

Patent Attorney

Patent attorneys help their clients or employers to secure and protect their patents, and other intellectual property rights. A patent provides an inventor with exclusive rights to the profits from their invention for a limited time.

The Work

You could be:

- using your technical and legal knowledge to check that the invention, design or discovery is original
- drawing up a 'patent draft' (application for patent, including a detailed technical description of the invention) to send to the Patent Office
- applying for a patent to the patent examiner, in the UK and in Europe, and negotiating with them on behalf of the client
- advising clients regarding infringement of patents, briefing lawyers in legal cases and appearing in court as an expert witness
- dealing with the sale or transfer of patents
- keeping up to date with scientific and legal developments relating to inventions
- perhaps specialising in areas such as trade marks, designs, chemistry, mechanical engineering or electronics.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Generally trainees start on around £35,100 increasing to between £40,900 and £45,000 when partially qualified. Newly qualified attorneys earn between £58,800 and £67,000. For those with 2-3 years post qualification salaries are between £69,700 and £80,000 and 4-5 years post qualification £78,000 and £100,000, sometimes more. However, competition for posts means that trainees may be offered salaries of around £20,000 a year, or less. For partners, salaries can range from £115,200 to £140,000 a year.

Freelance patent attorneys can earn around £50.00 an hour.

There may also be performance related bonuses.

Conditions

- Your normal working hours would be 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, but you may have to do overtime on occasions in order to meet deadlines.
- You would be based in an office. However, you may have to travel to meet clients, appear in court and

visit the UK Intellectual Property Office and the European Patent Office, which may involve spending time away from home.

Getting In

- You need a good Honours degree (often at least 2:1) in science, mathematics, engineering or technology.
- The entry requirements for these degree courses vary depending on the subject and college or university. However, the normal minimum requirements are 4-5 Highers plus subjects at National 5. Maths and science subjects are recommended at Higher.
- The University of Edinburgh offers postgraduate LLM degrees in Intellectual Property Law, and in Innovation, Technology and the Law, on a full time, part time and distance learning basis. A good Honours degree would be required for entry.
- The University of Aberdeen offers the postgraduate LLM in Intellectual Property Law on a full and part time basis. You would require a 2:1 Honours degree in Law.
- The University of Glasgow offers the postgraduate LLM in Intellectual Property and the Digital Economy. You would require a 2:1 Honours degree in Law or other subject with 50% law content.
- A good reading knowledge of French and German, while not essential for working in the UK, is highly desirable in order to read foreign language documents without having to call for translations. Knowledge of Japanese and Chinese is also becoming increasingly useful.
- A genuine interest in law is helpful.

As this is a small profession entry can be competitive. Patent attorneys work in private practice and patent departments in industry or government. Jobs are advertised on the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA) website.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- logical, analytical
- accurate and organised
- able to understand complex technical information
- able to present and argue a case effectively
- able to work well under pressure and meet deadlines
- confident and persuasive.

You need to have:

- good spoken and written communication skills
- a scientific and technical mind
- attention to detail
- discretion and confidentiality skills
- IT skills
- a good memory.

Training

- You would normally start as a trainee patent attorney, and be given legal training in a patent attorney's office or in a company's patent department while studying part time for the examinations of the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA). Training normally takes four to five years to complete.
- You would then be accepted on to the Register of Patent Attorneys, managed by the Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg).
- If you want to take cases to the European Patent Office (EPO), you must also pass the European qualifying examination.

Getting On

- Patent attorneys may choose to specialise in particular types of patents.
- You may move in to trade mark work as a trade mark attorney.
- Some experienced patent attorneys become partners in their firms or the head of a patents department in a company. Others may become patent examiners with the UK Intellectual Property Office.
- Since this is a small profession it would be an advantage if you are willing to move around the UK for advancement.
- Other patent attorneys become self-employed, either by taking on freelance work or by setting up their own patent agency.
- There may be opportunities to work abroad.

More Information

The [IP Careers](#) website has a lot of information on getting into intellectual property careers.

Contacts

Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys

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Website: www.cipa.org.uk

Twitter: @TheCIPA

Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA)

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Twitter: @CITMAuk

Skills for Justice

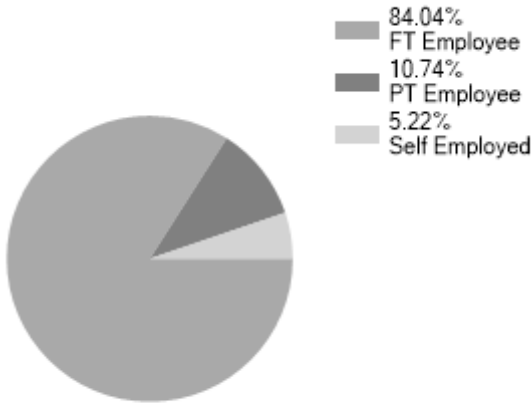
Tel: 0117 922 1155

Website: skillsforjustice.org.uk

Twitter: @Skills_Justice

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

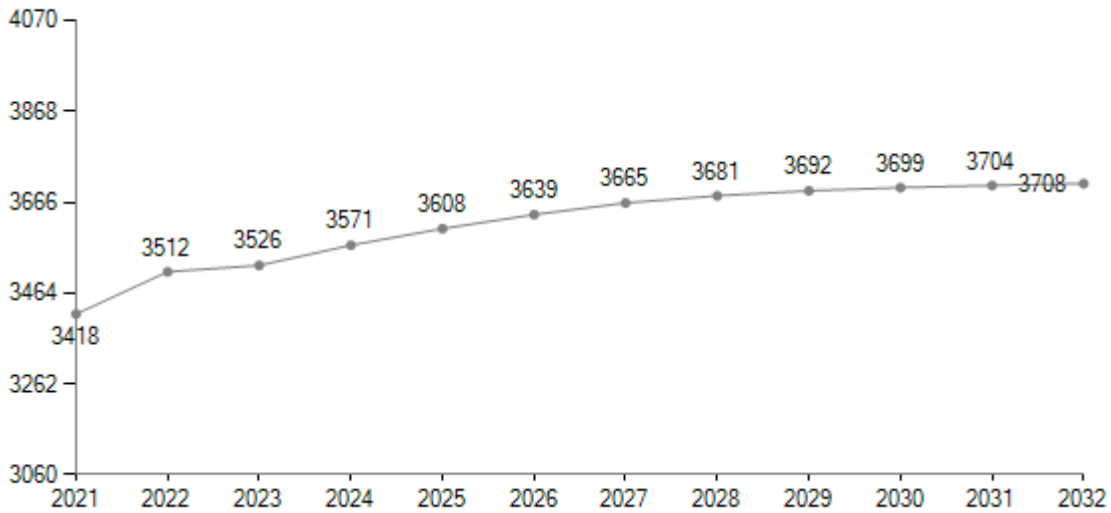


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)