

Patent attorney

As a patent attorney you will be responsible for submitting applications, on behalf of a company or an individual, to the government, in order to protect inventions and give the owners legal rights with regards to their intellectual property. You could work at a private practice which represents numerous clients, in the law department at a large company, or in a government department.



What does the role involve?

- Meeting with inventors to discuss their inventions
- Analysing the technicalities of inventions to determine whether they are novel and innovative
- Creating legal documents surrounding the inventions
- Applying to patent offices for patents
- Answering questions on applications and making amendments
- Liaising with solicitors to enforce patents where required
- Keeping abreast of changes and new developments within the field you work



What subjects should I do well in at school?

Patent attorneys can work in any discipline, however, fields such as Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering have a high demand so excelling in those subjects, along with English, at school would be beneficial.



What qualifications do I need?

A bachelor's degree (at least a 2:1) in a Science, Engineering, Mathematics, or another technical subject. Once you hold a trainee patent attorney position you will study for professional qualifications.



Where would I work?

Company or government offices. Sometimes remote working. Travel to clients is common.



What skills and attributes are required?

Technical understanding relevant to the field you are working in, ability to learn and work independently, communication, ability to express technical information clearly and concisely, good interpersonal skills, attention to detail, analytical skills, time management, organisation.



What work experience would be helpful?

Undertaking an internship or a summer placement at a patent office would be highly beneficial. Shadowing a patent attorney or attending an open day would be other useful activities.



What about career progression?

This career path has many opportunities for progression. Once registered, patent attorneys can take on the responsibility of mentoring trainees. Progression could involve becoming the manager of a team of attorneys, becoming an associate partner and eventually a partner within a law firm.

CASE STUDY



Dr Rachel Free

Rachel studied double Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics at A Level and initially studied Chemistry at university, before swapping to Experimental Psychology. Rachel went on to study for a master's degree in AI before undertaking a PhD in Vision Science. She then trained to become a patent attorney and now heads up a team of patent attorneys at CMS, an international Law Firm based in London, working on protecting computing related inventions, including some quantum technologies. Find out more about Rachel's Journey at: (tinyurl.com/careersinquantum).