Career Opportunities in IP (Patent Attorney)

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People have ideas

Sometimes other people will pay for them

IP = anything that might be worth something, but where the valuable bit is more an idea than a physical object

- Patents
- Trademarks
- Copyright
- Designs

Our whole society is built on IP

- Technology, medicines, books, music, branding/logos…
Career Opportunities in Intellectual Property

- **Science**
  - Patent attorney
  - Patent searcher/analyst
  - Technology transfer officer (e.g. universities)
  - Patent examiner – UK/Europe
  - IP journalist

- **Science + law (e.g. law conversion)**
  - Trade Mark Attorney
  - IP Barrister
  - IP Solicitor
  - IP Judge
  - Licensing executive

- **Other**
  - Technical translator
  - Trade mark examiner
  - Formalities examiner

www.careersinideas.org.uk
www.ipcareers.co.uk
What does a patent attorney do?
What does a patent attorney do?

- **Client**
  - Understand and describe the invention
  - Act before the patent offices/courts on behalf of client
  - Explain the legal issues
  - Advise on commercial strategy

- **Patent offices**
  - Explain the client’s invention
  - Argue and persuade that client’s invention deserves a patent

- A lot of reading, thinking, writing
- Life sciences: therapeutics (immunotherapy, gene therapy), diagnostics, biotechnology (medical and agricultural)
What are firms looking for?

- Good all-round technical and scientific ability (good science degree)
- Analytical approach combined with a certain feeling for, and a grasp of, words
- Written and verbal communication skills
- The ability to work to strict deadlines
- General commercial awareness
- Perhaps some skills/interest in management – many firms are partnerships
- MSc/PhD not essential but are common for life sciences

- ‘Old school’ application process: CV, covering letter and interview(s)
Training and qualification

- UK and European Patent Attorney
- On the job training supervised by qualified attorney(s)
  - No need to do a law conversion course
- Supplemented by
  - College courses
  - Tutorials
  - Lectures
  - Personal study
- Qualification by (many!) professional exams
  - At least 3.5 years to full qualification, typically more
Pros and cons

- **Good bits**
  - Intellectually stimulating every day
  - Puts your scientific background to good use
  - Front-line involvement with new technology
  - Lots of client interaction
  - Global networks, opportunities to travel
  - Excellent financial rewards
  - Partnership prospects

- **Bad bits**
  - Length and difficulty of training
  - Many exams
  - Pressure of working to deadlines
Want to know more?

- www.careersinideas.org.uk
- www.ipcareers.co.uk
- www.cipa.org.uk
- University careers service
- Firm open days – get in quick!
- Ask me!

N.B. Deadlines are approaching for applying for trainee patent attorney roles starting Autumn 2019 – see IP careers website
Exam Schedule Example:
UK and European (EQE) qualification

Start

- Sept 2019
- 1 year
  - Sept 2020
  - 2 years
    - Sept 2021
    - UK foundation exams or foundation IP course + exams
    - UK final exams
    - Pre-EQE exam
    - UK final exams 2nd attempt
    - EQE exams

3 years
- Sept 2022

4 years
- Sept 2023