



Mewburn



The forward-looking  
IP firm

Ellis

Training as a Patent or Trade  
Mark Attorney



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# About Mewburn Ellis

We are Mewburn Ellis, a top tier European intellectual property specialist working with organisations building the brands and technologies that will define tomorrow, using IP to nurture and protect innovations, ideas and inventions.

We are one of the largest specialist IP firms in the UK, with a strong track record and reputation for providing high quality training for our graduate recruits. This guide will give you an idea of what it is like being a Patent or Trade Mark Attorney at Mewburn Ellis. We have tried to give a feel for the day-to-day work – including both the good and the bad bits of starting out as a Trainee. We are sure you would prefer a realistic picture before you invest your time and energy in applying for a career in which you could spend many years!

Read further and you will realise that this is both a stimulating and rewarding profession, ideally suiting someone with a curious mind and a desire to develop new skills.



**Andy Whitlock**  
Resourcing and Talent Manager  
Manchester



# What is a Patent Attorney?

A Patent Attorney is a member of a specialised legal profession qualified to advise clients about patents and help them get their patents granted by the patent offices around the world. We represent applicants at the European Patent Office (EPO) and the UK Intellectual Property Office (UKIPO), and work with foreign Attorneys to obtain patents in other countries.

A patent is a monopoly granted for a new scientific invention, relating to anything from computers and electronics to new pharmaceuticals and useful gene sequences.

Patent Attorneys may be employed “in-house” by companies or may work in private practice firms (just like solicitors). If you work in a private firm, you will work for numerous different clients ranging from individual inventors, universities, start-ups, large international companies or Attorneys from abroad. A good Patent Attorney needs to be adaptable to deal with these different clients and be quick to learn new technologies.

The training usually takes four to five years and you are required to pass various professional exams to qualify as a UK Patent Attorney and a European Patent Attorney.

Patent Attorneys also often advise clients about other intellectual property rights, such as trade marks, designs and copyright.

## What do you need to be a Patent Attorney?

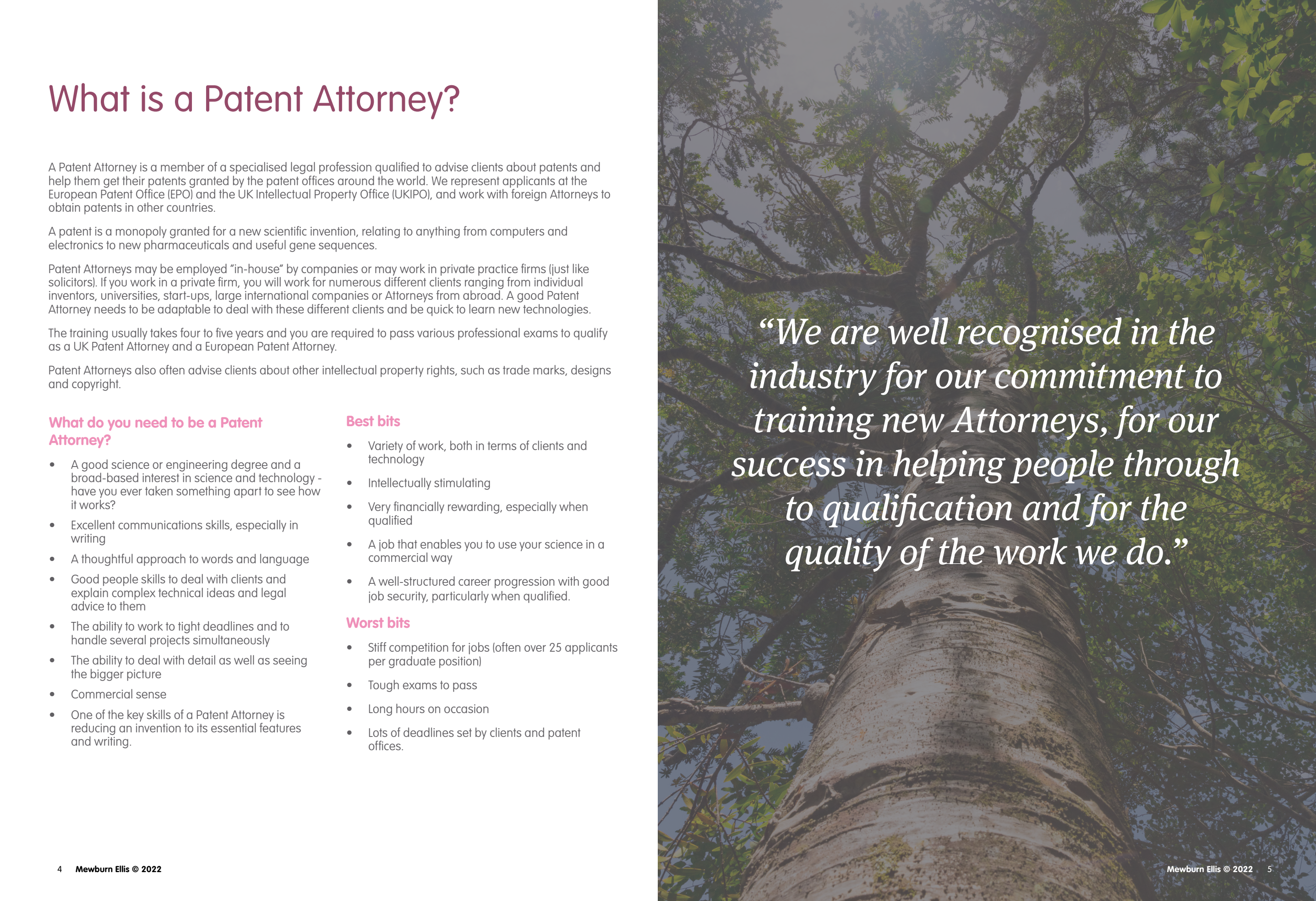
- A good science or engineering degree and a broad-based interest in science and technology - have you ever taken something apart to see how it works?
- Excellent communications skills, especially in writing
- A thoughtful approach to words and language
- Good people skills to deal with clients and explain complex technical ideas and legal advice to them
- The ability to work to tight deadlines and to handle several projects simultaneously
- The ability to deal with detail as well as seeing the bigger picture
- Commercial sense
- One of the key skills of a Patent Attorney is reducing an invention to its essential features and writing.

## Best bits

- Variety of work, both in terms of clients and technology
- Intellectually stimulating
- Very financially rewarding, especially when qualified
- A job that enables you to use your science in a commercial way
- A well-structured career progression with good job security, particularly when qualified.

## Worst bits

- Stiff competition for jobs (often over 25 applicants per graduate position)
- Tough exams to pass
- Long hours on occasion
- Lots of deadlines set by clients and patent offices.



*“We are well recognised in the industry for our commitment to training new Attorneys, for our success in helping people through to qualification and for the quality of the work we do.”*



# Meet our Patent Attorneys

## Niles' story

I started work in Mewburn's London office in 2018. Having attended a couple of open days at IP firms, I had an inkling of what the work entailed, but no actual knowledge of how to do it. This is perfectly normal.

In my first year, I found the best way to get by was to adopt a "have a go" attitude. Everyone is quite aware you don't yet know the law, or what to do, but having a go, making mistakes, and learning from them is the best thing you can do.

We're lucky to have large Trainee cohorts at Mewburn – so there's always other people to chat to in your year and above. Monthly tutorials at different offices are also a good excuse to get together and meet colleagues from other offices.

With the Trainee rotations and secondments, you get the chance to spend time in different offices and teams. In my case, I moved up to Manchester for my second year in the firm. By this time, I had already worked with three Partners in London, but moving to a new office allowed me to see how a completely new team worked. I think this really helps to

form your own hybrid style – rather than becoming a carbon-copy of just one principal.

Peppered through these training years are various sets of exams, all preceded by a mix of in-house and external tutorials. Again, having a group of Trainees around you to bounce off really helps in the run up to these difficult exams.

## Qualifications and day-to-day

After about three years at Mewburn, I made my final move to the Cambridge office, where I decided to settle, and soon after passed my final set of exams to become UK and EP qualified.

Your case work pre and post-qualification doesn't really change. At Mewburn, by and large, work is sent out in your name from the start, so clients know you're part of the team. All of this really allows you to take ownership of your work. What changes over time is your level of independence and responsibility, which gradually increases as you develop.

Day-to-day, your work involves a lot of reading, thinking, writing and re-writing. Being able to understand and explain how

complicated stuff works, both in writing and orally, is the cornerstone of our work. You get to do this across a broad variety of subject-matters and situations (i.e. when drafting a patent for the first time, or defending a patent at the European Patent Office in Munich).

Our work is very deadline driven. These deadlines might be set by the patent office or your client's commercial needs. Either way, this can lead to fluxional (often high) workloads. Alongside case work, there are great opportunities to get involved with business development or training. In time you also develop a better commercial understanding of your clients, so you can work with them on protecting their IP effectively. This is not to say you don't keep learning once qualified. Everyone frequently finds themselves in new situations and needs to keep abreast of developments in the law. The technology you work with is also constantly shifting, so you have to keep up with the latest innovations as you go.

Overall, if you like the idea of working at the cutting edge of science, but with an eye on the shifting legal and commercial world, then I would recommend training as a Patent Attorney.

## Bhakti's story

As I'm sure is a familiar feeling to many, I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to do after my studies, what I did know is that I didn't want to leave science completely. I very much enjoyed my PhD, but as it came to an end, I wasn't sure that a future in academia was for me. A career as a Patent Attorney seemed like a good fit allowing me to use and build upon my scientific knowledge but with a different focus to academic research.

As a Trainee at Mewburn, I have been involved in case work from the start helping clients during different stages of the patent prosecution process. Often when a client applies for a patent, the patent examiner raises several objections to the patentability of it. Most of my work involves trying to persuade patent examiners that the client's invention is patentable by preparing arguments to the objections that they have raised. The arguments are based on technical aspects as well as law.

I am supervised by a Partner in the firm. The Partners set you work and give you feedback. At Mewburn, we rotate Partners every six months which allows us to work with different types of clients and learn different ways of working. I've found this really useful in developing my problem solving abilities. We now also have the option for virtual rotations mixed in with two physical ones, which means you get the best of both worlds.

Good communication is key to many aspects of the job such as writing persuasive arguments, talking to clients to understand their inventions and explaining legal concepts to them in a digestible manner. An analytical and creative mind will also be helpful when responding to objections from examiners and during oral proceedings. As you've probably heard, having good attention to detail is also very important.

## Applying for roles

Before you apply to a Patent Attorney Trainee role try to get as much information as possible. Try talking to people in the profession and looking online. It's difficult to know exactly what something is like until you do it, but hopefully this will help you get a better feel for the job.

When applying, ensure you proof-read your CV and cover letter, accuracy is key to the Patent Attorney role. Try to research the firms to which you apply to ensure you're making informed choices and understand how they train their people. It can be daunting applying for a position as a Trainee Patent Attorney without knowing much about law, but don't let it put you off. You will learn on the job and hopefully find a firm like Mewburn Ellis with a strong training programme to help you develop along the way!



**Bhakti Mistry**

Trainee Patent Attorney  
Life Sciences

*"I work on multiple cases at any one time and each case is about something different. This is one of the things that makes this job so interesting."*



**Niles Beadman**

Associate, Patent Attorney  
Chemistry

*"Your work can be very spontaneous and variable. A new email from a client can completely change the focus of your day, which I find keeps things exciting and fresh."*



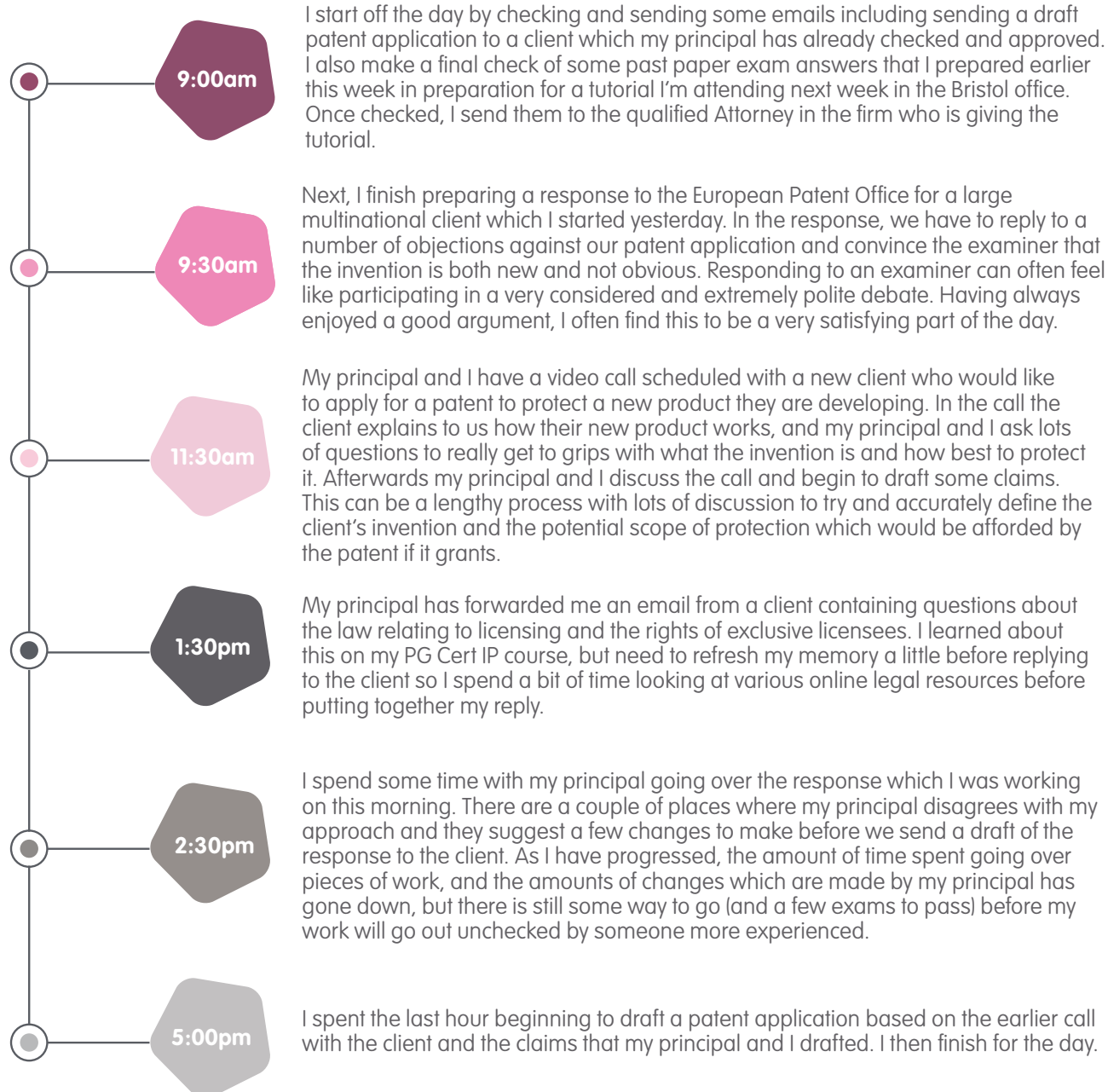


**Rebecca Frith**  
Trainee Patent Attorney  
Engineering

*“I enjoyed my three years working as an engineer after university, but decided that a life spent debugging capricious hardware in the lab wasn’t for me. Working as a Patent Attorney offers a perfect alternative that caters to my interest in technology while presenting a new challenge in terms of learning the law.”*

## A day in the life

The job involves a wide variety of different tasks. This keeps the job interesting because each day is different and you really don’t know what might crop up! Below, I’ve tried to give a flavour of some of the types of tasks that may turn up for a Trainee.



## What do we actually do all day?

One of the really engaging aspects of the job is that you actively utilise both your scientific knowledge and your analytical reasoning every day. The actual tasks that you will undertake as a Trainee, and once you become qualified, vary tremendously but they tend to call on a similar set of skills.

### Analysis

Large portions of our time are spent on analysing technical documents. This may be information from a client about a new invention, earlier patent documents or academic articles sent to us by a patent office, or arguments from a patent office Examiner or another Attorney in patent opposition proceedings. You will often find that you are not drawing on pre-existing knowledge about the technology; rather the ability to rapidly understand new science and interpret it to provide some practical advice is usually more important. This type of analysis requires a lot of careful, thorough reading of technical documents and assessment of both the key concepts and the precise technical detail.

### Writing

Most of our work output to both our clients and to patent offices is some form of writing. It may be a formal letter, an opinion about a legal or technical issue, a quick email, or a new patent application; but each requires careful, precise writing. The job involves taking care about the way you use written language to ensure that it conveys the exact intended meaning. You will often find that Patent Attorneys enjoy this detailed understanding of written language, even to the extent that being labelled as pedantic is taken as a compliment!

### Strategy

In addition to the analytical aspects of the job, another important skill that is required in our work is the ability to look at a client’s position as a whole and develop a strategy that covers all of their intellectual property. Many clients have a number of patent applications that cover different inventions or different parts of a product and an important part of our job is working out how these interact with each other to give the client the best possible protection. Although we concentrate on a client’s patent portfolio, we also need to keep in mind that they may also be able to get other intellectual property protection (such as trade marks or industrial designs) to help to protect other aspects of any given product. In many cases we act as intellectual property advisors rather than just focusing on a single patent application in isolation.

### Commercial awareness

Although our work involves careful, thorough analysis and precise writing, this all needs to be set in a commercial background. Patents are commercial tools for our clients, so it is important to develop a knowledge about how these tools are used in a business environment. In most cases, new Trainees do not start the job with this kind of commercial awareness but an interest and desire to develop these skills is important.

It is quite rare to find all of these skills in a new Trainee Patent Attorney. During the application process we try to identify candidates who show the potential to develop these capabilities and our in-house training for our Trainees is designed to develop these skills alongside the natural learning from day-to-day work.



# FAQs - Patent Attorney

## 1. Do I need to know any patent law before I start?

No. You do not need a law degree (in fact, you cannot become a Patent Attorney unless you have a degree in a science subject) or to have done a law conversion course. You will learn the necessary law on the job. As a Trainee, you will work on real cases from the outset and learn by going through pieces of work with your supervisor.

## 2. Which degree subjects are suitable?

Becoming a Patent Attorney requires a science degree, with biological sciences, biochemistry, chemistry, physics and engineering being some of the obvious examples. The definition of “science degree” extends to maths and computing, though in this case we would look for very applied knowledge or a strong background in physics, electronics or mechanics. If you have studied biological sciences, a focus on molecular biology will be important.

It is worth noting that the EPO requires evidence that you have a “full” science degree before it will let you sit the exams. Sometimes, joint honours degrees (such as chemistry with law) can be problematic if less than 80% of the course is devoted to the science aspect.

Further information on the requirements outlined by the EPO is available [here](#), under Article 11 of “Regulation on the European qualifying examination for professional representatives”

If you are unsure if your degree will qualify you for enrolment, you can contact the EPO by email at [support@epo.org](mailto:support@epo.org).

It is recommended you attach a copy of your degree transcripts detailing module weightings when emailing to ensure a swift and accurate response.

## 3. I am thinking about doing a PhD. Will this help my application? Would I still need to apply under your graduate recruitment program?

Our graduate recruitment program is intended for anyone who is not already working as a Patent Attorney. We find that candidates with a PhD and candidates straight from a first degree are equally capable of becoming successful Patent Attorneys, as the job requires an ability to understand new concepts rather than the kind of specialised knowledge that is acquired doing a PhD. Therefore, we do not place emphasis on having a PhD (though you will come across other firms that do). Sometimes a few more years’ experience and perhaps some contact with industry will improve a candidate’s confidence and commercial awareness and so may help with the interview process.

## 4. Are there tutorials to help with passing the exams?

Yes. Assistance in preparing for the UK Institute Final Examinations and the European Patent Attorney Qualifying Examinations is given

in the form of in-house tutorials. Trainees may also attend external tutorials organised by e.g. The Chartered Institute of Patent Agents. Just prior to the European Qualifying Examination, we also usually offer a one week external course on European Patent Law. Essentially this is a “crammer” course for the legal paper of the European Qualifying Exam.

Our in-house tutorial programme is great preparation for sitting the qualifying exams. However, you will also need to be motivated to study in your own time. This will inevitably mean hitting the books at home in the lead-up to exams.

The best way to think about the exams is that they are like a driving test. They are not simply an academic exercise, but rather a test of whether you are safe to be “on the road”, representing and advising clients. Therefore, the exams test more than just knowledge – they test your skill in doing the job, and the only way to obtain the necessary skill is to do the job for a number of years. However, the exams are modular, which makes it a bit easier.

## 5. I have heard that speaking French or German can be useful in the job; will it harm my application if I only have a GCSE in French, and I don’t speak any German?

No. In the past, the European exams required you to be able to understand a technical document written in French or German, but that requirement has now been removed.

The exams are now entirely in English (or are available in French or German if you prefer), so no additional language skills are necessary. That said, language skills can be useful when working for clients abroad; for example, the ability to speak Japanese or Mandarin can be a very useful (albeit not a necessary) skill.

## 6. As a Trainee, how much of the time will I spend working in my own subject area (e.g., chemistry?)

Most of the work we do is within our own subject area. However, as a Trainee you will be given tasks in a broad variety of technical areas as preparation for the exams, particularly in mechanical fields. In addition, the technical areas in which we work are very broad and involve frequent cross-over. This variety of technical subject matter is one of the really great parts of the job, particularly in private practice. You really could find yourself working in any part of your general subject area. The ability to pick-up new ideas, understand them quickly and ask sensible questions about them is one of the key skills we look for.

## 7. Does the job offer much opportunity for getting out of the office?

It is important to realise that this is a desk job. Most of our time is spent reading and analysing large piles of paper and then writing something as a result, e.g. an analysis for our client or arguments to place in front of the Examiner. However, we do

sometimes travel to meet clients or to meet foreign Attorneys in other countries. We are also sometimes required by the EPO to present a case in-person, which involves travelling to Munich or The Hague.

Depending on your subject area and the type of clients you are dealing with, our Trainees would probably go to external meetings or patent office hearings anywhere from a couple of times a year up to maybe six or eight.

## 8. Do you accept applications from overseas students?

Yes. The main potential limitation on overseas applications are that the European Patent Office (EPO) places restrictions on who can be listed on the register of European Patent Attorneys. They require that candidates must be a national of a state who has signed up to the European Patent Convention – essentially a European country. We ask all of our Trainees to work towards qualification as a European Attorney, so we require our graduate candidates to meet these EPO requirements. As for all candidates, we also require a high level of precision in the use of written and spoken language.

As a predominantly UK-based business, fluency in written and spoken English is required; where needed, we provide training and support to colleagues whose first language is not English.



# What is a Trade Mark Attorney?

A Trade Mark Attorney is a member of a specialised legal profession qualified to advise clients about trade marks and help them to register their marks around the world. We represent applicants at the UK IPO (UK Intellectual Property Office), EUIPO (European Union Intellectual Property Office) and WIPO (World Intellectual Property Office), and work with foreign Attorneys in countries throughout the world.

The diversity of clients from individuals to famous multinational brands allows you to develop true commercial acumen.

A trade mark is a sign which enables consumers to distinguish the goods and services of one business from those of another.

Trade Mark Attorneys may be employed “in-house” by companies or may work in private firms (just like solicitors). If you work in a private firm, you will work for lots of different clients who might be anyone from a sole trader to a multinational. A good Trade Mark Attorney needs to be adaptable to deal with these different clients.

The training usually takes three to four years and you are required to pass a law course and a practice course with exams in each to qualify as a Trade Mark Attorney.

Trade Mark Attorneys often advise clients about other intellectual property rights such as designs and copyright.

## What do you need to be a Trade Mark Attorney?

- A good degree, a good helping of common sense and a good “feel” for language – candidates with a penchant for crosswords and Scrabble® are not discouraged!
- Excellent communications skills, especially in writing
- Good people skills to deal with clients and explain complex legal points to them
- The ability to work to tight deadlines and to handle several projects simultaneously
- Commercial sense and awareness of what is happening in the marketplace – it can help to be the kind of person who reads the labels in supermarkets and notices advertising campaigns.

## Best bits

- Interesting and varied work
- Ability to become directly involved with client work at an early stage
- Great training and support
- Seeing one of “your” trade marks in the real world.

## Worst bits

- Juggling work and preparing for exams at the same time
- Lots of deadlines set by clients and trade mark offices.

# Meet our Trade Mark Attorneys

## Joe’s story

I came into the profession having studied law at the University of Manchester and then going on to complete the Legal Practice Course (LPC) at the University of Law. At both undergraduate and postgraduate level, I studied modules on Intellectual Property law, and this is what initially sparked my interest in IP.

Like most law students, I had never heard of, or considered becoming a Trade Mark Attorney whilst at university. I naturally assumed that if I wanted to pursue a legal career I would have to qualify as a solicitor. That said, I had some doubts about whether that was the right fit for me – I didn’t like the sound of working in 6-month seats in multiple different practice areas – I knew I wanted to specialise in IP.

With this goal in mind, I joined Mewburn Ellis in 2019. Initially, I started out as a Client Service Administrator in Mewburn Ellis’ Manchester office, assisting one of the patent teams. It was whilst working in this position that I first learned about the role of a Trade Mark Attorney.

After speaking to some people in the firm and doing some reading about what the role entailed, I knew that this was the job I had been looking for. As soon as the position became available, I applied as an internal candidate and, not too long afterwards, I was on my way to London to start my new career. The training scheme at Mewburn Ellis involves working closely with different Partners on the Trade Mark Team, typically for a year at a time.

The opportunity to spend time with and learn from a number of different Partners in the firm is an invaluable training experience. It allows you to get a

close look at different approaches to the work and, as you grow in confidence and experience, you can take the best bits you have learned from each of the supervising Partners and to come up with your own style; something that is definitely encouraged. Right from my first day, I was working on real cases and helping to advise real clients. This was a little daunting at first as, although I had some background knowledge of the law, I had never attempted to apply that in practice.

However, the support and guidance from the team is great and this quickly put me at ease. Although you are encouraged to undertake research and to utilise the various online resources when you are unsure of a point, there is an environment where you can freely and openly ask questions whenever you are stuck.

The work I did as a Trainee is extremely varied and no two days are exactly the same. The nature of the work means that there are often a number of deadlines to keep on top of, both from clients and from trade mark offices. It is therefore important to be organised and to be able to manage your time effectively. You will also need to be able to understand and explain difficult concepts, both in writing and in oral communication. Alongside the work, there are also a number of exams to sit before qualification. It can sometimes be a challenge to juggle work and preparing for exams at the same time, but the firm is always happy to help as much as possible to make sure you are in a position to pass!

Overall, if you are interested in language and you like the sound of a career where you can use your writing and critical thinking skills, I would highly recommend training as a Trade Mark Attorney.



**Joe McAlary**  
Associate, Trade Mark  
Attorney

*“The best way to learn when first starting out is to give every piece of work your best shot and then to discuss what worked well, what didn’t, and what could be improved.”*



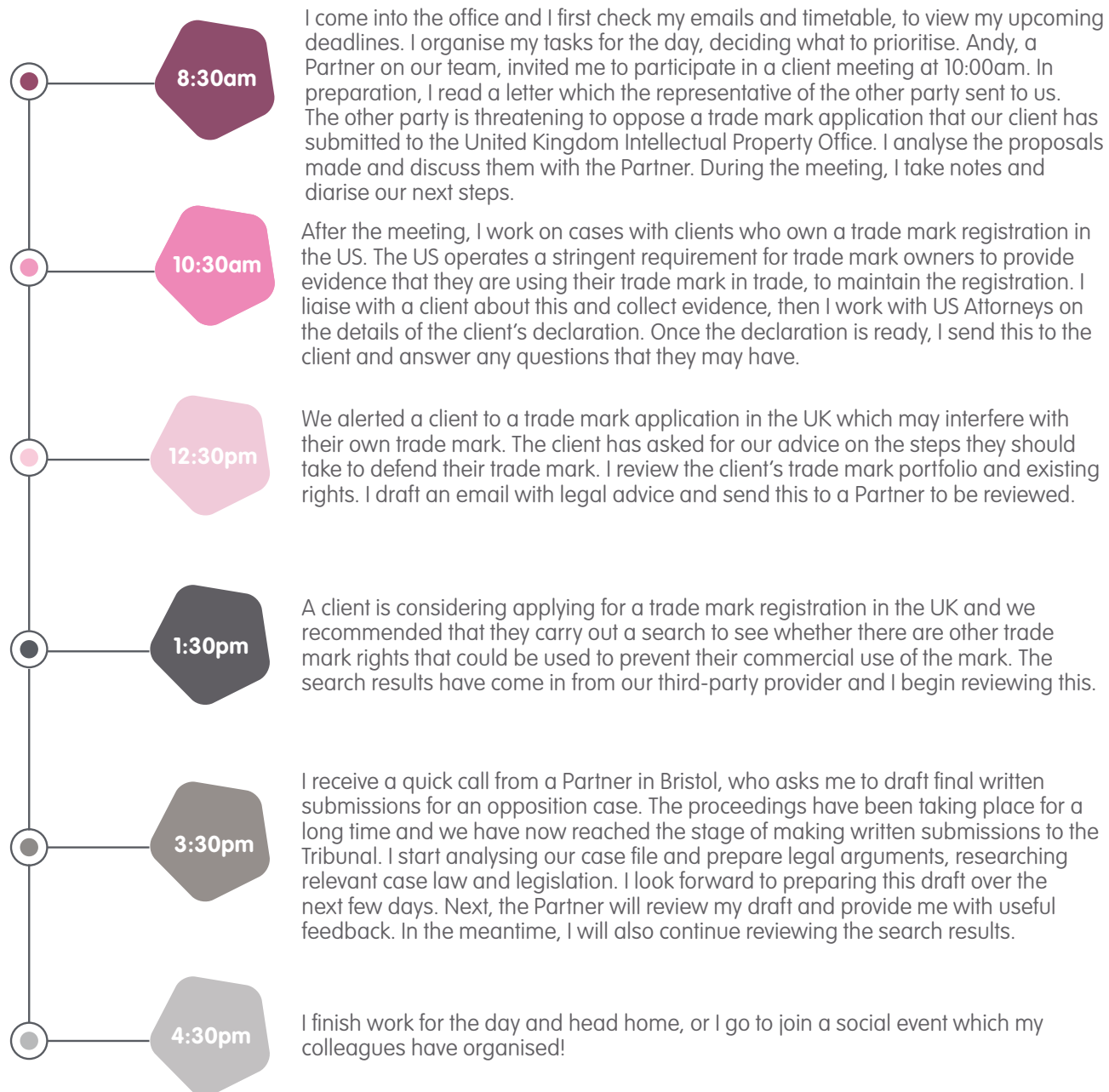


**Karolina Fryzlewicz**  
Trainee Trade Mark  
Attorney

*“During my studies, I chose to study a core module in ‘Trade Marks and Unfair Competition’ and took part in debating. These formative experiences brought me to take a focused interest in the area. Previous knowledge is not mandatory though and colleagues have varied academic backgrounds including Sociology, Marketing and English.”*

## A day in the life

The job of a Trade Mark Attorney includes a range of different tasks, the varied nature of these tasks and the fact that no two days are the same is one of the big attractions of the job and helps to keep it interesting. I have tried to give an idea of some of the more common tasks that a Trainee might encounter below.



## What do we actually do all day?

The job provides a unique opportunity to work with clients to develop, enhance and protect their assets.

### Analysis

Much of our time is spent on applying our knowledge on trade mark law and practice to the facts of a specific case in order to advise a client about their position and options. This may involve having to sift through large amounts of information provided by the client to gauge what is relevant and going back if necessary to ask further questions before the analysis can take place. Attention to detail is critical. Although Trainees are not expected to have this knowledge when starting the job, they should be able to pick up legal tests and practice points relatively quickly, and they will be helped by the professional courses they will attend as part of the qualification process. Our analysis should result in clear, reasoned, and helpful advice as to how the client should proceed in a given situation or resolve a particular issue.

### Commercial awareness

When advising clients, we should always be aware that they operate in a broader commercial environment and not become too narrowly focused on the legal aspects. Essentially, intellectual property rights are tools for our clients to further their business goals. This may mean that there are times when we should recognise that it is no longer commercially feasible to further a trade mark application or opposition, perhaps owing to a limited budget, or understanding the types of evidence a client is realistically or likely to be able to provide, for example in contentious proceedings, given their history and operations.

### Strategy

We should be able to look at a client’s position as a whole and develop a strategy that covers all of their intellectual property. That may be identifying any potential gaps in their trade mark protection or keeping in mind that there are other intellectual property rights available, such as patents or industrial designs, that may be appropriate in achieving the best possible protection for the client.

### Communication

A key part of our job is to communicate our arguments and advice effectively. We correspond with a large number of different entities on a daily basis, from direct clients, which may range from lone business owners with little to no knowledge of trade marks to large multinational corporations, foreign Attorneys, and trade mark offices. This is largely done through some form of writing, although we may also speak to clients directly or on the phone. It is crucial that we use precise and accurate language to convey our advice, as well as bearing in mind who our audience is as that will have an impact on style, tone, and the level of detail or explanation required.

### Organisational

Being a Trade Mark Attorney involves juggling a number of small and large jobs that are diverse in nature. Some of our days may be very fast-paced, for instance when we receive urgent instructions. It is important that we are able to prioritise our work and be constantly aware of upcoming deadlines, as well as keeping less pressing matters moving.

It is quite rare to find all of these skills in a new Trainee Trade Mark Attorney. During the application process we try to identify candidates who show the potential to develop these capabilities and our in-house training for our Trainees is designed to develop these skills alongside the natural learning from day-to-day work.



# FAQs - Trade Mark Attorney

## 1. The job adverts I have seen all refer to language skills – but I only did French at GCSE. Will this be a problem?

Being a Trade Mark Attorney requires sensitivity to language. For example, you may be required to argue about whether a member of the public would consider two similar marks to be confusing. Primarily, this requires a feel for English, so qualifications in foreign languages are not a prerequisite to do the job. Of course, a qualification in a foreign language may demonstrate that you have an aptitude for language in general and may be useful when dealing with foreign trade mark offices and clients.

## 2. Do I need to know any trade mark law before I start?

No. Some candidates will have come from a law background, but this is not a requirement. Even if you have studied law, practicing as a Trade Mark Attorney requires specialist knowledge, and you will learn this on the job. As a Trainee, you will work on real cases from the outset and learn by going through pieces of work with your supervisor.

## 3. How does the training work?

Like all Trainees at Mewburn Ellis, you share an office with a Partner in the firm who is responsible for supervising your work. This is pretty daunting, but it's really good for training – it's surprising how much you learn from listening to your principal talking on the phone to clients, trade mark examiners and foreign Attorneys or from going through the tasks in the week's diary with their secretary.

The main form of training involves working on real files, and discussing pieces of work with your principal before they go out to the client.

## 4. Are there tutorials to help with passing the exams?

Yes. Trainees attend external tutorials organised by the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys. This involves going through practice questions, sitting mock exams and attending lectures.


However, you will also need to be motivated to study in your own time. Although we encourage Trainees to study during their day-to-day tasks at work, it is inevitable that you will need to hit the books at home ahead of the exams.

## 5. Why are the exams so tough?

The best way to think about the exams is that they are like a driving test. They are not simply an academic exercise, but rather a test of whether you are safe to be "on the road", representing and advising clients. Therefore, the exams test more than just knowledge – they test your skill in doing the job, and the only way to obtain the necessary skill is to do the job for a number of years. However, the exams are modular, which makes it a bit easier.

## 6. Does the job offer much opportunity for getting out of the office?

It is important to realise that this is a desk job. Most of our time is spent reading and analysing large piles of paper and then writing something as a result, e.g. an analysis for our client or arguments to place in front of the Examiner. However, we do sometimes travel to meet clients or to meet foreign Attorneys in other countries and we attend conferences abroad. Some of our Attorneys work abroad for a few months, around the time they qualify.



*“Our unique office rotation scheme during training means that our Trainees benefit from working directly with different Partners in the firm and in different locations.”*



# Training and qualification

The training programme is well structured. The opportunity to spend time with – and learn from – different Attorneys is an invaluable training experience.

## Structure of our training scheme

Through our three year Trainee Attorney (TA) rotation scheme, we have always supported our TAs with their professional qualifications by offering hands-on experience across a varied range of work with different Partners. Historically, this has seen our TAs rotate around three or four of our UK offices, before settling permanently in an office to continue their training on a more informal basis through to qualification. With the world of work rapidly evolving, we have recently adopted a more flexible, hybrid working approach. We took the opportunity to review our existing TA scheme, with the aim of retaining the benefits of our existing scheme, whilst also providing our TAs with increased flexibility around their working location. We still firmly believe that our TAs have a better learning and development experience by working in a number of different offices in-person, and we encourage our TAs to move between our offices for this reason. However, we want to provide our TAs with more control over their own training path and to provide greater flexibility. So, we have introduced the option of virtual rotations, which some TAs may use to balance personal and work commitments more easily. Importantly, in virtual rotations, a TA remains in their preferred office whilst working remotely with a Partner and their team in another office elsewhere in the UK, rather than physically moving to that office.

## Patent Attorneys

Our Trainees work with at least four Partners or senior members of staff before settling. We move Trainees between principals every six months, these can be virtual moves (where you stay in the same office and work virtually with a new principal) or physical moves (where you change office location). You will have at least two of these physical moves during the first three years. These location changes are always done in consultation with our Trainees and personal circumstances accounted for to make any transitions as smooth as possible

A Trainee will be advised every six months of the proposed training plan for the following twelve months. Each time a Trainee moves they should know how long they will be staying in the new placement and with which principal, and where they will go next. However due to the complexity of the training scheme, plans cannot always be set in stone and flexibility on the part of both Mewburn Ellis and a Trainee is sometimes needed.

After about three years moving between slots, Trainees settle permanently into one of the firm's offices where training will continue through to qualification. After qualification we continue to give support to newly qualified fee earners, although this is on a more informal basis. Our offices are based in Bristol, Cambridge, London, Manchester and Munich.

Trainees usually join Mewburn Ellis in September, starting with a week's induction course which is usually held in our Bristol office. Sometimes Trainees can start at other times of the year.

## Trade Mark Attorneys

Currently the scheme for Trade Mark Attorneys is 12-month rotations and these centre around Bristol and London offices.

## Studying, qualification and courses

Much of the learning can only be achieved by personal study and experiencing the daily work. We recommend that new Trainees establish the habit of regular study to become fully familiar with various pieces of law. Learning can be guided or assessed by attempting questions from past exam papers.

## Trade Mark Attorneys

Trade Mark Attorneys qualify through attendance of a law course and a practice course, with examinations at the end of each. There is also a requirement to have completed a minimum of two years supervised training in trade mark work, which may involve keeping a training diary. Further assistance is provided via in-house tutorials.

The firm usually sends trade mark Trainees on a Law and Practice course and you would usually attend after having had a year's practical experience of the job here.

Following completion of the Queen Mary course, you then attend the Professional Certificate in Trade Mark Practice course at Nottingham Law School. This course is intended to teach the practical skills needed by a Trade Mark Attorney. It therefore involves practical assessments as well as written exams. The Nottingham course incorporates a module on litigation and advocacy, so Trade Mark Trainees do not need a separate litigation certificate.

## Patent Attorneys

Patent Attorneys qualify through a series of examinations. The firm sends Patent Trainees on a post-graduate certificate course in intellectual property run virtually by Bournemouth University. Trainees usually attend within their first year with the firm.

To qualify fully, Patent Trainees must then pass the UK Institute Final Exams and the European Qualifying Exams. Unfortunately, these are tough and have a low pass rate. However, we have a good record here of preparing people for the exams and most of our Trainees pass at their first or second attempt.

The exams are modular so candidates only need to sit individual papers in any retakes.

After UK qualification, a further litigation skills course is required to remain on the register as a UK Chartered Patent Attorney. The course must be taken within three years of entering onto this register (usually just after passing the UK Final Exams). We typically send our newly-qualified Attorneys on a litigation skills course run by the UK Chartered Institute. This course includes an online learning element (about 30-40 hours) and a residential weekend course followed by written and oral assessment.

## Our Approach

As a firm, we know that the exams are difficult and have a low pass rate. We place more emphasis on doing good work than purely on exams; so we accept that people may not pass all of the exams at first sitting. That said, passing the exams and becoming a qualified Attorney is a necessity before you can work independently so we do require all of our Trainees to work towards full qualification.

Our in-house training scheme involves tutorials about once per month with all of the Trainees from a given year. The tutorials are run by Partners or qualified Attorneys here and include preparation for qualifying exams and also sessions about professional practice and the internal workings of the firm. In addition, Trainees may also attend various external tutorials.

Trainees are expected to avail themselves of all training opportunities made available to them. The firm pays for all reasonable training costs in accordance with our various policies.



# Why work for us?

One of the best things about the job is being able to work with such a variety of different people in different business areas.

As you will no doubt have noticed there are a reasonably large number of patent and trade mark firms out there. So how can you choose between them, and why might you think of working for us?

We are one of the larger firms with four offices spread around the UK and a fifth in Munich with over 330 people in total. We have grown to this size relatively rapidly from beginning as a small family firm.

During this growth we have been careful to avoid losing the collaborative atmosphere and friendly feel that is often found in smaller firms. We believe that we have managed to achieve this growth without introducing an impersonal corporate feel to the firm.

Part of our success in this area is down to our commitment to our training of new Attorneys as they enter into the profession, in fact over 90% of the Partners here were trained at Mewburn Ellis. This has led to a relaxed, informal environment and a true sense that everyone can contribute to the success of the firm in some way.

The firm has also invested heavily in modern infrastructure, particularly in office IT, and run paperless files for all of our work. This helps us to provide a fast efficient service for our clients and keeps the firm ahead of many others in this respect.

## Our unique training programme

We are well recognised in the industry for our commitment to training new Attorneys, for our success in helping people through to qualification and for the quality of the work we do. We typically recruit 12 new Trainees each year across all technical backgrounds, which is a relatively large number for firms across

the profession. This means that our Trainees have a strong peer group and they can support and learn from each other during their training. The large numbers of Trainees here benefit from our well-established training programme that is designed to supplement their day-to-day training with a series of in-house tutorials. These tutorials are given by Partners or senior associates in the firm and provide invaluable assistance in preparation for qualifying exams and also training in other more commercial aspects of the job.

Our unique office rotation scheme during training means that our Trainees benefit from working directly with different Partners in the firm and in different locations. This provides two distinct benefits. First, it allows the Trainee to experience different ways of working and with a variety of different types of client and to adopt the practices that work best for them. By doing this, our Trainees can develop their own personal way of working without feeling obliged to adopt the practices of a single training Partner or mentor. The second benefit is that working in a few different offices before settling down in one location keeps the firm feeling unified which can be a challenge for a multi-office business.

From day one, our Trainees are placed in the same office as their mentor (not the case in all firms) which might sound daunting, but actually allows you to pick up good practices just by listening and being directly involved with the work that your mentor is doing. This also helps to lower any perceived barriers between Partners and Trainees in the firm which has real benefits in terms of the training experience. It also provides a more interesting and intellectually challenging environment for the Partners doing the training.

At Mewburn Ellis, the work you do as a Trainee is sent out to clients in your own name from the outset, this encourages ownership from day one but don't worry! This is after discussion and checking with your mentor.

While this may sound trivial, it does not happen in all firms. We think that it is important that our Trainees have the opportunity to interact directly with our clients at an early stage so that they develop the important client care and business interaction skills that they will need when they qualify and are working more independently. This also means that our Trainees take responsibility for their work and feel directly involved in each case that they handle.

## Our concierge service

- We can assist you in contacting selected lettings agents and coordinate setting up viewings of suitable accommodation.
- Each time you move offices we offer two extra paid days off to help with viewings and the move itself.
- We can arrange and pay directly for a removal service on moving day or van hire if you prefer.
- We will increase your pay in the month of the move to offset other expenses associated with your in-person secondment.

## Genuine career progression opportunities

In terms of career progression, the partnership here continues to grow, and we still recruit people who we think have the capacity to eventually become a Partner in the firm. At Mewburn Ellis there is a relatively fast route into the partnership following qualification if that is something that interests you.

Where possible we try to arrange for our Attorneys to have the opportunity to spend a period of two to three months working in a foreign patent or trade mark firm with the aim of learning more about the law in that country and developing close contacts with the firm. This is typically arranged shortly after qualification. Recent placements have been in the US, Japan, Korea, and China.

## Other sources of information

- Inside Careers Guide
- Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys
- Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys
- UK Intellectual Property Office
- European Patent Office





# Our commitment to our people

We recognise that we have a responsibility to ensure our business has a positive impact on the people, communities and environment around us.

We believe actions speak louder than words so we built the Forward Community Programme, invested significant sums of money and placed our approach to sustainable communities at the heart of our firm. We believe we're leading the IP market in this space and we're very proud of it.

Further details on all the areas that this firmwide initiative covers can be found [here](#), however a summary of these initiatives can be found below. You can also download a copy of our Sustainable Communities Special Report [here](#), which summarises all the work we have done as a firm over the last two years around charity, inclusivity and the environment as well as some of our plans for the future.

## Inclusion & Diversity

We are a firm that is committed to diversity of thought, ideas and viewpoints and where all our people, regardless of their background, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation feel they belong.

Belonging and inclusivity for us is about the people we hire, the careers we nurture, the culture we build and the relationships we have with our clients. We have already started to make changes in these areas. We have created a new board level role of Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer as well as launched an Inclusion & Diversity Collaboration Group. We are also now proud to be using Rare Recruitment's Contextual Recruitment System (CRS) which allows us to consider an applicant's achievements in the context in which they were gained.

## Our framework

Inclusive Talent Attraction	Inclusive Careers	Inclusive Culture	Inclusive Client Relationships
I&D attraction strategy that creates a pipeline for diverse talent across all roles	I&D talent management strategy that enables inclusive careers for everyone	I&D focused culture, integrated into people experience, policy & practice	I&D client engagement that integrates I&D in the way we work together

## Community

For us this means nurturing our people, helping everyone develop and contributing to the wider communities in which we operate as well as supporting worthy causes with time and money.

We support charities at a firmwide and local office level and do this through our Forward Community Programme Charity Fund. We are currently supporting the British Science Association as our firmwide charity as well as The Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal and Save the Children Emergency Fund. We also have a local charity for each office which has been chosen by our people.

Everyone that works at Mewburn Ellis has one community day per year to enable them to support causes they care about. In addition, we operate a Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme, so our people can donate to charities of their choice in a simple and tax effective way. Our combined community effort has amounted to more than £600,000 of investment since 2020.

This is in addition to our more ad hoc fund raising activity, where we have supported charities and events such as Genes for Jeans, Children in Need and Save the Children. We are also an active supporter of UK Youth, a leading national charity, committed to providing access to appropriate, high quality services in every community so that young people are empowered to build bright futures, regardless of their background or circumstance.

See more information on our Community Giving [here](#).

## Sustainability



We believe we must play our part in reducing the use of energy, lowering carbon emissions and reducing waste and actively avoid causing environmental damage.

Sustainability is a complex area and an ongoing focus for our firm. Our priority is to make sure that the way we operate has as little environmental impact as possible. We are looking at how we deal with waste, energy and reducing our carbon footprint (we aim to be a carbon neutral business by 2025) with the objective to eliminate our use if we can, reduce where possible or substitute if necessary. This is a broad approach and covers everything from how we manage our offices to the travel we undertake the decisions we make about the suppliers and products we use.

See our 5 step climate action plan and learn more about the Mewburn Ellis forest [here](#).





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