

What our people say



Rachael Evans

Why did you want to become a patent attorney?

I always enjoyed the writing, analysis and problem solving aspects of my undergrad and PhD degrees, but much less so the practical side. IP appealed to me as a career that would allow me to use my technical knowledge, writing and problem solving skills without having to go into the lab. I also loved the idea of learning about cutting edge research and working with inventors to protect their work and realise its commercial potential.

What is it like on a day to day basis?

The work varies a lot day to day! You might spend a few days drafting the same application or you might work on multiple cases in a single day. My days typically include working through office actions, drafting reporting letters to clients and preparing responses to the patent office. I then work through everything with a Partner to prepare versions that are ready to send. There is so much to learn about the profession and the time spent working through cases with Partners is so valuable. It's been encouraging to realise how much time more senior fee earners are willing to give to help you understand something.

What has the training been like?

The first few weeks were quite intense, there's a lot to learn about the systems and processes but there is also a lot of support available. Within the first few weeks I quickly started to gain some independence. Most of what I've learnt so far has come from discussions with the Partner I work with. He'll go through all my work with me, point out which bits need work and help me understand why things are done in a certain way.

What has been the biggest challenge?

The job is deadline driven and so, no matter how hard you work to plan your workload, if a couple of urgent jobs come in you just have to get them done. Missing deadlines can have serious (and expensive!) consequences and so sometimes you need to rearrange your plans to get things done in a short timeframe. Luckily, urgent work coming in at the last minute doesn't happen too often, so for the most part you can expect a healthy work life balance! One of the other things I found difficult to start with was recording time. Coming from an academic background, charging for time can be a strange concept to get used to. However, it's important to remember that you do add value to the clients you work for and the work you do is an important part of the commercialisation process.

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Grace Mason-Jarrett

Why did you choose to become a patent attorney?

I first came across the profession when I was at a careers fair in my second year of university. Prior to this I knew very little about it! The more I looked into the profession, the more I thought the combination of skills required suited my interests. I enjoyed my degree but knew research wasn't for me so I was looking for other careers that would enable me to apply my knowledge without being in a lab. I also was looking for a challenging career which would really push me, and I have certainly found this to be the case in IP.

How are you finding the role?

The job is demanding, and I find I am often working all areas of my brain to figure out the best solution to whatever problem I might be trying to solve. The work is rewarding in this sense and finding a good solution can be incredibly satisfying. The idea of working in a deadline-driven role might have put me off had I stopped to think about it before launching myself into this career, but actually I haven't found it to be an issue. Workload and responsibility has increased gradually over time, and I have developed the requisite skills to effectively manage the volume of work and the pressure that comes with that. Additionally, I have always felt well supported by my colleagues, so it is not like you are suddenly thrown into the deep end with deadlines and targets straight-away!

What is the work like?

Every day is different. Over the years that I have been working in this profession I have worked with a multitude of companies of all sizes, in a wide-range of industries. The variation in the inventions themselves means that I am constantly using and reflecting on different parts of my background knowledge; one day I might be working on a household consumer goods product, another day I may be working on telecommunications. Whilst I am training to be a patent attorney, I also do work relating to designs, copyright, trade secrets, and more. One day I might be at a conference on case law, another day I may be helping to run an IP workshop for a client, and the next I could be drafting a patent application.

Is being a patent attorney for you?

Absolutely, even when the pressure hits and the deadlines and exams are looming, the work is ultimately rewarding when you finally get that patent through in the US, or when you see a product you've worked on in a shop. For me, it was definitely the right decision as it met all my requirements for a career in being challenging and varied, and still something which uses the knowledge gained during my time at university.