



Guidelines for Examination

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4. Accelerated prosecution of European patent applications

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Applicants requiring faster search or examination can ask to have their applications processed under the programme for accelerated prosecution of European patent applications (PACE) (see the Notice from the EPO dated 30 November 2015, [OJ EPO 2015, A93](#); for PACE requests filed before 1 January 2016 see also OJ EPO 2010, 352). For information regarding additional ways to expedite the European grant procedure see [OJ EPO 2015, A94](#)).

Requests for participation in the PACE programme (PACE requests) must be filed online using the dedicated request form (EPO Form 1005). The EPO will issue an acknowledgement of receipt promptly. Requests filed informally, i.e. without using the dedicated form, and/or on paper will not be processed by the EPO.

A PACE request may be filed only once during each stage of the procedure, i.e. search and examination, and for one application at a time. A PACE request filed during search will not trigger accelerated examination. If the applicant wishes to have the application examined in an accelerated manner, a PACE request may be filed, once the application has entered the examination phase.

The EPO does not publish requests for accelerated search and/or examination and, by decision of the President dated 12 July 2007 (Special edition No. 3, OJ EPO 2007, J.3), they are excluded from file inspection.

An application will be taken out of the PACE programme if:

- the PACE request has been withdrawn,
- the applicant has requested an extension of time limits,
- the application has been refused,
- the application has been withdrawn,

- the application is deemed to be withdrawn.

This applies regardless of the legal remedies available under the EPC. In such cases it will not be possible to restore the application to the PACE programme, i.e. a second request for that application during the same stage of the procedure will not be processed.

Additionally, accelerated prosecution will be suspended in the event of failure to pay renewal fees by the due date stipulated in [Rule 51\(1\)](#).

Accelerated prosecution under the PACE programme can be provided only where practically feasible and subject to the workload of the search and examining divisions. In certain technical fields there may be constraints due to the numbers of incoming PACE requests. Applicants requesting accelerated prosecution for all or most of their applications will, as a rule, be required by the EPO to limit the number of their PACE requests by making a selection.

4.1 Accelerated search

4.2 Accelerated examination

4.3 Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH)

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