Outline

• About me
• What do patent attorneys actually do?
• What qualities do you need?
• Career path
• Transfer from academia
• Questions (and answers?)
Robert Andrews

- Biochemistry degree in Oxford, PhD in Cambridge (Establishment of embryo polarity)
- Joined Mewburn Ellis – September 2006
- Qualified UK attorney – March 2010
- Qualified European Attorney – October 2011
- Almost entirely biotechnology work (industrial enzymology, fungal genomics, stem cell biology, medical devices), a few general mechanical inventions
An idea!

It’s worth money … how do you protect it?
Types of intellectual property

- Patents protect how something works
- Designs protect how something looks
- Copyright protects expression of ideas, literary works, computer programs
- Trade marks protect “badge of origin”, reputation – ‘brand’
Why have a patent?

Patentee gets

- Right to exclude others from commercial exploitations
- In return for
  - Making the invention
  - Disclosing the invention
Where does Mewburn Ellis fit in?

• Specialist IP attorneys
  • patents, designs, trademarks, copyright
• Detailed knowledge of how to obtain registered rights
• Advise on enforcement of rights
• Private practice (but also ‘in house’)
• Contacts worldwide
What does a patent attorney do?

- Understanding an invention
- Describing the invention
- Explaining the invention to other people
- Justifying your description of the invention to other people
Or, more simply…

- READ A LOT
- THINK A LOT
- WRITE A LOT
Qualities you need …

• Good all-round technical and scientific awareness
• Analytical approach combined with a certain feeling for, and grasp of, words
• Excellent communication skills – written and oral
• The ability to work under pressure
Career path

At least 4 years to full qualification

- Start work September 2013
- Foundation college course October 2014 – part qualified March 2015
- UK Final exams November 2015 – UK qualified April 2016
- European pre-exams March 2016 – right to sit full European exams awarded August 2016
- European exams March 2017 – European qualified August 2017

Partnership, 3-5 years after full qualification
The Good Bits

• Intellectually stimulating on a daily basis
• Front-line involvement in new technology
• Excellent financial rewards
• Good working hours (usually)
• Partnership prospects
The Bad Bits

• Length of training

• Exams

• Pressure of working to deadlines
Comparisons with Academia

- Work with innovations so often in contact with academia
- Can be difficult to get out of research mindset
- More commercial awareness required (depends on you PhD)
- Strict deadlines imposed on you
- Service provider so client relations important
- Desk job
Skills I still use

• Scientific understanding
  • More degree level (and A-level!) than PhD
• Analytical skills – legal analysis, logical reasoning
• Communication skills – oral and written
  • Writing papers, presenting at conferences etc.
• Time management
Things I had to learn

- General business sense
- Commercial awareness of products
- Legal analysis
QUESTIONS?

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