

# **Patent Career: Video Starter Course**

## **Video 1 Patent Practitioner Career Discovery**

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Website: [PatentEducationSeries.com](http://PatentEducationSeries.com)

## PES Video 1: Patent Practitioner Career Discovery

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Patent Practitioner Career Discovery video.

If you are watching this video, then you may have a science or technical background and are looking for a new opportunity.

If you have a degree in engineering, science, or design, you may only need to pass an exam known as the Patent Bar Exam to qualify for a career in patent law.

This exam is offered through the United States Patent and Trademark Office, or USPTO.

You don't need a law degree to start a career in patent law as a patent practitioner.

Patent practitioner career paths include careers as patent agents, patent attorneys, and design patent practitioners.

In order to become a patent practitioner, you need to pass the patent bar exam. If you pass the patent bar exam as a scientist or engineer without a law degree, you will be classified as a patent agent. If you have a law degree and are already considered an attorney, then you'll be classified as a patent attorney upon passing the exam.

If you [00:01:00] pass the patent bar exam with a background in design, you'll be classified as a design patent practitioner.

We'll cover patent agents and patent attorneys first. Both of these practitioners may write and prosecute patent applications before the USPTO, so there's no difference there.

But, patent attorneys may also litigate patents in a court of law or advise or represent clients in other legal matters. A patent agent may not since they're not attorneys.

Patent agents are often hired because in many cases they have more technical experience than patent attorneys. An agent might forego the law degree and instead have a graduate degree plus years of experience working in their field of expertise.

This experience is really valuable for understanding new complex inventions and how they differ from what's already available.

In addition, although patent agents are paid a decent salary, they are typically paid less than patent attorneys. That means companies and law firms save money by hiring patent agents [00:02:00] to write and prosecute patent applications and limit the use of the more expensive patent attorneys for infringement cases.

As for the third pathway, design patent practitioners can only practice in design patent matters before the USPTO. For non design related patents, you need to have the background in science or engineering.

Most inventions stem from fields of science, design, or engineering. Therefore, only individuals with the proper background in science, design, or engineering can sit for the patent bar exam.

A patent application must convey exactly what has been invented, as well as convey exactly why it's new from everything else out there.

The main point is, patent practitioners must absolutely understand the field of the invention. If you already have the appropriate background, then you only need to learn patent law in order to start a new career helping inventors.

Here are the top six reasons a career in patent law is a great career to transition into. [00:03:00] First, you'll be positioned on the cutting edge of technology. Second, the pay is high. Third, patent law is a very prestigious career field. Fourth, in many cases, you can start a new career without gaining another degree.

Fifth, as a patent practitioner, you'll help others and do good for society. And sixth, there are multiple options for gaining employment. We'll get into each of these now.

The first one is that becoming a patent practitioner will put you squarely on the cutting edge of science, design, or technology.

Patents give the owner the right to exclude others from making, using, selling, offering for sale, and importing an invention in the U. S. for a limited period of time. When an inventor comes up with new technology, they want to gain a patent so that they can be the only source for consumers to get that new invention from.

The patent system offers individuals and companies a means to benefit from the creation of new, useful [00:04:00] technology.

Although an inventor can try to patent an invention on their own, patent law is so complex that in order to secure a patent of value, a patent practitioner is practically required.

Most inventors without patent law knowledge don't try to gain patents on their own.

And whether they are an in house IP law firm, corporations always use skilled professionals to draft their applications. If you enter this career field, you'll learn about new technology in your area of expertise. In addition, you'll help drive technology forward. That's because through your services, you'll ensure that individuals and companies gain value from their inventions.

You'll be right on the cutting edge of technology, learning about new inventions before anyone else, and playing an integral role in helping those inventions reach consumers.

Secondly, the pay is high.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, also called BLS, reported that for 2023, the median pay for lawyers was \$145,760 per [00:05:00] year. The lowest 10 percent of lawyers earned less than \$69,760, and the top 10 percent of lawyers earned more than \$239,200 per year. The BLS collects salary data for attorneys in general, however, the BLS states that due to the complexity of patent law and the technical knowledge it requires, patent attorneys are likely much closer to the highest 10 percent of lawyers.

So this puts them around \$239,200 or more as of May 2023. To provide another perspective, Indeed. com puts the average salary for patent attorneys at \$196,507. According to Indeed. com, the lower paid patent attorneys earn \$119,167 per year, while the higher paid patent attorneys earn \$324,042 per year.

Indeed's salary ranges are likely more accurate than the BLS ranges since Indeed is looking at the [00:06:00] pay for patent attorneys as opposed to attorneys in general.

Although it's still high, patent agents typically earn a lower salary than patent attorneys. This makes sense because patent agents don't have a law degree and can't provide all the services a patent attorney can provide.

So here on this slide, according to Indeed. com, the average salary for patent agents is \$147,030 per year. Also, according to Indeed Research, the lowest paid patent agents earn about \$89,605 and the highest paid patent agents earn \$241,258. This slide shows patent attorney salaries from Indeed under the patent agent salaries.

As you can see, patent attorneys earn more than patent agents at the low end all the way to the high end of the salary range. This makes sense because in addition to the science or technology background, they also have a law degree.

Moving along, the third benefit is that patent [00:07:00] law is a very prestigious career field. A career as a lawyer places you in an elite circle of professionals. Even without the law degree, a career as a patent practitioner is prestigious. The combination of technology and in depth knowledge of patent law keep many out of this field.

You'll definitely gain respect and feel pride in your accomplishment when you become a registered patent practitioner after passing the patent bar exam. In addition, the career is intellectually challenging. You need to be a problem solver, analyst, and innovative thinker in order to do well. Your intellect will be crucial to your career success, perhaps even more so than as an engineer or scientist.

You'll likely work with well respected individuals and business leaders in your community. You may be frustrated with your current job and feel like you're not getting the recognition you deserve. If so, getting on the path to a career in patent law may be the perfect change for you.

Moving along, the fourth [00:08:00] benefit is that you can start a new career without gaining another degree. Becoming a patent practitioner allows you to build on what you've already worked so hard for instead of backtracking or taking a different direction. This is priceless for a lot of people.

There aren't a lot of options in life where you can change directions without having to backtrack at least a little.

In most instances, if you want a different career, you'll need to gain more education in the form of an entirely new degree, and often your previous education and experience don't count. To become a patent practitioner, however, you don't need more formal education. You can most likely build on what you already have.

In many cases, all of your experience in science, design, or engineering will play a factor when you transition into a career in patent law, making you even more employable.

And for the fifth benefit, as a patent practitioner, you'll help others and do good for society. As a patent practitioner, whether a patent agent, patent attorney, or [00:09:00] design patent practitioner, you'll have direct contact with inventors. Inventors come in the form of individuals as well as corporations.

Corporations often invest millions of dollars into the development of a new invention and need to ensure it's protected. Oftentimes, they must see a profit from their investment to continue paying their employees. In addition, some of the money multi million dollar corporations earn from their patented inventions winds up being used to further technological advances in the field.

You'll be playing an integral role in the business cycle for these companies. As a patent practitioner, you will definitely touch lives.

Not only will you help inventors and corporations, you will indirectly help consumers and members of the public who benefit from the patented inventions. Inventions can be new drugs to help combat disease and maintain health, as well as technological advances that make our lives easier. Again, you will be right on the cutting edge of technology, moving innovative technology and [00:10:00] advances forward.

In fact, you can probably help move technology forward more as a patent agent or patent attorney than you can as an engineer, scientist, or a designer. This is because you'll be directly involved in more technological advances as a patent practitioner. As a scientist,

designer, or engineer, you'll likely only be involved in one or two breakthroughs if you're very fortunate over the life of your career.

And this is only if what you're working on turns out to be a success. As a patent practitioner, you can help draft possibly hundreds of inventions over the life of your career, and many of these can be breakthroughs.

Moving on, the sixth benefit is that there are multiple options for gaining employment. As a patent practitioner, you will work directly with inventors.

Inventors can mean Fortune 500 companies, public and private corporations, startups, universities, hospitals, investors, non profits, and independent [00:11:00] inventors.

Patent practitioners frequently work in law firms specializing in intellectual property law or in technology transfer offices. Technology transfer offices are dedicated to identifying research that has potential commercial interests. These offices are often found in universities and corporations.

Transitioning into a career in patent law will likely bring you more income and more prestige in your career. In addition, it'll position you right on the cutting edge of technology without the need to gain a new degree.

It's a smart move to make if you're a scientist or engineer considering a career change.

You may be wondering what a typical day as a patent practitioner is like, so we'll cover that next. As a patent practitioner, you will draft and review patent applications. You will write replies to office actions, conduct patent searches, and communicate with inventors and patent examiners. Much of your day will be spent preparing legal documents and researching legal materials.

You will maintain patent [00:12:00] rights in the U. S. and internationally. You will be responsible for meeting the strict deadlines imposed by the USPTO while representing clients in court before the USPTO. In addition to the typical duties of writing and prosecuting patent applications, you may spend some of your time educating clients on the best strategies for their inventions.

You may even offer patent counseling, including counseling clients on their patent portfolio. As a patent attorney, you can offer litigation and dispute resolution services in addition to all the previously mentioned duties. As a patent practitioner, you'll typically work in an office every day. However, there may be an occasional need to travel to meet with a client.

You'll communicate with clients and examiners. Examiners work at the USPTO, ultimately deciding whether or not a specific patent should be granted. You'll make telephone calls and correspond via emails. There's a great deal of work with computers, [00:13:00]

photocopiers, scanners, the electronic filing system for the USPTO, project management software, and the search software involved with patent law.

Essentially, your daily tasks will consist of getting information, making decisions, and solving complex problems. You'll need to interpret laws, rulings, and regulations, referring back to them often.

It can be difficult to justify getting into the legal field when that's not what you started out in school for. But, becoming a patent practitioner is a smart career move for many. There's really no risk involved in transitioning to the patent law field. It can be a nice change out of the lab or from whatever you are presently doing.

Plus, as you've seen, you can almost certainly expect an increase in your salary. Many companies value individuals skilled in patent law.

After you pass the patent bar, you'll gain registration as a patent practitioner. This is a designation that you can add to your resume that will help you stand apart from [00:14:00] others with a science, engineering, or design background.

It shows that you took initiative and you're essentially expert enough in the area of patent law that you were able to pass the patent bar exam.

You may be eligible for a promotion within your current job just based on gaining status as a patent practitioner or if you apply for a new job in a different company.

You may gain advanced positions easier than without the designation as a patent practitioner. If you pass the patent bar, you don't have to find a job as a patent practitioner immediately after doing so.

This registration does not expire. At this point, there's not even a recertification. So, you essentially keep the designation as a patent practitioner for the rest of your career. That means if you decide not to transition into a career in patent law right away, you can always do so later on. For instance, as we all know, companies often downsize.

If you're laid off at your current company, having that registration as a patent practitioner [00:15:00] will likely make you more employable to future employers than without. And that hurdle, passing the exam, has already been accomplished. It's a lot easier to take the time to study for and pass the exam when you're not in a desperate position.

Finding ways to learn and improve yourself, even when you don't have to, is always smart. Securing registration as a patent practitioner is a good investment in your future. There really isn't anything to be anxious about when it comes to making this transition. It's only going to benefit you to take the patent bar if you're at all interested in a career in patent law.

In the next video, we'll cover the requirements to become a registered patent practitioner. I'll see you there.