A Service of the Chamber of Patent Attorneys

Training to be a trained IP paralegal. Varied and demanding work.

Someone who is happy to assume responsibility, who likes foreign languages and shows an interest in technology, science and law, has the right preconditions to work successfully as a trained IP paralegal.

Dual training. The profession of trained IP paralegals is a recognised qualified profession according to the Vocational Training Act. The course of training covers a period of three years as a rule. With suitable earlier qualifications, the training period can be shortened. The law does not prescribe any particular school-leaving certificate as an entry requirement. The training is based on the dual vocational training system, which combines theory and practice synergistically. Practical training is provided by patent attorneys in law firms and company patent departments. The theoretical principles are taught in vocational schools in a form based on practical action. At the beginning of the second training year, the level reached is established by means of an intermediate examination. At the end of the training period, there is a final examination. Both examinations are held by the examination boards set up for this purpose by the Patentanwaltskammer.

Specialist classes in Munich, Bremen, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart. The details of the vocational training are laid down for the whole of Germany by the Vocational Training Act and by the Regulation on Vocational Training to become a trained IP paralegal, together with the framework training curriculum. Separate specialist classes for trained IP paralegals have been set up at the vocational schools in Munich, Bremen, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart. In addition to the existing specialist classes with weekly lessons in Munich block teaching was introduced which can, subject to certain conditions, be attended by trainees from several federal states according to the specifications of the Conference of Education Ministers or rather respective Ministries of Education and the Arts. In addition, supplementary specialist studies are offered in Berlin by the Patentanwaltskammer. If the vocational school does not cover some of the material laid down in the framework training curriculum, it is up to the patent attorney to provide the trainees with the knowledge and skills required.
Content of the theoretical course. In line with the profile of the profession, the theoretical course combines specialist - especially legal - and organisational/commercial topics. The legal course concentrates, among other things, on the principles of legal methodology, civil law, the law of civil procedure, commercial and company law. The focus of the legal training for a future trained IP paralegal is of course on national and international intellectual property law. In addition, the curriculum at the vocational schools includes the basics of economics, social studies, accounting and finance.

The practical side. The patent attorneys in the law firms and companies teach the trainees the practical skills, knowledge and competences needed for their professional careers. The focus here is on those competences which are connected with securing success in filing and upholding intellectual property rights, particularly since trained IP paralegals set themselves apart in this respect from graduates of other vocational training courses in the commercial and legal sectors.

Advanced training. If after a number of years working in the profession a trained IP paralegal wishes to advance professionally, he or she is free to take part in the examination held by the local bar association to become a certified legal officer (Geprüfter Rechtsfachwirt/Geprüfte Rechtsfachwirtin).