**Patent examiner**

**What does your job entail on a day-to-day basis?**

I deal with patent applications. I mainly spend my time searching and selecting relevant documents, examining patent applications (i.e. deciding, based on the documents that I found, whether the claims of the patent application satisfy criteria such as novelty, inventive step and clarity), classifying documents and attending oral proceedings in patent examination and opposition.

I usually work alone and sometimes consult my colleagues for advice. However, in case of oral proceedings, three patent examiners closely work together in a formal setting, where we listen to the arguments of patent attorneys and make a final decision about a patent or patent application on that same day.

**What qualifications are required?**

A scientific degree at Master's level and the knowledge of English, French and German is needed [for working at the European Patent Office, EPO].

**What other transferable skills do you need?**

You need an analytical mind, the ability to work alone as well as in a team in a multicultural environment and the ability to use several languages.

**Are there opportunities to widen your knowledge of other areas in your field?**  
The job is very specific and mainly focuses on patents. You may change department and technical field, but the job is essentially the same. However, there is a lot to learn from the field itself, thanks to the constant legal changes (especially in terms of decisions of the EPO board of appeal).

**Is training continual? Career Progression?**  
The training is continual, although in the last years e-modules have replaced training with instructors (for me this is a shame because it was one of the best part of the job). The career structure is flat, but the responsibilities and the tasks increase.

**What do you enjoy the most in your job?**  
There are many things: The legal-related aspects, the working conditions, my colleagues, the multicultural environment and working alone. I also like the mixture between having a certain routine and there being always something new to learn.

**What challenges do you have to overcome?**  
The main challenge is the pressure to meet our target by the end of year.

**Any advice for those interested in a position such as yours?**  
To think carefully if it is the kind of job you might like. It is a very focused and specialized job with not so many new transferable skills to learn. It is not very dynamic and you almost have no contact with the outside world.

**What sources did you use to find out about the job vacancy?**  
A professor at university sent me a link with the job vacancy. [The EPO website has a jobs page that lists vacancies and other information related to careers at the EPO <http://www.epo.org/about-us/jobs.html>]

**Is there anything that you miss about being in the lab (if you were previously a lab-based scientist)?**  
I miss the manual aspect of lab work, which gave me the possibility to switch off my brain while repeating experiments and to walk around instead of siting in front of a computer the whole day.