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Patent and Trade Mark Salary Survey 2020

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Patent & Trade Mark Attorneys - London

Level of Qualification	Low	Average	High
Trainee Trade Mark Attorney - Graduate entering the profession	£27,000	£31,500	£36,000
Trainee Trade Mark Attorney with QMU or Equivalent	£33,000	£38,000	£45,000
Part Qualified Trade Mark Attorney	£35,000	£42,000	£50,000
Newly Qualified Trade Mark Attorney	£40,000	£53,000	£62,000
Trade Mark Attorney - Associate	£57,000	£65,000	£82,000
Trade Mark Attorney - Senior Associate	£69,000	£85,000	£118,500
Trade Mark Partner	£85,000	£105,000	£140,000
Trainee Patent Attorney - Graduate entering the profession	£26,000	£32,000	£35,000
Trainee Patent Attorney with QMU or Equivalent	£34,000	£38,700	£47,000
Part Qualified Patent Attorney	£37,000	£48,000	£59,000
Qualified Patent Attorney either CPA or EPA	£53,000	£62,000	£72,000
Salary to reflect 2019 Dual Qualification	£58,000	£69,800	£84,000
Dual Qualified Patent Associate	£65,000	£75,000	£93,000
Dual Qualified Senior Patent Associate	£78,500	£88,000	£115,000
Patent Partner	£85,000	£110,000	£150,000

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Patent & Trade Mark Attorneys - Regional

Level of Qualification	Low	Average	High
Trainee Trade Mark Attorney - Graduate entering the profession	£25,000	£28,000	£33,000
Trainee Trade Mark Attorney with QMU or Equivalent	£30,000	£35,500	£42,000
Part Qualified Trade Mark Attorney	£32,000	£40,000	£45,000
Newly Qualified Trade Mark Attorney	£38,000	£50,000	£62,000
Trade Mark Attorney - Associate	£45,000	£62,000	£76,000
Trade Mark Attorney - Senior Associate	£65,000	£79,000	£110,000
Trade Mark Partner	£76,000	£95,000	£110,000
Trainee Patent Attorney - Graduate entering the profession	£27,000	£31,000	£36,000
Trainee Patent Attorney with QMU or Equivalent	£30,000	£38,000	£47,000
Part Qualified Patent Attorney	£36,000	£47,000	£57,000
Qualified Patent Attorney either CPA or EPA	£47,000	£59,000	£73,000
Salary to reflect 2019 Dual Qualification	£58,000	£66,000	£74,000
Dual Qualified Patent Associate	£65,500	£75,000	£88,000
Dual Qualified Senior Associate	£70,000	£84,000	£120,000
Patent Partner	£83,000	£100,000	£150,000

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Patent & Trade Mark Support Staff - London & Regional

Level of Qualification	Low	Average	High
London	London	London	London
Patent / Trade Mark Secretary - up to 2 years experience	£20,500	£27,000	£33,000
Patent / Trade Mark Secretary - up to 2 to 5 years experience	£25,000	£35,000	£43,000
Patent / Trade Mark Secretary - 5 years plus experience	£28,000	£41,000	£50,000
Formalities Administrator - up to 2 years experience	£19,000	£28,500	£38,000
Formalities Administrator - 2 to 5 years experience	£24,000	£34,000	£40,000
Formalities Administrator - 5 years plus experience	£34,500	£40,000	£47,000
Formalities Manager / Supervisor / Team Leader	£42,000	£56,800	£75,000
Head of Formalities	£74,300	£93,000	£125,000
Regional	Regional	Regional	Regional
Patent / Trade Mark Secretary - up to 2 years experience	£17,500	£22,500	£28,000
Patent / Trade Mark Secretary - up to 2 to 5 years experience	£19,500	£30,000	£39,500
Patent / Trade Mark Secretary - 5 years plus experience	£25,000	£34,500	£46,500
Formalities Administrator - up to 2 years experience	£19,000	£25,000	£35,000
Formalities Administrator - 2 to 5 years experience	£24,000	£29,000	£39,000
Formalities Administrator - 5 years plus experience	£26,000	£34,000	£45,000
Formalities Manager / Supervisor / Team Leader	£28,500	£46,500	£71,000
Head of Formalities	£42,000	£63,000	£95,000

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Patent & Trade Mark - In-House

Level of Qualification	Low	Average	High
Newly Qualified Trade Mark Attorney	£50,000	£59,000	£67,000
Trade Mark Attorney - Associate	£62,000	£71,800	£80,000
Trade Mark Attorney - Senior Associate	£64,000	£82,500	£105,000
Head of Trade Marks	£70,000	£95,000	£130,000
Part Qualified Patent Attorney	£40,000	£50,000	£59,000
Qualified either CPA or EPA	£55,000	£65,000	£75,000
Dual Qualified Patent Attorney	£72,000	£80,000	£90,000
Head of Patents	£80,000	£113,000	£130,000
Formalities Administrator - 2 to 5 years experience	£32,000	£37,900	£42,000
Formalities Administrator - 5 years plus experience	£39,000	£47,400	£60,000

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As the recruitment market remains as competitive as ever, salaries continue to stay in the spotlight with employees paying particular attention to not only their basic salary but bonuses and 'softer benefits' too. We are still seeing significant salary discrepancies across the market as well as in the way in which employee pay is structured but hope that the following document will help to make some sense of this.

Whilst we recognise that basic salaries will always be of interest, it is very rarely the only factor considered. The additional information following the salary tables is designed to give an insight into working conditions across the IP sector, as well as reflecting on points of interest raised by clients and candidates alike.

As with previous years, individuals are generally keen to look at a job offer / their current package in its entirety, taking into account not just the basic salary. We are seeing bonuses, earning potential and, increasingly, flexibility and work-life balance being important factors for a candidate to consider, and we expect this thought process to continue. Nevertheless, remuneration remains an important factor in both attracting and retaining the best quality people.

As you will see from the salary figures, the bandings are quite wide and there are a number of factors that impact on where an IP professional could fall within the banding.

What impacts on salary banding?

Salary Reviews and Areas of Practice:

As in previous years, almost all of the businesses that we work with told us that they had awarded salary increases in 2019 and there continues to be an uplift in the average salaries across the board, although the rate of increase has slowed i.e. £100s rather than £1000s.

Over recent years, there has been a very real "skills gap" across a wide range of areas and good Attorneys remain in high demand across all disciplines which is often reflected in the starting salaries. In the areas of shortest supply, notably Electronics, we still see higher remuneration (basic and bonuses where applicable) being offered to both attract and retain top talent, although this is currently less widespread than in previous years.

Of the Attorneys for whom we have secured roles over the past year, 77.5% got a salary increase with their move. This does of course mean that there were 22.5% of Attorneys who moved for the same or indeed less than their previous salary. The below information will show that while a significant number of Attorneys moved for an increase, salaries are not increasing at the same rate as previous years.

Of the Patent Attorneys who secured an increase, this increase was on average 16% compared to 20% last year. For Trade Mark Attorneys, the average salary increase was 12% in contrast to 15% in 2018/2019.

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Finally, for the support staff who secured roles last year, 78% also received a salary increase upon moving. That increase was an average of 13%, compared to 14% last year.

2019 Dual Qualified Patent Attorneys

Notably, there has been significantly less movement in salary at single qualification level this year, which could indicate that firms may be putting more value on dual qualification. There is also a major difference between employers paying at the lower end of the range in comparison to those paying at the top end, with over a £20k difference. Although the range was significant, in both the regions and in London, there were a lot of firms paying very close to the 'average' salaries shown.

Location

While salaries in London are generally still higher, we have seen a notably higher rise in the regions for Attorneys, which may reflect a growing number of firms looking to reduce their London office overheads and grow bigger regional teams of Attorneys. While many firms add an element of "London weighting" due to a higher cost of living, we have seen increases in the salaries that are being offered, to attract both existing employees and new starters to their regional offices.

Increases and Bonuses for Attorneys Passing Exams:

The majority of the private practices we work with review salaries when exams are passed, with these reviews being separate to their firm-wide annual salary review. Of the firms that offer salary reviews to reflect exam passes, c. 50% offer 'spot' bonuses for individual exam passes, typically £1000 per exam pass. In contrast, the majority of our in-house clients incorporate an increase for passing exams into the Attorney's annual salary review.

Increases and Bonuses for Support Staff Passing Exams:

Our London and in-house clients are far more likely to offer financial rewards to Patent / Trade Mark Administrators who have passed the CIPA / CITMA Paralegal Course than the practices in the regions. For those passing the CIPA / CITMA Paralegal Course in both London and regional practices, a spot bonus would typically be between £750 and £1200 in comparison to industry employers where that figure is likely to be between £1500 – £3000.

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Trade Mark Attorney Salaries

Salaries vary in this sector more than in any other Attorney category and to advise on a Trade Mark Attorney's salary remains a little bit 'finger in the air'. To give some examples, we have seen newly qualified TMA salaries ranging from £35,000 all the way up to over £60,000 and those with two years' PQE experience being paid anything from £45,000 through to £80,000 +. Following a spike in qualified Attorney recruitment throughout the Summer, we have seen increases across the board for Trade Mark Attorneys, specifically from NQ level upwards but especially at Associate level which follows the pattern of firms being more cautious until Attorneys have gained some PQE. We explore this in more detail below.

What is Causing Such a Vast Range?

It would appear that some employers are still negatively comparing the current qualification system to the old system and "penalising" Attorneys for having less practical experience than their level of qualification might suggest. Once an Attorney has qualified, it still seems that in a lot of instances, they are being held at the 'newly qualified' level for longer than in the past, i.e. not stepping into a more independent, Associate level position straight away. In comparison to a few years ago, a lot of very recently qualified Trade Mark Attorneys tell us that despite being officially qualified, they haven't seen an immediate change to their 'day job' and they are still being closely supervised.

It has been evident that there are more Trade Mark Attorneys who are qualifying in the profession via the paralegal or support route and again this is having an impact on salaries in the sector. Traditionally, Trade Mark Attorneys joined their firm as a graduate and the speed that they moved through their training and their exams was predominantly dictated by their employer. Now, we are seeing trainees joining firms and already being technically part-qualified because they have self-funded QM (or an equivalent) and are keen to commence the Nottingham Course as soon as possible without having necessarily gained that much practical experience. Conversely, we are also seeing a significant influx of Trade Mark Administrators / Trade Mark Paralegals who have either self-funded or been financially supported by their employer to qualify as a Trade Mark Attorney and who find themselves passing the exams without having had 'true' Attorney experience. There are UK registered Trade Mark Attorneys who are still effectively operating at Paralegal level despite their technical qualification. Their employer either hasn't got the volume of Attorney work to provide or they simply don't recognise them as a qualified Attorney which is reflected in the salary that they are able / prepared to pay. Often we see these Attorneys being in a catch-22 position as it is also hard for them to move to another firm, because even with their qualification, a potential employer isn't confident that they will be able to perform at the level that they would expect of their own NQ Attorneys.

It's important to remember that some businesses simply pay more than others and that remains the same in any sector. There is still stiff competition for the few in-house Trade Mark Attorney roles that are available. Recruitment into the Trade Marks teams within law firms remained strong in 2019 and it is within these firms that we see the greatest disparity of salaries. Whilst in some instances, it is true that the higher expectations of longer hours and higher billing targets offer the highest rates of pay, this is not always the case, and Attorneys in the 1-7 years PQE bracket have the widest range of pay across firms. Generally speaking, Senior Trade Mark Attorneys in London law firms are amongst the highest paid in the industry.

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Despite the uncertainty of Brexit, recruitment in the Trade Marks sector remained buoyant throughout 2019. Firms have been busy and keen to ensure that they are adequately resourced to respond well to their clients' changing needs. Firms who have been keen to recruit at the 0-3 years PQE level have had more choice of candidates as Attorneys feel more confident in exploring their career options at the point of recent qualification. If there is a reluctance to move in the current market, it has been more evident at the Senior level. From speaking with clients, the early indications are that this market will quieten in the coming months as the profession adjusts to the impact of Brexit, but this remains hard to predict at this point.

Attorney vs Senior Attorney

Increasingly, we have seen a difference in salaries between those who are considered Attorneys and those who are operating at Senior Attorney level. In some businesses the difference merely reflects time served, however, increasingly Senior Attorneys are expected to take on additional responsibilities beyond the 'day job'. Some examples of this include taking a lead role in new business development initiatives, managing other employees, providing structured training within the business, presenting at conferences / sector events etc. Often, these are the people who have their eye on their next step up the career ladder, be that a move towards Partnership or in to a 'Head of IP' role.

In both the Patent and Trade Mark sectors, there are a lot of very experienced, skilled Attorneys who simply enjoy the Attorney role and have no desire to immerse themselves in lots of extracurricular activities. There is increasing recognition for this group of professionals in the sector and often they are extremely valued by their employer. That said, whilst these Attorneys will accrue incremental increases, their salaries may plateau compared to those making an additional contribution to their employer. The notable exception in the current market is within the Hi-Tech/ Electronics sector, where firms can be so busy that they are prepared to pay a premium for those Attorneys who simply want to fee-earn without taking on additional responsibility.

The variety in titles within different firms at this "Senior Attorney" level can be misleading, particularly for Attorneys looking to move from one firm to another. It is important to look beyond the title, not just at the salary banding within each firm, but also at the level of additional responsibility expected, in order to accurately compare and contrast what each role offers both in terms of remuneration and career progression.

Support Staff Salaries

Salaries at the more senior end continue to rise, specifically with Heads of Formalities now commanding salaries well into 6 figures. The London / Regional divide remains evident; however we have seen regional CIPA / CITMA Administrator salaries increase quite significantly, and firms in certain areas such as Cambridge are now matching London salaries like for like, in order to attract the best candidates.

Experienced Patent and Trade Mark support professionals continue to be well looked after and harder to attract. We continue to see candidates being persuaded to stay with their existing employer for significant salary increases, although longer term this rarely solves any wider issues which may be prompting them to move on.

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'Capping' of Salaries for Support Staff

Many of our clients spoke to us about what their competitors do in terms of capping support staff salaries. Experienced, good quality Secretaries and Administrators are almost in as high demand / short supply as Attorneys and it is not uncommon for us to see some Secretaries being paid more than the junior fee earners within the same firm.

This year, we have continued to see a much more considered approach with salaries on offer for new positions. There have been salary brackets provided at the outset, and these have been much more adhered to this year, with clients prepared to walk away from even the most exceptional of candidates, if they were seen to be demanding too much.

Of course, if a Secretary / Administrator is thought to be absolutely invaluable to a business and they are consistently performing at a level that is beyond the norm, then of course their salary review should reflect this. Some firms have expressed an interest in having caps on support staff salaries, to prevent long term employees receiving annual increases for doing the same job year in and year out, meaning they are being paid more than they would be considered worth in the wider market.

Interestingly, this year we have seen some firms moving towards recognising and rewarding those who are performing with an individual / discretionary bonus instead of the traditional, annual increase. The aim is to help alleviate frustration from some Partners who feel increases are being given, without being justified, by attaching the bonus to a particular project or increase in responsibility that the employee has taken on. It also helps to manage the employees' expectations by linking remuneration more closely to specific performance as opposed to simply "time served".

This has been evidenced by seeing smaller increases in 5+ years and senior formalities roles in practice, although we've seen larger increases in industry formalities salaries.

Individual Skills & Capabilities

Irrespective of demand or sector, we consistently see exceptional candidates being rewarded beyond what could be expected within the market.

In our experience they do so for a range of reasons, the most frequent/important being:

- Sector Specialism
- Management Input
- Business Development
- Client Management
- Fee Earning
- Potential

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Most often it is a combination of the above.

We also see people who simply work and perform beyond their 'PQE' being effectively treated, for financial and other reasons, as someone of more seniority.

Bonuses and Benefits?

Bonuses

With nearly all employers offering a form of employee bonus, the way that they are structured and the rewards they can generate vary greatly.

Personal performance was the most common reason to pay a bonus UK-wide and employment in London offers considerably more chance for all employees to earn a bonus rather than fee earners alone. We saw a split between bonuses being awarded for performance against a predefined target and discretionary bonuses. In a few firms the reason for awarding bonuses was dependent on whether your role was support staff (discretionary) or Attorney (performance against a target). Targets against 'hours' and 'billings' were the biggest factor influencing bonuses although we know from speaking to Attorneys that these targets and the financial rewards associated vary hugely from firm to firm. Typically, Attorneys start seeing their bonus once they have billed in excess of 900 hours (although this can be closer to 800 hours in some firms and in law firms, it will often be over 1200 with a target of 1500 not being unusual).

In industry, a significant amount of an employee bonus will often be attributed to the company's financial performance that year and the remaining element which that employee can directly influence will reflect their performance against set personal objectives.

From the numerous discussions we have had, it would seem that sector-wide, on average a qualified Attorney can expect to earn an additional 8-10% of their basic salary as an annual bonus. This takes into account those who are underperforming as well as those who have made an exceptional contribution. Typically, where the bonus is discretionary, firms offer an incentive to earn up to an additional 25% of a basic salary, although in our experience, the number of Attorneys achieving 25% is reasonably low. For those at the very top of their game, we have examples of Attorneys earning around £30K in bonuses, with some Attorneys earning £40K plus.

Basic salaries do differ across employers and we tend to see a trade-off between firms offering a more modest basic with a stronger bonus structure, versus firms offering a higher basic paired with a less sophisticated or indeed a harder to achieve bonus structure. Ultimately, it is then for the Attorney to decide what motivates them more – also giving their potential employer a useful insight to their psyche for future development.

Welcome Payments

'Golden Hellos' and relocation allowances are more prevalent now within high demand areas in firms. These are often used as a way of enticing people on board, or to help them bridge the gap between London or overseas salaries and those in the regions.

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Private Medical Insurance

There are very differing positions on this, and whilst the vast majority of larger firms will offer health insurance to their employees, many of the mid-tier and smaller firms still don't. Those that do offer it usually offer to cover other family members for an additional but competitive cost.

Pensions

Auto enrolment was introduced in 2017 and minimum contributions increased again in April 2019. The level is a minimum of 3% from employers and 5% from employees. Some firms offer a further enhancement on statutory minimums but these vary greatly:

- London / national firms - usually between 4-5% but we have seen up to 10%
- Mid-tier and Boutiques - there is greater variance here with some only just starting to deliver pensions, yet others are already paying up to 5% and employers usually require their contributions to be matched
- Industry – pension schemes can be very generous in-house, with some employers paying up to 20%. Although this isn't the case everywhere, industry pensions do tend to be higher than practice offerings

Death in Service Benefits: many firms do offer this benefit but the amount varies significantly and often smaller general practices don't offer it. The minimum amount in this year's survey was 1 x salary and the highest level of benefit was 8 x salary.

In some cases this can be enhanced via flexible benefits packages, and in some it was linked to membership of the Pension Scheme.

Critical Illness Cover and Income Protection:

This is a benefit far more likely to be available to Partners /Directors than to all staff.

There is no evidence of any firm offering this benefit on an all staff basis.

These benefits are also often part of a flexible benefits package.

Working From Home:

There is no denying that we are all working increasingly longer hours whilst committing ourselves to costly and often lengthy commutes. With the never ending quest for achieving some sense of work-life balance under scrutiny, it is of little surprise that employees are increasingly asking for some level of working from home to help restore the equilibrium.

And how are employers responding? We have seen a significant shift again over the last year. Even as recently as a couple of years ago, the 'luxury' of working from home was reasonably rare and reserved for the more Senior Attorneys.

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Now it seems far more common and not just amongst Senior / Qualified Attorneys – it is not unusual for support staff to have some flexibility in their working arrangements. The degree of flexibility depends on the role and the nature / regularity of the flexibility varies enormously. Some firms have a working from home policy of up to 2 days per week and for those commuting into London, the cost benefit is negligible once someone is commuting more than 2 days. By contrast, some firms are seeing people preferring to work on site having had the option of home working and having decided they prefer that.

Clearly there are advantages of having your employees primarily based on-site: it is after all the people who create your environment and culture. If you are managing, it is advantageous to be close to your team and if you are still at a development point in your career, it helps having your manager close to hand. That said, a business that can take a flexible approach to home working can be an attractive proposition to someone considering a move, whether it is something that the person is used to or if it is something that is not currently available to them and is causing frustration. Let's not forget that this is a generation of workers who are already used to logging in from home and working out of 'standard office hours', so the sense of what's 'normal' is constantly shifting. From a commercial perspective, home working can also help free up (expensive!) desk space. It is also a relatively low cost benefit, and as IT systems become more sophisticated there is definitely a trend towards this becoming more common place. Many firms have factored this into their new office moves, specifically creating 'hot desking' environments and actually encouraging people to work more flexibly.

Flexible Working:

Formal flexible working continues to become more common across the IP sector. Some firms have what they term 'core hours', e.g. 10.00am to 4.00pm, offering employees greater flexibility to adjust their hours to their busiest periods. What is noticeable is that this is no longer just the domain of the working parents; people are requesting to do so for other lifestyle reasons. And it works both ways with flexible working becoming so popular that some employers use this to reduce office costs and to save on office space required. Often this is not offered officially to employees as part of a contract, but is unofficially offered on a case by case basis.

Maternity / Paternity Benefits:

Whilst paid time off for antenatal appointments for male employees is becoming more widely available, it seems that a lot of firms are still offering statutory maternity / paternity leave only. Of course, there are a number of examples where enhanced provisions are already in place: some of the larger or national firms were typically offering between 12-20 weeks full pay, or, up to 50% pay for weeks 6-26. In addition, we have seen some firms pay full maternity and/or paternity leave for 39 weeks.

Generally, enhanced maternity / paternity benefits will be linked to a minimum length of service and some form of repayment scheme in the event that a specified time period is not completed following return from the leave.

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Holiday Entitlement:

The average number of holidays is:

- 30 days for Partners/Directors
- 25 days for fee earners and support staff

The vast majority of firms offer additional holiday for long service and/or promotions. In a few cases we also saw a bonus day being allowed in December as a 'shopping' day.

In the regional practices, it was more common for support staff to have a different holiday allowance to fee earners, typically 23 days compared to 25 and in London, it was more common for employees to have incremental holiday allowance increases for length of service, typically one day for each year of service, rising to 28.

We are also seeing more firms offering the option to buy additional holiday (usually between 3-5 days), either as part of a flexible benefits package, or as a stand alone policy.

Other Financial Benefits:

- Income Protection Insurance
- Private Medical Insurance
- Enhanced Sick Pay Scheme
- Voluntary Critical Illness Cover
- Introduction Rewards
- Season Ticket Loans/Parking/Travel/ Child Care Vouchers
- Discounted Legal Advice

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As well as the more traditional financial rewards, employee wellbeing is an ever-increasing topic in the workplace, with a particular focus on mental health more recently.

This may include things such as:

- Wellbeing programmes, for example: access to financial advice, psychological support, stop smoking clinic, mental health champions in the workplace etc.
- On-site massages
- Free lunch
- Gym allowance/Gym on-site, Ride-to-Work salary sacrifice schemes
- Access to Perkbox or similar
- Easter eggs, Advent calendars, birthday cards / gifts / deduction of hours on birthdays
- Sabbatical leave (unpaid/paid)
- Corporate Social Responsibility days
- Flu Vaccination Health Screening
- Occupational health
- Fruit bowls

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Established in 2006, the Sacco Mann team is a leading name in Patent and Trade Mark recruitment. Acting for clients throughout the UK, our experienced consultants work with a huge variety of businesses, from Patent and Trade Mark practices to IP departments within law firms, boutique IP practices to In-House teams within innovative start-ups through to household name companies.

Advising such a range of clients on their recruitment strategies provides us with a broad overview as well as an in-depth knowledge of the market at every level of qualification. Part and Fully Qualified Patent Attorneys, Trade Mark Attorneys, Secretaries, Administrators, Paralegals, Partners and Directors come to us for our expertise and confidential guidance throughout their careers.

[Click here to have a look at some of our current Patent and Trade Mark Opportunities](#)

[Meet Our Team!](#)

All salary information included in our Salary Survey reflects basic salary information only; guaranteed bonuses, car allowances and other benefits which could be deemed to have a financial value have not been included in the data provided.

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