

## Patent Examinations Board – Qualifying Examinations

### Report on the September 2020 Candidate Trial of the PEBX System

**This report should be read in conjunction with the updated Essential Information for Candidates.**

PEB developed the PEBX system with its IT contractors so that the October 2020 Qualifying Examinations could be delivered online. The candidate trial of the system took place between 21 and 25 September (three weeks before the examination week). The purpose was to give candidates the opportunity to:

- practise completing the full examination process in the time available (2019 Question Papers of all the examinations they have entered). In particular, candidates were strongly advised to practise typing a response into the Answer sheet document, converting Answer documents to PDF, and uploading Answer documents, all within the Total Examination Time.
- ensure their your IT equipment was suitable;
- familiarise themselves with all features of the PEBX online examination system.

75% of candidates made use of the trial opportunity. Most, but not all, attempted a “mock” examination under timed conditions.

**The 25% of candidates who did not access the system at all are strongly recommended to log on to the PEBX system and re-set their password before the day of their first examination.**

A few candidates had clearly tried to devise unusual, and sometimes creative, ways to circumvent aspects of the PEBX system and/or the instructions in the Essential Information for Candidates. This approach is not advisable: as part of routine post-examination processes, PEB will audit the candidate logs after each examination.

The majority of candidates were able to access the system easily and found it straightforward to use. After the completion of the candidate trial, the PEB has worked with the IT contractor to resolve some of the few issues that were flagged up in candidate feedback. The main points to note are:

- The password to be used in the live examination is the same as was used in the trial. Candidates should make sure they have not forgotten their password by checking it works before the morning of their first live examination.
- The problem experienced by a few candidates in completing the Declaration has been fixed.
- The screen time out issue experienced by some candidates has been fixed.
- FD4 Answer Document: the use of landscape orientation is **NOT** permitted. Tables are acceptable in portrait.

- Interruption to the internet connection might cause the clock to freeze. Refreshing the screen every so often is recommended if this occurs.
- So that candidates can check what they have uploaded, a new **“View document” button** has been incorporated next to the Uploaded Answer document.
- **Candidates must click the “End Exam Session” button**, otherwise there is a risk that their Answer document(s) may not be issued to Examiners for marking. Finally, the browser should be closed as soon as the candidate has finished their examination.
- **Answer Documents uploaded after Clock has gone into minus time will not be marked.** Candidates are advised to ensure they upload their Answer Document/s before the clock hits 00.00. If uploading is late because of technical issues, Special Consideration can be requested. Any such request on technical (IT) grounds must be made by noon the next day, to ensure that PEB has full information to hand when it reviews PEBX system logs to decide which Answer documents will be marked.

**The number of Answer documents** that should be uploaded has been clarified in the updated Essential Information for Candidates:

- It is **NOT** permitted to upload series of Answer documents i.e. one for each question (FCs and FD1) or one for each section (FD2, FD3 and FD4).
- For FC examinations only one Answer document must be uploaded. If more than one are uploaded, only the final document uploaded before the Exam End Time will be issued for the Examiners to mark.
- For FD examinations candidates are allowed to upload the Answer document plus:
  - FD1: a handwritten timeline
  - FD2, FD3 and FD4: hand-annotated claims/diagrams.

**October 2020**