Education Review

Call for Evidence and Feedback

Introduction

IPReg's Call for Evidence and Feedback within our Education Review includes:

- A brief explanation of why and how we are undertaking the Review.
- An explanation of our approach to the Call.
- Guidance on responding to the Call.
- An explanation on how we will use Call responses to inform the Review.
- Individual sections of the Call:
  - Part one: About you and your response
  - Part two: Your response
  - Part three: How we can use your response.

If you have a disability and need to access this material in a different format, such as larger print or audio, please let us know. Please also let us know if there is anything we can do to help you to respond to the Call in a non-written format. You can respond to this Call either in English or Welsh.

If you have any other questions or problems in responding to this Call, please contact us at edreview@ipreg.org.uk. We will seek to respond to you within five working days.

The deadline for responses is **30 April 2026**.

The Review's purpose

IPReg's Education Review is focused on:

- How future qualification routes into the patent and trade mark attorney professions need to respond to changing professional practice, employer and consumer needs.
- Understanding current barriers to entry to each profession and identifying how qualification routes can become more accessible and inclusive while upholding high education and professional standards.
- Exploring how IPReg's own regulatory processes relating to education and training can usefully be updated to ensure they remain robust and proportionate.

The Call's purpose

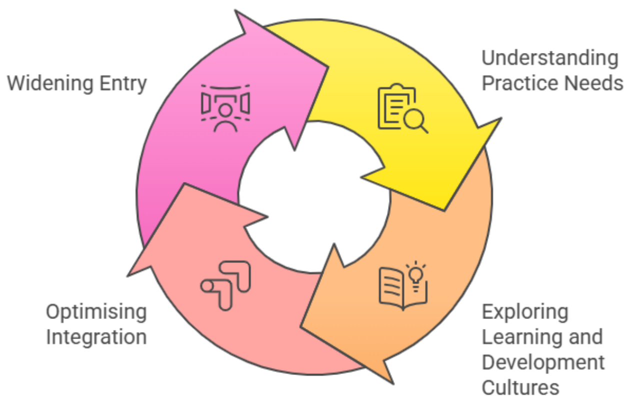
The purpose of this Call is to gain perspectives on what works well in the current education and training of trade mark and patent attorneys, and what could be improved to meet changing needs and to enable more diverse professions.

The Call's focus and scope

The Call is structured around four overlapping themes (see Figure 1 below):

- Changing practice needs within the patent and trade mark attorney professions.
- The professions' learning and development cultures.
- Appropriate ways to integrate professional learning and development, work-based experience, and assessment.
- How entry to the professions can be widened while ensuring that high professional standards are upheld.

Figure 1: Key Themes for the Education Review



We particularly want to understand how 'day-one' capability requirements in each profession are changing. This is important to do before we consider whether and how qualification routes into each profession may need to change. We explain more about what we mean by day-one capability requirements in our supporting information. This can be accessed here.

We want to gain stakeholder perspectives on changing needs in the context of:

- Changing consumer, employer and practice needs.
- Wider changes in how members of each profession contribute to legal services and multi-disciplinary teamworking.

- The potential that some capabilities are becoming less important within current practice.
- Capabilities that may best be developed after registration (e.g. in line with individual attorneys' scope of practice and role, area of specialty, and practice environment).

We are particularly interested to explore how professionalism and professional ethics are embedded within qualification routes and to understand the impacts of generative AI and LawTech on the professions' education and training, practice, and workforce needs.

We are also keen to:

- Explore best practices in professional education and assessment.
- Understand equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging issues in order to address current barriers to entry and progression.
- Explore specific issues to do with the size of each profession and how qualification routes into them can be sustained, informed by workforce supply and demand projections.

The Review does not focus on IPReg's updated CPD requirements. It also does not cover broader post-registration education that falls outside IPReg's regulatory responsibilities. However, we see both as relevant context to the Education Review. This includes in terms of how trainees are supported to engage with their future professional responsibilities and career progression opportunities.

You can access more information about the Review's purpose, scope and context and four themes here.

Responding to the Call

You can respond to this Call in any or all of the following ways:

- Answering the questions in this template and emailing your response to us (if you prefer, you can respond to the questions via our online survey).
- Sharing links to published material.
- Emailing unpublished information to us.

Please email your feedback and evidence to us at edreview@ipreg.org.uk.

Further guidance on responding is below.

Responding to our questions

If you respond to our questions in **Part 2** of this template, you can choose to answer all of them, or only some of them. This means you can

- Respond to some or all the questions relating to all four themes.
- Just answer questions relating to the theme or themes of greatest interest to you.

If you prefer, you can email us your feedback on specific topics, rather than responding directly to our questions.

It is difficult for us to advise on how long it will take you to complete your response because we are offering this flexibility.

Our questions are open rather than closed. We are keen to gain your explanations of your views and to understand the rationale for your responses. We are inviting you to share your opinions, experiences and anecdotal evidence. Our questions are also deliberately broad. This is to be inclusive of all stakeholder perspectives. However, we recognise and welcome that you will respond to questions in ways that fit with your interpretation of them and what you are keen to tell us.

Sharing evidence with us

We also invite you to supply evidence that you see as relevant to the Education Review. Evidence sources include both published material for which you can provide links and unpublished information that it is appropriate for you to share.

We welcome receiving materials in different media and formats. We ask that you explain why you are supplying the information and its relevance to the Review (e.g. if it relates to one or more of the key themes, or a specific aspect of them). This will help us to understand its value.

You can share links to published materials either in your response to our questions in this template or by sending them to us with a brief explanation of their relevance to the Review.

If you wish to share unpublished material as evidence, please send documents as attachments. We cannot accept personal information or unprocessed data (e.g. any information from which individuals could be identified, or quantitative information without an explanation of its significance or context). **If you choose to share information that is confidential, please make this clea**r (see our guidance below on this and **Part 3** of this template).

Tell us about you and your response

In **Part 1** of this template, we ask you to provide some information about you and your response. **We ask you to complete this part of the template and to send it to us however you choose to respond to the Call.** This includes if you email us evidence or a response on a particular topic.

Please tell us if your response to our questions and your evidence relate to the patent attorney profession, the trade mark attorney profession, or both. We understand this may vary, depending on the specific question that you answer or the nature of the material that you share. Clarity on the scope of your response this will be very helpful for how we analyse responses.

If you use AI tools to help prepare your response**, please indicate this in your submission** and give a brief description of how you have used it (e.g. to combine responses to our questions from colleagues across your organisation).[1] We ask you to explain this in completing Part 3 of this template.

Submitting your response

Please submit your response to our questions in this template and/or your evidence sources by emailing them to edreview@ipreg.org.uk. Please use the subject line "**Education Review feedback and evidence**".

Tell us how we can use your response

In **Part 3** of this template, we ask you to tell us how we can use your response. **We ask you to complete this part of the template and to send it to us however you choose to respond to the Call.** We particularly seek clarity from you on how you consent to us using your response and if any aspects of your submission are confidential.

Consent

In **Part 3** of this template, we ask you to indicate if you consent to:

- IPReg contacting you for more information on your response if we think this will be helpful.

[1] IPReg has used generative AI tools to support the production of diagrams in our Call materials and to consider and edit the materials to enhance their clarity and accessibility.

- Your name (either your personal name or the name of the organisation on whose behalf you are responding) being included in a list of respondents to the Call.

Confidentiality

We also ask you in **Part 3** of this template to indicate if any of your answers to specific questions and/or your supply of specific evidence is confidential (e.g. due to reasons of commercial sensitivity or because you are sharing a personal experience).

Unless you tell us that some or all your response is confidential, we will assume that your response is NOT confidential and can be used to illustrate a particular viewpoint or to highlight existing good practice relevant to the Review. If we use parts of your response in this way, we will not attribute it directly to you.

Please be assured that all responses (whether confidential or not) will be used to inform how we progress the Review.

You are welcome to share or publish your own submission to the Call if you wish to do so. https://ipreg.org.uk/about-us/legal-notices/privacy-notice

How we will use your response

We will analyse all the evidence and feedback we receive to this Call and produce a summary report and a detailed report on responses. We currently expect to be able to share both reports in the summer of 2026. Our analysis will identify key issues and trends in responses. This includes to identify where there are discernible patterns in responses; e.g. that are specific to one profession, or to a particular stakeholder group.

We will use the analysis to inform how we draft Review proposals for any change to qualification route requirements and to IPReg's own accreditation processes. We will then share our proposals through a formal consultation exercise. We currently plan to launch the consultation in late 2026.

Our privacy policy is available to here: https://ipreg.org.uk/about-us/legal-notices/privacy-notice.

PART ONE: About you and your response

We are asking these questions to gain an understanding of the profile of respondents to the Call for Evidence and Feedback. We will only use the information you supply to inform our production of summary information about the profile of respondents.

Please note, we require you to answer all questions marked with an * in this section.

1. **Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation**? *

	Please indicate
a. Individual - *please answer questions 2 through 7 where relevant*	
b. Organisation - *please answer questions 8 through 11*	**X**

If you are responding as an individual

2. **Which category/categories below indicate the capacity/ies in which you are responding?** (Please select each category that applies to you.) *

	Please indicate
c. Patent attorney	
d. Trade mark attorney	
e. Patent attorney trainee	
f. Trade mark attorney trainee	
g. Another role in the intellectual property sector	
h. Educator/examiner within IPReg-accredited provision	
i. Trainer/training lead in a workplace setting	
j. Consumer	
k. Member of the public	
l. Other (please state):	

3. **What sort of organisation do you currently work in?** (Please select each category that applies to you.) *

	Please indicate
a. IPReg-regulated law firm	
b. In-house, public sector or commercial business	
c. Sole practice	
d. Education and/or examination provider	
e. Member of the public who uses intellectual property services	

f. I prefer not to say	
g. Other (please specify)	

4. **Which nation/s do you currently work in?** (Please select each category that applies to you.) *

	Please indicate
a. England	
b. Wales	
c. Scotland	
d. Northern Ireland	
e. All the above	
f. Not applicable	
g. Other (please specify)	

5. **If you answered 'England', which region/s do you currently work in?** (Please select each category that applies to you.)

	Please indicate
a. North West	
b. North East	
c. Yorkshire and Humber	
d. East Midlands	
e. West Midlands	
f. East of England	
g. Greater London	
h. South East	
i. South West	
j. All the above	
k. I prefer not to say	
l. Not applicable	

6. **What best describes your main current role?** *

	Please indicate
a. Trainee attorney	
b. Early-career employed attorney	
c. Mid-career employed attorney	
d. Partner or business owner with employees	
e. Sole practitioner / business owner without employees	

f. Member of academic staff of a university	
g. Other role within the intellectual property sector	
h. Retired	
i. I prefer not to say	
j. Not applicable	
k. Other (please specify)	

7. **If you are a registered IP attorney, for how many years have you practised?** This question is intended for current or previously registered patent and trade mark attorneys. Please skip this question if it does not apply to you.

	Please indicate
a. Up to 5 years	
b. 6 to 15 years	
c. 16 to 25 years	
d. 26 to 40 years	
e. More than 40 years	
f. I prefer not to say	
g. Not applicable	

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation

8. **What is your organisation's name?** *

The Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA)

9. **In which nation/s does your organisation have its headquarters?** *

	Please indicate
a. England	**X**
b. Wales	
c. Scotland	
d. Northern Ireland	
e. Other (please specify)	

10. **If you answered 'England', in which region/s is its headquarters?**

	Please indicate
a. North West	
b. North East	

c. Yorkshire and Humber	
d. East Midlands	
e. West Midlands	
f. East of England	
g. Greater London	X
h. South East	
i. South West	
j. I prefer not to say	
k. Not applicable	

11. **Please select the descriptor that best describes your organisation***

	Please indicate
a. Consultancy	
b. Consumer/public interest group	
c. Education/ examination provider	
d. In-house (includes government agencies and charities) - small department (1-20 employees)	
e. In-house (includes government agencies and charities) - medium department (21-80 employees)	
f. In-house (includes government agencies and charities) - large department (>80 employees)	
g. Private practice - small firm (1-20 employees/partners/members/directors)	
h. Private practice - medium-sized firm (21-80 employees/partners/members/directors)	
i. Private practice - large firm (>80 employees/partners/members/directors)	
j. Sole practice	
k. Professional body	X
l. Specialty network	
m. Prefer not to say	
n. Other, please state	

12. If you think it forms useful context to your response, please provide any additional information about your organisation in the space below. Possible examples relating to employers are the multidisciplinary profile of your team(s), or information about your training programme.

PART TWO: Your response

Theme A: Changing practice needs

Why are we asking about this?

We want to gain a developed understanding of the changing nature of patent attorneys' and trade mark attorneys' professional practice. As examples, this includes contextual changes in practice settings and multi-disciplinary teamworking; the impact of technological advances (especially generative AI); and the impact of UK, European and global market trends on practice within legal services and intellectual property law.

We are using the term 'day-one professional capabilities' to refer to the combination of knowledge, skills and behaviours required to practise as either an UK patent or trade mark attorney from the point of registration. IPReg's existing Competency Frameworks currently define our threshold requirements for each profession; see www.ipreg.org.uk/news-and-events/updated-competency-frameworks. However, it is timely to consider how professional capability requirements are changing in each profession to meet changes in practice, employer and consumer needs. This is with a focus on what newly-qualified attorneys need to be able to do to be safe and effective in their practice.

Your perspectives on these issues will inform how we review, frame and consult on our future regulatory requirements for qualification routes into each profession. This includes to ensure arrangements remain up-to-date, responsive to changing needs, and continue to uphold high educational and professional standards.

Further information on Theme A is available here.
Further information on 'day-one professional capabilities' is available here.

Our questions on changing practice needs

In answering questions under this theme, please

- **State to which profession(s) your response relates.**
- **Answer the questions, or parts of questions, that you feel are most useful for sharing the feedback you want to provide.**

CITMA

1. How are day-one professional capability requirements to practise safely and effectively changing?

   This varies heavily depending on the firm and what the firm has always done. There are some firms where support is still heavily present after qualification and therefore practise is strictly monitored. However, other firms take day-one professional capability requirements as the standard to meet and once this has been met the professional is then expected to practise with minimal support.

The change in how people work also has an impact on this. Often people will now work from home, this includes recently qualified attorneys. Therefore, the tendency to ask for help or collaborate on ideas may be harder and therefore more work is being carried out independently. Although this doesn't change the level required at qualification it does open up the risk and potentially increases the need to highlight the safety element of practise.

The introduction of AI also means that there is a need to ensure the day-one professional capability requirements reflect the use of this but also emphasise that whilst it could be a useful tool it should not take away from the knowledge that is required to be qualified. It is also key that it is understood that client's require advice and not just a list of facts.

2. Which aspects of IPReg's current competency frameworks must be maintained and why?

   Each part of the general/legal skills and technical skills should be maintained. They are all relevant to everyday practice. There may be the need to add things in based on the points above.

3. What specific professional capabilities can safely be developed after registration, depending on individual scope of practice, setting and role?

   Commercial awareness, this comes with time and experience and will vary depending on the role someone has. In-house roles are likely to build this quicker or secondment opportunities while working in private practice.

   Confidence with client interaction. Again, this is something that develops over time and also will depend on how much independent interaction individuals are given within their roles.

   Adaptation of practice depending on changes in law. This is ongoing and something everyone has to develop. For many law or practice changes there should be support within a firm to ensure that they are implemented effectively, and everyone knows and understands how the changes will impact their day to day working.

4. What, if any, professional capabilities are no longer required to practise safely and effectively at the point of qualification and why?

   As far as we are aware there are not any. There have been many developments in trade mark practice but nothing to take out.

5. How should technological and generative AI developments be reflected in day-one professional capabilities?

   There needs to be an awareness from two different perspectives. We need to ensure that if it is being used in practise, the individual still has the skills to be able to analyse the work that has been produced and be able to identify any issues with the advice that has been provided. Although AI can be used to assist in a trade mark attorney role, it should not take away from

knowledge being built and the individual being able to give the same advice had AI not been used.

AI is also an area that is being used by clients and therefore we need to be aware that protection is needed from a trade mark perspective. Therefore, all attorneys should have a general knowledge of AI and how it is used in order to be able to advice clients to ensure they have the correct protection in place.

This means that the legal, ethical and regulatory framework surrounding use of AI has to be robust and proportionate.

6. What impact are European and global developments having on day-one professional capabilities from a UK regulatory perspective?

   European and global developments have a significant impact in terms of changes in terms of a rapidly evolving landscape with an ever more digital focus. The move towards use of AI and an online environment alter the way new entrants to the profession research, draft and interact. This impacts the skills they have acquired and their approach to new tasks and challenges. Whilst this brings some benefits, there is also a risk that independent thought and breadth of approach could be weakened. From a UK regulatory perspective this leads to a risk of lower quality output, particularly for more strategic work.

   The content of the CITMA trade mark foundation exam needs to be more robust and on par with the CIPA trade mark foundation exam which appears to have more content on EUTM, Brexit and the Madrid Protocol. The CITMA trade mark foundation exam seems to skim the surface on these subjects, does not have much foreign content and could do with better EUTM, Madrid awareness and more US/foreign emphasis. The trade mark foundation exam might be overly focussed on the UK and something to address with providers, as this is only a part of what a UK trade mark attorney does on a day to day basis for larger/global clients.

7. How are changes in business and service delivery models and multi-disciplinary teamworking affecting workforce demand in the professions?

   The demands of the workforce are likely to be different from the employers. There has been a move over the past decade or so towards ever more mixed practices, not just patent and trade mark attorneys, but with solicitors and the CITMA paralegal qualification. COVID introduced at great speed flexible working and more flexible team set ups – the silos of a partner with a dedicated team underneath seem to have shifted to more flexible team set ups and with greater independence and visibility of team members at all levels. As digital tools evolve there is greater scope for paper free, digital, remote, flexible, working environments. Many workers favour the flexible approach, and there are significant benefits for working parents and others, whilst some employers are keen to increase in office

attendance. With the increased flexibility in team set ups and locations there is arguably a move towards being available anytime anywhere. There are benefits to this, but there needs to be a plan to ensure adequate training and review of the work conducted and the sharing of knowledge takes place and importantly a work life balance is not lost.

8. How are technological and generative AI developments impacting on the volume and types of work activity undertaken by the professions?

   This encourages the anytime anywhere possibility, and perhaps expectation by clients. Whilst the human involvement remains critical, technology and AI developments mean more work can be undertaken more quickly. The types of work activity remain the same, partly for regulatory reasons and because the expertise means the work must be within the IP field, but the developments allow quicker and more extensive searches, reviews of evidence and documents, and in some cases drafting, to be undertaken.

9. How do we ensure qualification routes into the professions remain robust, proportionate, cost-effective and sustainable for

   a. Consumers?

   b. Employers?

   c. Providers?

   d. Trainees?

   It is key to maintain standards. The professions are known for their rigorous qualification process and that cannot change. That therefore requires a balance of the key wants of the above groups. Trainees will want to be readily taken on by an employer and qualify quickly. Consumers want to balance time and cost with output, consumers need to trust that their advisors are well qualified, and providers will need to cover costs and have a course that is attractive and well regarded. There is also a balance to be struck as to who is eligible to enter the qualification route and ensuring that those who do are likely to flourish with the demands of both the qualification route and job.

   Having more than one provider is likely to be important – to ensure geographical coverage, high standards are maintained and offer choice. However, there needs to be a consistent level of product across all providers.

Theme B: Learning and development culture

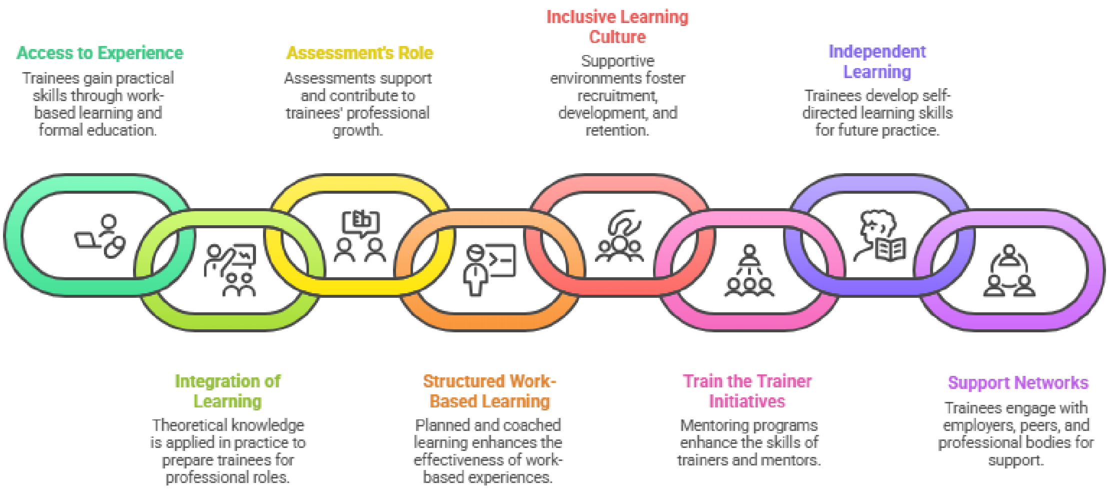
Why are we asking about this?

The values, practices, expectations and environments that shape and support trainees' professional learning and development experience are critical for preparing trainee patent and trade mark attorneys for their future professional practice.

We want to understand how the learning and development culture within each profession can support and enable trainees to develop and demonstrate the day-one capabilities required to practise as a trade mark attorney or patent attorney. We are keen to understand current good practice and to hear about how arrangements could be strengthened to benefit all stakeholders.

Figure 2 illustrates the components of learning and development cultures that we are keen to explore. Further information on Theme B is available here.

Figure 2: Building a Robust Learning Culture



Our questions on learning and development culture

In answering questions under this theme, please

- **State to which profession(s) your response relates.**
- **Answer the questions that you feel are most useful for sharing the feedback that you want to provide.**

CITMA

10. How can individual trainees gain a sufficient depth and breadth of professional learning to prepare for qualification while also contributing to meeting employer, service delivery and consumer needs as trainees?

    Ring fenced study time - can be flexible but must happen. Agree a weekly / biweekly rhythm (e.g., a proportion of hours for learning vs. service tasks). Purposeful use of supervision to support learning and analyse decisions, rather than just reporting progress. Using reflection to understand where mistakes have occurred or how matters could be handled differently.

11. How can proportionality be upheld in how qualification routes are delivered and the demands they place on all parties (trainees, employers and providers)?

    Provide role specific competency frameworks with clear milestones. Make outcomes, standards, and success criteria transparent. Allow full time, part time, apprenticeship, modular, or blended routes - i.e. provide options that work for employers and trainees. Enable prior learning or experience to count towards qualification. Offer digital and in person options depending on context. Ensure trainees have protected learning time that employers must honour. Publish clear handbooks, timelines and assessment criteria and ensure trainees, employers and providers all have access to these materials.

12. How can all dimensions of an effective learning culture be optimised to support trainees' professional development and contribution to service delivery?

    Safe → trainees can ask, challenge, and learn. Clear → expectations and pathways are transparent. Supported → high quality supervision and mentoring. Feedback rich → continuous growth. Practical → real tasks and responsibility. Collaborative → learning with and from others. Resourced → protected time, tools, and training. Reflective → learning from experience. Inclusive → fairness and equity embedded.

    When all these dimensions work together, trainees develop faster, deeper, and more confidently, and the organisation benefits from; a) higher-quality work out put; b) better risk management; c) smoother service delivery; d) stronger workforce resilience; e) increased staff engagement and retention

13. What current examples of good practice can be built upon to address potential gaps, unmet needs and unwarranted variation in support for trainees' learning and development?

    Monitoring of work carried out during training, to identify gaps in training and perhaps introduce a standard template to support managing this. Moving trainees between partners or working teams, so that they get exposed to different styles of working and types of work/clients. Ensure time for supervision is protected—not squeezed in between tasks. Pair trainees with a secondary mentor for pastoral or career support. Share

case studies and examples across the trainee group. Run trainee cohorts, peer learning sets, or action learning groups.

14. What examples of good practice exist for supporting those who support trainees' professional learning and development, and how can these be built upon?

    There is currently no formal, or external, support for individuals conducting training. Network of 'trainers' where people conducting training can meet to discuss best practice. Workshops to develop 'training' skills, e.g. coaching, feedback, delegation, and inclusive leadership. Post qualification 'soft skills' courses.

    It is also important that there is communication between the institutions providing the training and those supporting the trainees in the work place. This would then help to ensure that the trainee is covering all the relevant areas within their work and gaining exposure to the key areas of trade mark practice that is required to become day-one professional capable. Without this communication there is the tendency for gaps in training and practice, which then puts the trainee at a disadvantage in both their professional training course and also in the workplace

Theme C: Appropriate integration within qualification routes

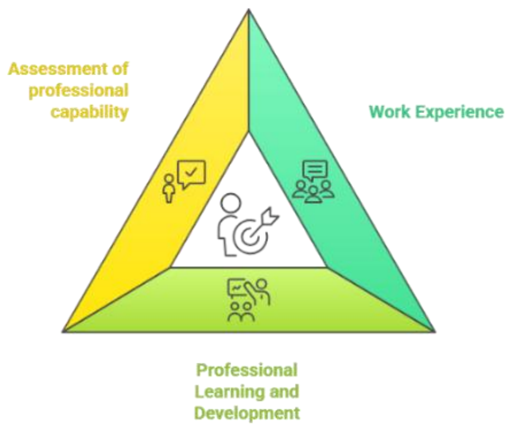
Why are we asking about this?

Achieving an appropriate integration between professional work experience, learning and development, and assessment within qualification routes is a key focus in how all professions develop their future members. This includes to uphold high professional standards and assure the relevance and authenticity of how future members of a profession are supported in their learning and development to meet the needs and demands of professional practice. Appropriate integration also relates to optimising the efficiency and proportionality of qualification routes from all stakeholder perspectives. It can be achieved in a variety of ways. It does not imply that qualification routes can only be delivered in one particular way.

We want to understand more about the appropriate alignment between the following components of qualification routes (see Figure 3):

a. Trainees' work-based experience.
b. Trainees' engagement in their professional learning and development.
c. How trainees' fulfilment of the professional capabilities required for registered practice is demonstrated and assessed.

Figure 3: Educational Triangle



Further information on Theme C is available here.

Our questions on appropriate integration of experience, learning and assessment

In answering the questions below, please

- **State to which profession(s) your response relates.**
- **Answer the questions, or parts of questions, that you feel are most useful for sharing the feedback that you want to provide.**

CITMA

15. What approaches work well to achieve an appropriate alignment of trainees' work-based experience, opportunities for professional learning and development, and how their readiness for registered practice is demonstrated and assessed?

    The IPReg and CITMA competency frameworks are useful assessment tools for trainees and their employers and can be used as a 'benchmark' to identify areas in which trainees might be lacking in experience or understanding, and those where they are doing well. This should be reviewed both by the trainee and their employer and used almost as a reflective learning tool. Many employers also encourage their trainees to use a training log or journal and to map their tasks, allowing both parties to clearly see the areas they are focussing and gaining experience and where this is lacking. It is helpful for trainees to be given the opportunity to draft filings, arguments or responses, for review and constructive comments and feedback by a senior attorney or mentor. This gives them a safe space to broaden and sharpen their skills with the safety net of an experienced person reviewing their work and providing feedback. This feedback leads

to reflection, where the trainee can look at what they did well and areas in which they are weaker and need to improve.

Ultimately, there must be more support given by employers to their trainees. Trainees should have a dedicated mentor who acts as their supervisor, offering support and feedback. Some trainees receive little support within the office – what they do in the workplace should reinforce their learning and allow them to gain exposure in different areas and issues within TM law. A trainee's supervisor or mentor should be aware of what they are learning/being examined on and should endeavour to tie this in with real-life workplace experience to give them the best opportunity to understand how these issues play out and are examined in real life.

Supplementing training with practical experience gives the trainee the best possible chance to excel. It is important, however, that trainees understand and appreciate that qualification is not the end of learning – this continues long after a trainee is qualified, as they continue to gain experience and confidence in their abilities. Employers should be prepared to continue to monitor and support newly qualified attorneys as they adapt and start to gain autonomy over their work.

A learning diary, potentially created by either the institutions or IPReg listing the key areas of work that a trainee must have undertaken before they can qualify. This can then be signed off by those supporting the trainees to ensure that they have covered the key areas and highlight if they have not. Steps can then be made to ensure that those areas not covered are done so before qualification. This document could be submitted at the time of qualification and part of entry onto the register.

16. How could the alignment of trainees' professional experience, learning and assessment usefully be strengthened?

As indicated above, employers need to play a much bigger part in this. Some trainees are sent off on the qualification courses without having the basic and requisite knowledge or experience, which results in a poor learning outcome and disappointment for both parties. By working with a mentor or supervisor, trainees will be able to reinforce their learning and have the opportunity to discuss issues, perhaps role play certain situations (new client interviews, hearings, etc). This will ensure the trainee has necessary feedback on areas to focus on, or where they are doing well, and will also allow the employer the opportunity to assess how their trainee is doing and implement changes if there are any issues identified – perhaps give them more dispute work to draft if this an area of weakness or lacking in confidence, or allow them the opportunity to sit in and observe a hearing or client meeting.

17. What existing good practice can be built upon to enhance qualification routes for

a. Trainees?

b. Employers?

c. Education/examination providers?

d. Consumers?

Trainees continuing to engage with their supervisor/mentor. Keep a training journal, reflect back on training exercises or actual work activities to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Employers must have oversight of the topics their trainees are currently studying and at what point they are in their training. Work to provide them with the opportunity to work on oppositions, attend hearings, etc, to expand their experience.

Education/examination providers should continue to encourage trainees to use reflective learning as a training tool, keep a training journal, and seek out actual workplace exposure and experience of all different types of issues that they may come across once fully qualified.

Consumers need to be able to trust that their qualified advisors have undergone vigorous training and continue to undergo post qualification training and development to ensure they are in the position to serve the needs of the consumer adequately and efficiently.

18. How do we optimise the quality, rigour and proportionality of qualification routes for

a. Trainees?

b. Employers?

c. Education/examination providers?

d. Consumers?

We need to ensure trainees are at the right level to be undertaking the training for qualification in the first place. Inexperienced trainees result in lower pass rates and impact on the training experience of others on the course with them, who may end up helping them through group work (most relevant to the Nottingham course, where trainees undertake more practical scenario-based learning, often in small groups).

Employers should not rush to get their trainees fully qualified if they are not prepared. Rushing the training process and sending trainees on the Nottingham (year 2) course when they are not fully prepared for it and don't have the sufficient level of experience is damaging to their learning experience and could result in the trainee failing the exams. A mandatory 'experience' year between year 1 and year 2 of training would help with this.

Training providers need to have more accountability of the minimum standard required for students undertaking the course applied for and should not be afraid to refuse applicants if they cannot demonstrate they have this experience/basic knowledge. It might be beneficial for trainees to have a compulsory one-year break between years 1 and 2 of training, to allow them to consolidate their learning in year 1 with hands-on workplace experience. This will put trainees in a much stronger position heading into year 2.

The above steps will ensure quality remains of a high standard and the needs of consumers are adequately and efficiently served.

19. How can we develop a shared understanding of current trends in trainee progression, performance and outcomes within qualification routes, including to achieve enhancements for all parties?

It is important to keep communication channels between all parties open, i.e., trainees (who can speak to their CITMA Student Rep to flag any issues), employers and training providers. Training providers ought to be transparent in their exam results and, in cases where a trainee has not passed a course, it should be checked to see whether this is as a result of the trainee being put on the course too soon (without a minimum level of experience or knowledge) or simply a lack of application on the part of the trainee so that steps to address the issues are undertaken.

Theme D: Widening entry to the professions

Why are we asking about this?

Entry routes into the trade mark and patent attorney professions can be seen as relatively accessible, given trainees are generally supported to progress to qualification by their employer. However, we want to understand current potential barriers to strengthening equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging within each profession. This is with a focus on barriers' potential impact on recruitment and progression. This is so that identified barriers can be addressed, while ensuring that high education and professional standards are maintained.

We are keen to understand the following:

- The profile of trainees who engage in qualification routes for each profession.
- Potential differences in trainees' experience in relation to all relevant diversity characteristics.
- Potential diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging issues arising from the qualification route that individual trainees pursue.
- The potential impact of individuals' experience as a trainee on their progression and subsequent career choices and development opportunities.
- How qualification routes are inclusive of and accessible to trainees with additional learning needs and other diversity characteristics.
- How qualification routes support all trainees' wellbeing.

Further information on Theme D is available here.

Our questions on widening entry

In answering the questions below, please

- **State to which profession(s) your response relates.**
- **Answer the questions, or parts of questions, that you feel are most useful for sharing the feedback that you want to provide.**

CITMA

20. How can we gain a better understanding of barriers to recruitment and progression within each profession's current qualification routes, including those relating to protected characteristics and wider diversity characteristics (e.g. relating to socio-economic background, caring responsibilities, and geography)?

    Listening to peoples lived experiences provides insight that data alone cannot. Talking to trainees and potential entrants through interviews, group discussions, or anonymous feedback helps bring hidden issues to light, like financial pressure, lack of contacts or role models, and fixed ideas about how careers or working patterns should work. Employers and supervisors also have a massive influence on who gets hired and who moves up. Taking a closer look at recruitment and supervision, and learning from what other organisations do well, can help spot and reduce barriers. Money matters too. The cost of training and exams, whether and how much employers actually help with those costs, and how tied roles are to London /other big (expensive) cities or in person working can all make entry harder for people on lower incomes or with caring responsibilities.

21. How can diversity and inclusion in each profession be increased, while ensuring that high education and professional standards are upheld?

    Diversity and inclusion improve when barriers that have nothing to do with ability are removed. This includes things like high exam and course costs, unpaid or low paid training, and rigid expectations about where or how people work. It is important to think not just about who qualifies in the end, but also about who is able to apply in the first place. This means looking beyond the same universities and networks, clearly explaining career routes and requirements, and offering early opportunities and mentoring to underrepresented groups.

    Ongoing support is just as important as getting people through the door. This includes flexible training and supervision, understanding caring responsibilities, being open to different career paths, supporting different ways of working, and being clear about how progression works and what is expected.

    People from lower income backgrounds, ethnic minority communities, and non traditional career routes often face extra barriers, such as fewer professional contacts, financial pressures, and assumptions about

academic ability. Many gain strong skills by starting in paralegal roles and learning on the job but may still feel overlooked.

Firms can be more inclusive by valuing practical experience as well as qualifications, being clear about how people can qualify, and encouraging capable individuals to progress even if their career path is not straightforward. Clear guidance, flexible training, and simple mentoring can help build confidence and ensure talent from a wider range of backgrounds is recognised and supported.

Where individuals have had less exposure to professional environments or corporate norms, light touch mentoring or informal guidance can help build confidence and professional awareness without requiring significant time or resources.

22. What factors impact on current trainee recruitment and progression from diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging perspectives?

    Entry into trade mark trainee roles often depends on two fundamental factors: awareness that the role exists (as the profession is less well known than more established legal careers, such as that of a solicitor) and a perception that the profession is open to people from a wide range of backgrounds. Where recruitment is concentrated within a narrow(er) group of universities (with an IP module) and recruitment agencies, or reliance on personal networks, individuals from less advantaged backgrounds or under represented communities are more likely to be overlooked. In addition, limited visibility of relatable role models within the profession can make it difficult for prospective candidates to envisage themselves in such roles, discouraging applications altogether. Financial considerations present a further significant barrier. High examination and course fees, low paid training positions, and the cost of living associated with major cities such as London can render qualification inaccessible for many. These pressures are particularly acute for individuals on lower incomes, those with caring responsibilities, or those seeking to transition into the profession through alternative career pathways. Many individuals begin in paralegal roles, often within in house teams, and develop strong practical skills and professional expertise through on the job learning rather than formal academic routes. Despite this, they may feel held back by a lack of traditional academic qualifications or perceptions that they are not sufficiently "academic", even where their performance clearly demonstrates capability.

23. What examples of good practice can be built on to do one or more of the following:

    a. Widen awareness of each profession as a potential career opportunity?
       Awareness of the profession as a potential career opportunity can be widened through more proactive and inclusive outreach beyond traditional recruitment channels. This includes engagement at careers

fairs and sustained outreach to schools, further education colleges, and a broader range of universities, rather than concentrating on a limited number of established institutions. The use of role-model case studies and lived-experience profiles that reflect diverse backgrounds and non-linear career pathways can also help challenge perceptions of the profession and demonstrate that it is accessible to a wider range of candidates. Early exposure to the profession is particularly important in supporting informed career choices. Paid internships and summer placements, alongside work-shadowing opportunities and foundation or pre-training programmes, can provide practical insight into the nature of the work and the routes into qualification. These initiatives are most effective where they are targeted at individuals from under-represented or non-traditional backgrounds and where there is a clear, transparent link to future training and progression pathways.

b. Strengthen a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion within recruitment processes?
A stronger focus on equity, diversity and inclusion within recruitment processes can be achieved by avoiding decision making that favours familiarity with, or similarity to, existing team members over objective assessment of skills, aptitude and potential. Recruitment should be structured to minimise bias and ensure that selection decisions are grounded in clearly defined, role relevant criteria.

In addition, reliance on vague or subjective indicators—such as perceived confidence, cultural fit, or communication style—should be reduced, as these can disproportionately disadvantage candidates from different backgrounds. Instead, consistent, transparent assessment methods should be used to evaluate capability and potential in a way that is fair, evidence based, and inclusive.

c. Support trainees with diverse needs?
Supporting trainees with diverse needs requires structured and transparent approaches, rather than reliance on informal networks or subjective notions of “fit”. All trainees should have equitable access to work, supervision, and development opportunities through clear allocation processes and regular supervision. Inclusive practices may include consistent check ins, clear expectations and progression criteria, objective workload allocation, and access to reasonable adjustments and flexible working arrangements. Regular review of training and progression outcomes can help identify unintended barriers, while sharing effective inclusive practices across organisations can support consistency and improved trainee experiences.

d. Strengthen a learning and development culture that is inclusive and promotes a sense of belonging?

People learn, work, and communicate in different ways, and the skills needed to thrive in practice extend far beyond their background, exam performance, or classroom confidence. Supporting this reality means adopting simple, consistent approaches that allow different strengths to come through. This can include flexible working where possible, offering training in more than one format, giving clear and step by step instructions, and following up key points in writing. Small, reasonable adjustments can help people focus and process information effectively, without feeling overwhelmed. Regular but focused check ins with supervisors help individuals develop in ways that suit their working style, without requiring significant additional time. Inclusion is further strengthened when expectations, performance standards, and progression routes are clearly explained, work and learning opportunities are shared fairly, and support resources are easy to find. Open communication, regular supervision, and access to mentoring help show that success is not limited to people from one type of background or academic path. Instead, the profession benefits from many different skills, experiences, and perspectives.

e. Support trainee wellbeing?
It is important to recognise that all professionals were once trainees and that errors are an inherent part of the learning process. Supervisors should actively encourage work shadowing and allocate sufficient time to review trainees' work carefully, with a focus on development and learning rather than solely identifying mistakes. Regular check ins should be embedded into supervision practices, rather than engagement occurring only when issues arise. Workloads should be realistic, expectations clearly communicated, and trainees made aware and continually reminded of available wellbeing support, including access to mental health resources

Final questions

24. Please share below any other feedback that you think should inform the Education Review. As examples, this might be on topics not covered by the previous questions that you see as relevant to the Review, or to comment on how the Review is progressed.

    Apprenticeship for trade mark attorneys and trade mark paralegals should be considered and thoroughly investigated as part of the review process and implemented if possible. An AI module as part of the qualification route and AI webinars to upskill qualified professionals will be extremely beneficial.

25. Please provide below any feedback you want to share at this stage about current IPReg criteria, structures and processes for accrediting education and examination provision; see www.ipreg.org.uk/pro/admission-to-register/qualifying-courses-and-examinations/ipreg-accreditation-handbook.Our approach to accreditation will form a strong focus in later stages of the Review and our consultation on Review proposals.

    Currently Nottingham Law School is the only provider for the Professional Certificate in Trade mark Practice (year 2) which could be a potential risk, and serious consideration should be given to at the very least having another provider.

PART THREE: How we can use your response

IPReg's privacy policy is available here: https://ipreg.org.uk/about-us/legal-notices/privacy-notice.

We ask that you answer all questions marked with an asterisk (*) in this section.

Contact details

Please provide your name and email address. We will only use this information if you consent to this (see below).*

Name*	**Ese Akpogheneta (Chair of CTIMA Education Qualification and Standards Committee)**
Email address*	**Ese_akpogheneta@bat.com**

Consent statements

Please answer the consent statements below so that we know how we can use your response.*

	YES	NO
1. I am happy for the IPReg Education Review team to contact me for more information about my response.*	**YES**	
2. If I have responded as an individual, I consent to IPReg including my own name in a list of respondents.*		
OR If I have responded on behalf of an organisation, I consent to IPReg including my organisation's name in a list of respondents.*	**YES**	

AI use in response

Please indicate below if you have used generative AI tools to support the preparation of your response (other than for making minor edits) and briefly explain how you have used it (e.g. to collate responses to questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation). This will help us to understand how your feedback has been developed.*

	YES	NO
3. Generative AI has been used in preparing this response.* If you answer 'Yes', please indicate below how you have used it. **AI has been used in relation to answer questions 23b and 23c**	**YES**	

Using your response

Unless you tell us that some or all your response is confidential, we will assume that it is NOT confidential and that material from it can be used to illustrate a particular viewpoint or to highlight existing good practice relevant to the Review. If we use parts of your response in this way, we will not attribute it directly to you.

4. Please specify below if any aspects of your response are confidential.

Thank you for your completing this template.

Please email it to ed.review@ipreg.org.uk

Please also tell us about your experience of engaging with our Call. You can do this by responding to a few questions by clicking on this link to access our feedback form:

https://forms.office.com/e/m0UqfDL4yB

Your feedback will help us to evaluate our approach and inform how we run future exercises.