

Training in Mewburn Ellis and Movement between our Offices

Mewburn Ellis provides a balanced professional education and experience of a broad range of work. In order to do this, we feel it is necessary for trainees to work with at least four or five partners or senior members of staff. Thus we move trainees from one principal to another about every six months and often this involves a change in geographical location. After about two to three years we expect a trainee to settle into one of the firm's offices to further develop their career.

This sheet aims to give information about life as a trainee in Mewburn Ellis and in particular to set out the practical aspects of how the training scheme operates.

Structure of training scheme

Trainees usually join Mewburn Ellis in late September to early October. Training commences with a week's induction course into the firm's way of operation. Usually the course is held in our Bristol office. Sometimes trainees can start at other times of the year.

The training period is normally divided up into approximately six month 'slots'. Usually a trainee will spend each of the first four to six slots with a different principal. Generally a trainee should expect to spend at least one slot in each of three of our training offices, presently these being Bristol, London, Manchester and Cambridge. The slots commence in early April and October.

A trainee will be advised every six months (in approximately March and September) of the proposed training plan for the following twelve months. Thus each time a trainee moves they should know how long they will be staying in the new slot, who their principal will be and where they will go for the next slot. However it must be stressed that because of the complexity of the training scheme as a whole, plans cannot be set in stone and flexibility on the part of both Mewburn Ellis and a trainee is sometimes needed.

For patent trainees one or more of the slots may be outside their technical discipline. Thus chemists

may find themselves working on biotech cases and biologists may find themselves finding out about semiconductors.

After about two to three years we expect a trainee to 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.

If on receipt of a job offer you have a preference regarding location of the initial training slot, please contact the partner who issued your job offer letter as soon as possible. Whilst we cannot guarantee to accommodate the request, we will try to take preferences into account when making our plans. If a trainee has any concerns or requests about their future training movements, they should contact a member of the Training Movements Committee (currently Patrick Stoner, Nigel Hackney, Seán Walton and Robert Watson).

Studying and courses

Much of the learning can only be achieved by personal study and experiencing the daily work of a patent or trade mark attorney. The examinations are difficult with low pass rates. We recommend that early on a new trainee establish the habit of regular study. A trainee needs to become fully familiar with various Conventions, Acts, Rules and Regulations and case law. Learning can be guided or assessed by attempting questions from past exam papers. We encourage our trainees to use about an hour a day of office time for private study.

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The firm usually sends patent trainees on the short (three months) certificate course in intellectual property run by Queen Mary College in London. This course commences in September so trainees usually attend after having had a year's practical experience of the job. A pass in the university certificate examinations provides an exemption from the Intermediate Examinations.

Assistance in preparing for the UK Institute Final Examinations (Patent and Trade Mark) 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 or the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys. Just prior to the European Qualifying Examination, we also usually send people to Strasbourg for a week's course on European Patent Law. Essentially this is a 'crammer' course for the Legal Paper of the European Qualifying Exam.

Trainees are expected to avail themselves of all training opportunities made available to them. The firm pays for all reasonable training costs, e.g. course fees, travel expenses for attending courses, examination fees etc. in accordance with our various practices.

Salary, expenses, holidays and benefits

The following is given as a guide but of course the precise details will be determined by a trainee's contract of employment and any policy prevailing at the time.

- **Salary:** competitive starting salaries are offered; trainee salaries are reviewed every six months; increases will reflect an individual's improvement and value to the firm.
- **Holidays:** 23 days annually; pro-rata as appropriate.
- **Flexitime:** allows up to six extra days' leave a year.
- **Bonuses:** loyalty bonuses paid after three, five and seven years in the firm.
- **Pension:** we operate a contributory pension scheme; this can be joined after completing three months' service. Further details are available on request.
- **Life assurance:** cover for three years' salary.
- **Permanent Health Insurance :** provides up to 75% salary if unable to work on medical grounds. Excludes first 26 weeks and is subject to a year's qualifying service and the acceptance of the claim by insurers.
- **Expenses:** all reasonable out of pocket expenses (as defined by the firm's guidance note) will be reimbursed to trainees on presentation to the firm.

This information is simplified and must not be taken as a definitive statement of the law or practice. For more information on Mewburn Ellis LLP and other intellectual property matters, please contact us or visit our website at www.mewburn.com.

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