

PEB Report on the 2023 Qualifying Examination Session

This report to candidates covers general and administrative matters. Examiners' feedback on the individual units can be found in the Principal Examiner Reports which can be found on the PEB website [here](#).

Concerns about any aspect of the examinations should be sent to peb@cipa.org.uk in accordance with the PEB Customer Feedback Policy [here](#).

General

Before and during examination sessions, PEB responds to a great many email queries from candidates. PEB would advise candidates to ensure that they familiarise themselves with the documents about the examinations published on the PEB website. Answers to the majority of candidates' queries are in these documents. Unfortunately, during busy times, dealing with routine email queries can impact on PEB's ability to give support to candidates with more complex queries.

Candidates are also asked to follow these routine steps that would help their examination administration run smoothly:

- Meet published deadlines for providing essential information (such as Designated Contact details) and requests for Reasonable Adjustments.
- If they use both personal and work email addresses, keep a note of which address was provided at registration.
- Notify PEB promptly of any change in email address. Every year many candidates tell PEB that they have not received important information such as results, but almost invariably it was sent to an email address that was provided at registration, but which is no longer valid.
- Before contacting PEB to query whether they should have received an email, candidates should check all your email accounts, including "junk"/"spam" folders.
- If CIPA Membership has been advised of name/ email/ address changes, ensure that PEB is also notified.
- Similarly, if you want to check your "exam list" on PEBX and cannot see your exams, before contacting PEB, ensure you are logging on to PEBX with the email address you provided at registration.

Reasonable Adjustments

There was an increase in the number of applications for Reasonable Adjustments for the 2023 examinations. Unfortunately, in a number of cases supporting evidence was incomplete and this delayed the process.

PEB has reviewed the Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Procedure for 2024.

Candidates submitting new Reasonable Adjustments requests for 2024 should ensure they follow the new Policy and Guidance on the PEB website. They should also submit all supporting evidence by the deadline of 30 August 2024.

Designated Contacts

PEB is grateful to Designated Contacts for the support they provide for the examinations.

Unfortunately, in the 2023 examinations, there were some instances where candidates did not receive the printed question paper promptly due to oversight on the part of the Designated Contact. There were rare instances where the candidate was actually handed the previous day's question paper.

The question paper is always released to Designated Contacts at the same time as to the candidates on the PEBX system (10 am promptly). Candidates who prefer to use a hard copy might want to remind their Designated Contact of the examination arrangements before their examination.

The PEBX and ProctorExam Trials

The trial examinations are expensive and they are paid for through the candidate examination fees. It was again very disappointing that some candidates did not take part in the trial, and then asked PEB for a second opportunity to have a trial.

PEBX

99% of candidates managed their time effectively and uploaded their Answer documents to PEBX before the End Upload time. A small number of candidates failed to upload their correct Answer document.

Candidates are reminded that the Timeline in the Technical Requirements document is provided to help them. The Timeline advises, "Use the "View Document" button in PEBX to check that you have uploaded the correct document."

Foundation – ProctorExam

Most candidates set up ProctorExam correctly. There were very few issues reported.

Finals – Zoom invigilation

For the first time, FD candidates were given verbal warnings by the Zoom Invigilator. These appear to have worked well.

Malpractice

Invigilators and Reviewers saw a number of instances of administrative breaches of the Malpractice Policy. These issues will all be dealt with as breaches of the Malpractice Policy in future examination sessions.

- Books, bags and jackets had not been removed from the room where the examination took place.
- ProctorExam: some candidates did not properly complete identity checks.
- Identification: a number of candidates did not show themselves full-face to the camera during the security checks. Photo-ID normally requires spectacles to be removed for the photograph. They must also be briefly removed during the ProctorExam security checks (Foundation).
- When under examination conditions, candidates must be in full view of the camera (unless they have notified the Invigilator via the "chat" that they are going to the toilet). Instances where the candidate is not in full view of the camera will be treated as potential malpractice in future examination sessions.
- Also when examination conditions are in force, the invigilators and Reviewers need to be able to see more than the top of the candidate's head.
- Zoom: a few candidates blurred their background in Zoom. Invigilators must be able to see candidates' examination rooms at all times.

- In future sessions, Zoom Invigilators (Final Diploma) will be authorised to move candidates into the breakout room if there have been no responses to direct messages to them on the “chat” system. Recordings will also be reviewed as potential malpractice incidents.
- One candidate took their laptop with them when they went to the toilet.

PEB expects candidates to act in a way which is consistent with what the IPReg Code of Conduct sets out for members of the profession, namely that they should not do anything that “might compromise ... the dignity and good standing of the regulated person or of the patent or trade mark professions” (Rule 5.2). It is recognised and understood that examinations can be very stressful for candidates. However, PEB will not tolerate rude, disruptive or unprofessional emails or behaviour from candidates.

Special Consideration

The Special Consideration Policy had been revised for the 2023 examinations. It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates who requested Special Consideration had submitted their request by the deadline with the appropriate evidence.

Certificates

Candidates will receive a certificate for each examination they have passed. There is no charge for this service and these will be posted to candidates within two months of the release of results.

Candidates are advised to ensure the PEB have your correct address for posting as there is a fee for the reissue certificates.

2024 Examinations

The PEB Governance Board has decided the form of invigilation/ proctoring that will be used in the 2024 Qualifying Examinations will be as in the 2023 examination session: Foundation examinations will be proctored by ProctorExam; Finals examinations will be invigilated by PEB invigilators via Zoom.

Further information will be released by the PEB in due course.

Patent Examination Board

March 2024