

PEB Report on the 2024 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](#).

2025 Examinations

The current syllabi for the Final Diploma examinations will be tested for the final time in October 2025. Revised syllabi will be tested from the October 2026 session.

The PEB Governance Board has decided the form of invigilation/ proctoring that will be used in the 2025 Qualifying Examinations will be as in the 2024 examination session: Foundation examinations will be proctored by ProctorExam; Finals examinations will be invigilated by PEB invigilators via Zoom.

Candidates should check the PEB website regularly for information on future examinations.

2024 Examinations

General

Candidates are again reminded that the answers to the most common queries about the examinations can be found in the Essential Information and Technical Requirements documents, both of which are published on the website in the August before the examinations.

In addition, there are some routine administrative actions that candidates are asked to take to help ensure their examinations run as smoothly as possible:

- Meet the published deadlines for submitting Reasonable Adjustments requests and evidence.
- If appropriate, send Designated Contact details to the PEB by the published deadline
- Notify the PEB promptly of any change in email address. Changes in email address are the most common reason why candidates do not receive essential examination information or their results. CIPA Membership maintains a separate database. GDPR regulations mean that they cannot forward changes in personal information to the PEB.
- If you think that you might not have received essential information, check your "junk"/"spam" folders before contacting the PEB.

Malpractice

The PEB is concerned to note that there was an increase in potential malpractice cases in the 2024 examination. The Malpractice Committee considered a number of cases and determined that some constituted serious examination malpractice involving use of AI. The PEB has a duty to candidates, the profession and stakeholders to maintain the integrity of its professional examinations. Accordingly, a number of Void results were issued.

Suspected malpractice reported by invigilators or examiners included the following:

- Uploading the Answer document at the start of Upload Time, then continuing to work on it and uploading a second version just before the cut-off point;
- Attempting to communicate with another candidate; examination conditions apply from the point of logging on to Zoom or accessing ProctorExam until PEBX and Zoom/ProctorExam have been shut down;
- Blurring the background in Zoom or ProctorExam: invigilators must be able to see candidates' examination rooms at all times.
- Using headphones without prior approval of their use as a Reasonable Adjustment;
- Books, bags and jackets not removed from the room where the examination was taking place;
- Not being in full view of the camera (unless they have notified the Invigilator that they are going to the toilet). The invigilators and Reviewers need to be able to see more than the top of the candidate's head. Instances where the candidate was not in full view of the camera (including accidentally covering the camera) were investigated as suspected malpractice;
- Leaving the examination room during the examination without notifying the invigilator or using the ProctorExam messaging system;
- Failing to respond to messages from the invigilator.

The 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, the PEB will not tolerate rude, disruptive or unprofessional emails or behaviour from candidates.

All candidates are reminded to familiarise themselves with the PEB Malpractice Policy. At the start of all examinations, candidates have to confirm they have read and understood the Policy before you can access the examination material.

Reasonable Adjustments

There was again a significant number of requests for Reasonable Adjustments. The PEB was pleased to note that many candidates had followed the evidence requirements in the Reasonable Adjustments Policy. However, there were a few candidates who had not provided evidence as specified and, unfortunately, this delayed them receiving the outcome of their request.

For the 2025 examinations, the PEB will not send reminder emails to candidates who have requested Reasonable Adjustments but not uploaded their evidence at registration or submitted it by the deadline of Friday, 29 August 2025.

Designated Contacts

PEB is again very grateful to Designated Contacts for the support they provided which helped the examinations run smoothly.

The PEBX and ProctorExam Trials

The trial examinations are candidates' opportunity to check that the IT they plan to use is functioning properly and to get used to the PEBX system. The trials are a significant expense for the PEB, which ultimately are paid for through the candidate examination fees. It is disappointing that some candidates did not take part in the trial. Candidates are reminded

that if they experience technical difficulties during their examination, mitigation cannot be put in place if they have not taken part in the trial.

Examination Timeline

Candidates are reminded that the Timeline in the Technical Requirements document is provided to help them.

Lead Invigilator's Briefing

A few FD candidates logged onto Zoom just a few minutes before the Exam Start Time and so missed the briefing by the lead invigilator. It is vital that candidates attend this briefing, because it provides key information about how the examination will run.

Failure to attend the invigilator's briefing might be taken into account if there is a subsequent investigation into suspected malpractice.

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 their correct address for posting as there is a fee for the reissue certificates.

Patent Examination Board

March 2025