



Feature

The Patent Agent is a Legal Staff Position and Passing the Patent Bar Exam is required

This article talks about the legal staff position of a Patent Agent. A Patent Agent does not need a legal degree but does need a background in technology such as computer science, electrical, mechanical engineering, or biotech education. The Patent Agent must take and pass the patent bar exam the same as patent attorneys.

A Patent Agent is a person with a strong technical background who has taken and passed the patent bar exam. Once the patent bar exam is passed the agent is admitted to practice before the US Patent Office. This means the patent agent can file applications and also provide prosecution services to patent clients.

A Patent Agent does not need a law degree and the patent bar exam is the same for agents and attorneys. So the only difference between a patent attorney and agent is the law degree which admits attorneys to appear in the court of at least one state as well as admittance before the US Patent Office. Patent attorneys must have a technical background to pass the patent bar exam. It is a requirement before an attorney can sit for the patent bar exam.

If you have a background in the following areas as an engineer or scientist, you have the qualifications to sit for the patent bar exam. The following is a list of technical professionals who often choose to become a Patent Agent:

- Mechanical Engineer
- Electrical Engineer
- Project Engineer
- Software Engineer
- Environmental Scientist
- Clinical Laboratory Scientist

Once the patent bar exam is taken and passed the engineers and scientists who become Patent Agents increase their salaries by about \$20K annually. That is a very good raise. The average salary for Patent Agents is about \$74K.

Additional knowledge and skills which can be required and helpful to Patent Agents:

- writing skills
- Conflict resolution knowledge
- Knowledge of commercial transactions since some jobs will be computer and software contracting that involve transactions
- Secured transactions knowledge also important for intellectual property clients who have software patents where lending takes place through their intellectual property
- Important intellectual property trial work includes, evidence, discovery, advanced civil procedure, and trial practice. (These things can often be learned on the job with a legal firm.)
- Knowledge of corporations and other subjects in advanced business courses can also be helpful for an understanding procedures and workings of some software and other intellectual property.

Job Outlook for Patent Agents

The job outlook for a profession that assists lawyers to cut costs to clients is the reason that there will be growth in work as a Patent Agent. The salaries of Patent Agents are not much higher than paralegals in some legal fields. The overall outlook for patent paralegals who are not required to pass the patent bar exam is projected at 22%. A Patent Agent can actually represent clients before the US Patent Office in addition to all the paper work for filing and prosecuting the patent.



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An honest assessment based on the economy at this time lends to some areas of patent law being better than others. For example, Electrical Engineers who pass the Patent Bar

Exam will most likely have better opportunities than other engineers and scientists. Happy job hunting!

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