



# **European Tree Worker Certification**

## **Exam Rules & Regulations**

(Version January 2021)

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## European Tree Worker Certification Rules

*The curriculum and the examination regulations for the European Tree Worker have been prepared and are maintained by the European Arboricultural Council (EAC). They will be updated and amended on a regular basis.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Arboricultural Council (EAC), represented by the national associations which make up this council, offers the qualification of "European Tree Worker". The aim of the examination is to test the knowledge and skills that the candidates have to master according to the ETW curriculum.

**Successfully certified candidates may use the title**  
**"European Tree Worker".**

## 2. ORGANISATION

- 2.1. The Certification Centre (CC) has to inform the EAC Office at a recommended **minimum of two months** prior to the certification date.
- 2.2. On the candidate's application form there must be an **agreement** that the candidate's name and optional e-mail address, may be published on the **EAC website**.
- 2.3. The CC must complete the on-line registration for the planned certification with all data and information required.
- 2.4. For **late announcement** and **cancellation costs**, please look at the currently valid scale of fees which can be found on the EAC website.
- 2.5. The **examination fee** is payable in advance and is not refundable if the candidate fails the examination.
- 2.6. If a candidate's absence during the examination is unexcused, he/she still has to pay the examination fee.
- 2.7. A modification of the test days within the stipulated deadline is permitted. **Resulting expenses** by the EAC Office and the Supervisors have to be paid by the responsible CC (for details of distribution of costs, see "Role and Responsibility of Supervisor" on the password protected site of the EAC).
- 2.8. **Open questions** for the written part (6.1) **must be sent** not later than **ten calendar days** in advance to the selected Supervisor and to the EAC Office by the CC.
- 2.9. Multiple choice questions, for the Written Part (6.1) **will be sent** not later than **ten calendar days** in advance to the selected Supervisor and the Certification Centre by the EAC office.

- 2.10. **Questions** for the written part (6.1) **must be different** for every examination day. The questions from the last examination should be sent to the EAC Office with the Supervisor's report.
- 2.11. **All questions**, written and oral, must be **available in English** if needed for the Supervisor.

### 3. THE EXAMINING BOARD

The examining board should be composed of **representatives from the following groups:**

- The recognised and responsible **Training Centre / Certification Centre**
- The private tree **contracting industry**
- The public tree **management services**.
- The **national EAC member organization(s)** may ask to attend an examination within their country as a normal member of the examination board. Such requests should be accepted but the cost will be covered by themselves.

**An EAC Supervisor**, independent to the examining board, **must also be present**.

All examiners participating in the EAC examination **must be technically competent**.

## 4. CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Open access to the examination is offered to all those who possess the necessary technical skill to carry out the below-mentioned operations. However the examining board is the sole arbiter of entry and there is no absolute claim to admittance.

Candidates **must** provide:

- 4.1. The candidate must be at least **18 years old** at the time of the examination.
- 4.2. The candidate must confirm the agreement to comply with the Code of Ethics by signing the Declaration.
- 4.3. Proof of **payment** of the certification fee.
- 4.4. Proof of **physical and mental ability** to carry out tree care operations safely, with a **medical certificate** or a **self-declaration**.
- 4.5. Proof of a valid qualification in **first aid**, according to the national regulations.
- 4.6. Proof of training in the **use of chainsaws** (either on the ground or in the tree), and if required in their own country, a qualification or a license for the use of a chainsaw in the tree. The certificates for the aerial chainsaw use, provided by the professionally recognized organizations are also accepted.
- 4.7. For the climber and the MEWP operator: proof of a minimum of **one year practical experience** in tree care must be provided.
- 4.8. For the **climber**: proof of skills in **aerial rescue** must be provided.  
  
If no proof of aerial rescue training is available, the candidate will be required to carry out simulation 3 (aerial rescue) as part of the examination.
- 4.9. For the **MEWP operator**: Proof of skills in the **use of a MEWP/Platform** and **emergency situations** must be provided.

## 5. GENERAL EXAMINATION RULES

- 5.1. **A translator** must be available if needed at each certification in order to help the Supervisor with questions etc.
- 5.2. Candidates and examiners are **not allowed to use mobile phones** during any part of the examination unless in an emergency situation.
- 5.3. Candidates and examiners are **not allowed to give interviews** or speak to passers-by during the examination.
- 5.4. Candidates must be **separated in groups** so that they cannot influence each other before and after each part of the examination.
- 5.5. The examining board has **the right to stop the examination** of a candidate at any time if that candidate has committed an unsafe act or put his own life and / or others at risk. In such a case, the candidate has failed that part of the examination.
- 5.6. The complete examination can also be halted due to **bad weather** or other unforeseen circumstances.
- 5.7. The certification reports of each part must be **signed by both examiners**.
- 5.8. Candidates wishing to take **both practical exam parts** (6.5 Climbing / 6.6 Platform operator) must use **60 minutes** for each part.
- 5.9. During the exam it is recommended that the candidates and the examiners wear **Hi Viz Vests** in preferably different colours for ease of recognition.
- 5.10. **Candidate and examiners must be fluent in the spoken and written language** at the place of examination. This will normally be the national language. Alternatively another language can be used, e.g. English, if both examiners and candidates are fluent in this language. **No translation** is permitted between examiners and candidates.



- 5.11. If the selected Supervisor identifies that the CC fails to fulfill any part stated in this Rules and Regulations, she/he can terminate or delay the entire certification immediately.
- 5.12. Once accepted for an examination, CCs are encouraged to make allowances for a candidate who has a disability or special needs.

## **6. THE EXAMINATION FORMAT**

*The examination consists of the following parts:*

**6.1. Written Theoretical Examination**

**6.2. Oral Examination**

**6.3. Tree Identity Examination**

**6.4. Practical Examination – General**

**6.5. Practical Examination – Climbing**

**and / or**

**6.6. Practical Examination – Platform / MEWP**

**6.7. Practical Examination – Ground worker (Climbing and Platform)**

## **6.1. Written Theoretical Examination**

6.1.1. 30 Multiple Choice questions

8 Open questions

6.1.2. The first part of the written examination contains **30 multiple choice questions** with four possible answers only **one** of which is correct. These will be sent by the EAC Question-Bank System.

6.1.3. The **eight open / long questions** concerning the **national directives, legal requirements and/or special guidelines of that country** are to be supplied by the Certification Centre and have to be answered in the candidate's own words.

6.1.4. The written exam has to include 1 open question on the European / national **nature protection** laws / rules / regulations.

6.1.5. The whole written examination will take **60 minutes to complete**.

6.1.6. The written examination requires only **one examiner to observe**.

6.1.7. The control / grading of the written part can be done and signed by **one examiner**. If the result is **borderline**, it must be checked and signed by two examiners.

Pass rate: **50% of available points in each part**

A failure to reach 50% in either multiple choice or open questions would mean a re-take in the whole written exam.

## **6.2. Oral Examination**

- 6.2.1. The oral examination will last between **15 and 20 minutes**, and will be conducted by **two examiners**, with the use of samples and visual aids, as and when necessary.
  
- 6.2.2. An examination report must be made in **written form** and **be signed** by the examiners.

Pass rate: **50% overall**

### 6.3. *Tree Identification Examination*

- 6.3.1. The Tree Identification (ID) Examination will last a maximum of **15 minutes**. It will cover samples of **15 species**, which will consist of a regional representation of both broadleaved trees and conifers (and palms where applicable).
- 6.3.2. The answers will be given in **written form**.
- 6.3.3. Real **and fresh** samples must be used for the examination, but **digital and coloured photographs** can be used in addition during the winter months. The **length of the samples** should be at least 35 – 40 cm.
- 6.3.4. Botanical name: **genus** (1 point) and **species** (1 point) and **common name** (1 point) = **3 points** for each sample.  
  
Example: **Acer** (1 point)   **campestre** (1 point)   Field Maple (1 point)
- 6.3.5. The Tree ID Examination requires only **one examiner**.

Pass rate: **67% (30 out of 45 points)**

## **6.4. Practical Examination – General**

- 6.4.1. The examination site must be properly secured by the Certification Centre.

The **worksite** must be secured by the **candidate / ground worker**. This is a part of the exam.

- 6.4.2. Current EU PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) regulations and the safety guide of the EAC will apply. In some circumstances the examining board is empowered to make more rigorous safety demands.

- 6.4.3. The candidate has to provide all the necessary safety equipment and clothing which must comply with at least the current national regulations in the country where the examination takes place.

- 6.4.4. Trees used in the exam have to be at least **15 meters in height**. The **working height** must be **at least 10 meters**.

- 6.4.5. The practical exam starts with **the equipment check** and **risk assessment** and ends when the climbing equipment is removed from the tree or when the platform (MEWP) is in the lowered position and ready for transport.

- 6.4.6. **Communication** (hand-signs or verbal) between climber / platform and ground worker must be part of the examination.

- 6.4.7. The **examiners cannot take part in the practical examination** e.g. by playing the role of the ground worker. It is essential that there are **two examiners at all times**. Both examiners must observe the candidates whilst they are in the tree and on the ground, working as **a team**.

- 6.4.8. At least one examiner on site must be able **to carry out a rescue** of the candidate if necessary, for tree climbing and platform (MEWP).

- 6.4.9. **The examination of chainsaw use in the tree** must be undertaken **by all candidates**. The **safe use of a chainsaw** during this part of the examination has to be demonstrated on a **minimum of five different cuts**. In addition, handsaw use should be also demonstrated for smaller cuts during the whole practical examination.
- 6.4.10. Both **live and deadwood pruning ability in the tree** must be shown.

## **6.5. Practical Examination – Climbing**

- 6.5.1. The practical examination (climbing) consists of pruning in the crown carried out by using **appropriate climbing techniques**. The practical examination will take **60 minutes**.
- 6.5.2. The candidate must be able to climb to all parts of the tree to carry out the pruning within the available time of 60 minutes. No more than 30 minutes can be spent on accessing the crown (to get to the first working position) and **30 minutes for actual pruning**.
- 6.5.3. A **rescue system** has to be put in place **by the examination board** before the tree is used for the exam (e.g. a pre-installed rescue line, a MEWP ready to use next to the tree, an additional climber in the exam tree, ...)
- 6.5.4. Climbing candidates must place their **access line** themselves in the tree. **Candidates cannot use the rescue line for access.**
- 6.5.5. Branches used for **limb walking** must allow the climber to walk out a minimum length of four meters from the trunk and / or at least two thirds of the length of the longest branch.

Pass Rate: **50% overall**



## **6.6. Practical Examination – Platform / MEWP**

- 6.6.1. The practical examination (MEWP / Platform) consists of pruning in the crown carried out by **using a MEWP / Platform**. The team will consist of one candidate / operator and one ground worker.
- 6.6.2. The practical examination will take **60 minutes**.
- 6.6.3. The candidate must be able to access **all parts of the tree**, where practicable, without damaging the tree, to carry out the pruning within the available time of 60 minutes, of which no more than 30 minutes can be spent on the MEWP / Platform setup and on accessing the crown to get to the first working position, and **30 minutes for the actual pruning**.

Pass Rate: **50% overall**

## **6.7. Practical Examination – Ground worker (Climbing / Platform)**

- 6.7.1. In addition to the practical examination, the candidate must spend **60 minutes as a ground worker**.
- 6.7.2. An **oral examination** of the ground worker is an integral part of this examination and will take an **additional 15 minutes**. The oral part can be taken **separately** from the practical part. This means he / she can be tested separately.
- 6.7.3. The ground worker must be **examined as part of a team** with the climber / platform operator (duration 60 minutes).
- 6.7.4. **Failure** to pass the **ground worker section** (either oral or practical) of the examination will result in a failure of the practical examination.
- 6.7.5. **The ground worker cannot be tested** whilst the climber installs his / her climbing rope, unless there are two extra examiners available for this oral test.
- 6.7.6. The separate Ground worker Examination will be conducted by **two examiners**.

Pass Rate: **50% overall**

## 7. SIMULATIONS

### *7.1. Simulation 1 and 2*

7.1.1. Simulation 1 and 2 will consist of an **explanation and practical demonstration** of arboricultural operations in the most realistic situation **possible**. Each simulation will last between **20 and 30 minutes** and will be conducted by two examiners.

7.1.2. The subjects for both simulations will be chosen from:

- A) Pruning young trees
- B) Planting / transplanting
- C) Basic tree inspection.
- D) Crown stabilisation (tree bracing)
- E) Felling & rigging
- F) Protection of trees on construction sites

7.1.3. The simulation **subjects must be rotated** in a way that every subject is used at least once every five exams.

Pass Rate: **50% overall per simulation**

## ***7.2. Simulation 3 (Optional)***

### ***Aerial Rescue Test***

- 7.2.1. Simulation 3 is **optional** and only applicable where there is **no formal Certification for Aerial Rescue** in the candidate's country and should be conducted by **two examiners**.
- 7.2.2. An **explanation and practical demonstration** of a technique to rescue a person from a tree will be required.
- 7.2.3. The examiner is **not allowed** to take over the role of the injured **climber / dummy**.

Pass Rate: **50% overall**.

## 8. CERTIFICATION

- 8.1. A **pass rate of 50% for all parts** of the examination is required;
- 8.2. with the exception of a **pass rate of 67%** for the **Tree Identity** Examination.
- 8.3. Candidates will only have **successfully passed** the complete examination (including Simulation 3 where applicable) when the above results have been achieved.
- 8.4. If candidates take the **Combi Examination (Platform and Climbing)** and, for example, the Climbing section is not passed, but the Platform section is passed. This separate Practical Part can then be retaken.
- 8.5. Candidates retaking Simulation I or Simulation II **might not be re-examined in the same topic they failed**.
- 8.6. Candidates may **retake** individual parts of the examination, in which they have not achieved the pass rate, **twice**. This must be **no sooner than one month and no later than two years** following the initial examination.

## 9. RECERTIFICATION

- 9.1. The European Tree Worker Certificate is **valid for three years** from the date of issue, but **can be renewed** for a further three years by the EAC only if the certified European Tree Worker can provide:
- Proof of practical tree care work in 24 of the previous 36 months.
  - Proof of a valid qualification in **first aid**.
  - Proof of **physical and mental ability** to carry out tree work at height, with a current **medical certificate** or a **self-declaration**.
  - Proof of **participation at seminars/workshops/courses** (regarding arboriculture and/or technical training) for a total of **30 hours** during the previous 36 months.
- 9.2. **Applications** must be made in writing to the national coordination office and must include the required documents of proof and the appropriate payment. The certified European Tree Worker must also confirm the agreement to comply with the Code of Ethics by signing the Declaration at the time of the application.
- 9.3. **Recertification** can only be approved up to December 31, one year after the expiry date of the certification.
- 9.4. **After the expiry date**, the candidate's name on the EAC Register will be marked as "**to be renewed**".

- 9.5. If the certificate has not been renewed by this date, the European Tree Worker examination must be **retaken**.
- 9.6. The national board can make an **exception if recertification has not been possible** for reasons such as military draft, maternity leave, etc.
- 9.7. The national board, at their discretion, can **refuse recertification** or can take away certification status due to:
- unsafe work
  - unprofessional work
  - unprofessional conduct.

## 10. COMPLAINT AND INCIDENT

10.1. **The national EAC member organization(s)** is (are) responsible for any complaints and incidents related to the ETW certification. The following procedure was agreed upon by the EAC Annual General Meeting in 2016.

10.1.1. A complaint or incident is identified and reported to the national certification board, consisting of written information describing the form of the complaint, photographic or other evidence and an independent witness account of the incident / tree work.

10.1.2. The national certification board must contact the person or company involved to hear their explanation. Here is their opportunity to give their opinion and version of the facts and expose additional written and photographic evidence.

10.1.3. The national certification board can use the following template as guidance for handling the complaints procedure:

- The complaint and evidence provided by both parties will be evaluated by the board, which will make a ruling.
- At the first confirmed complaint or in case of a minor offence, the suggested action is a verbal warning explaining that recertification can be refused or the ETW certification status can be taken away if further unsafe or unprofessional work or conduct is registered.
- At the second confirmed complaint or in case of a major offence, the suggested action is a written warning from the national certification board explaining the confirmed complaint and informing that the next confirmed complaint will result in a refusal of recertification or withdrawal of certification status, as allowed in the rules.



- At continued refusal to stop unsafe or unprofessional work or conduct, the suggested action is the withdrawal of certification status from the person involved. This will include the removal of his or her name as registered on the EAC website showing certified ETW.

10.2. A letter from the national certification board must be sent to the EAC office informing the EAC of the complaint and withdrawal of certification status. The EAC through the Certification and Quality Management working group and the Executive committee will then inform all Certification Centres in all member countries to prevent the person involved to recertify in another country or Certification Centre. This would be in effect, a black listing of the person involved.

Certification and Quality Management (CQM)  
European Arboricultural Council  
January 2021