	15 (46.9%)	4 (12.5%)	32
FC2 (Law)	8 (32.0%)	8 (32.0%)	9 (36.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25
FC3 (P5)	4 (12.1%)	7 (21.2%)	4 (12.1%)	13 (39.4%)	5 (15.2%)	33
FC4 (D&C)	1 (3.8%)	2 (7.7%)	10 (38.5%)	8 (30.8%)	5 (19.2%)	26
FC5 (P7)	5 (20.8%)	7 (29.2%)	6 (25.0%)	1 (4.2%)	5 (20.8%)	24
FD1 (P2)	6 (8.6%)	16 (22.9%)	23 (32.9%)	16 (22.9%)	9 (12.9%)	70
FD2 (P3)	2 (4.2%)	9 (18.8%)	13 (27.1%)	18 (37.5%)	6 (12.5%)	48
FD3 (P4)	2 (4.5%)	4 (9.1%)	12 (27.3%)	19 (43.2%)	7 (15.9%)	44
FD4 (P6)	9 (10.2%)	17 (19.3%)	30 (34.1%)	24 (27.3%)	8 (9.1%)	88
TOTAL	37	74	116	114	49	

### Venues

There were some noise issues reported with some venues, particularly in Leeds and Glasgow. The Board has taken note of all the student feedback with regard to venues, and as always will endeavor to select the most suitable venues. Any students who know of any potential venues are invited to contact the PEB with information. Any noise issues were carefully considered by the examiners before the final marks were agreed.

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### **Administration**

A few students commented that scripts should be marked more quickly, and results released earlier – a January results release was requested. The PEB has addressed this issue in the past, and at present this request cannot be met although it is always under review.

An article explaining the reasoning behind this decision is published [here](#).

### **Comment on the examination question papers**

There were comments on the FC2 (Law) examination and some said FC3 (P5) had far too much content to revise. Five students fed back that the Trade Mark paper FC5 (P7) seemed completely inappropriate for trainee patent attorneys and had had a complete format change. Most questions related to procedure and formalities in filing and prosecution of trade mark applications. Eight students commented about the FD1 (P2) examination, one saying that it would really benefit from an open book format. Other students felt that this year's examination was very different in style and approach from previous papers, in particular the design question and Rule 111 question. Several students commented that they ran out of time for the FD4/P6 examination, and that the paper seemed to require much more information than in previous years.

The PEB has noted all the comments on the 2015 examination question papers, and some have been addressed in the Examiner's Report for the relevant subject. All student comments were considered by examiners at the awarding meeting which finalised student marks, and will be considered when setting future question papers.

The Chair of the PEB Governance Board, Rob Taylor said:

*The PEB is grateful to all the students who took the time to complete the annual survey. The PEB is constantly striving to improve and provide as much information as possible to students, whilst seeking to ensure that all examination question papers are consistent and fair. The student responses and comments are extremely helpful in helping the PEB achieve these objectives.*