

 **STANDING COUNSEL FOR THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF**

 **PATENTS, DESIGNS AND TRADE MARKS**

 **INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS**

Thank you for your interest in becoming Standing Counsel for the Comptroller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks. This sheet provides **essential information** for all applicants: **PLEASE READ IT BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM.**

**General Background**

The Attorney General has traditionally appointed a member of the intellectual property Bar or a solicitor advocate to provide the Comptroller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks with advice when required, and to act for him in proceedings before the higher courts. The Attorney General is launching a recruitment exercise to fill two existing vacancies with the following practice:

* Appointments will be for an initial period of three years, with the possibility of an extension up to a further three years at the discretion of the Attorney General;
* Advocates will be invited to apply for appointment in an open competition.

The appointments are open to both barristers with a tenancy and solicitors with a higher court advocacy qualification. Although most of the work will come from the Comptroller, advocates may occasionally be asked to advise or act for other government departments on intellectual property matters. However, the appointments carry no guarantee of the amount of work that will be available.

**Eligibility**

In the past appointments have been made to applicants who have at least 5 years experience in actual practice.

Applicants are generally expected to meet the following criteria:

* A high degree of expertise in intellectual property generally, but with particular emphasis on patents, trademarks, registered designs and design right;
* Experience both of advocacy before the Comptroller and the higher courts and of advisory work;
* Academic strength (2: 1 or above) or compensating strength on other factors covered by the application;
* Written/drafting ability, to be evidenced by recent specimens of work (an opinion and a skeleton argument).

Whilst not essential, the following would also be helpful:

* Experience of advocacy before the Court of Appeal;
* Experience of working for or against the government and/or public bodies and an appreciation of the special demands of government litigation.

**Application**

All applicants must complete the standard application form and provide references from **three professional referees** of the applicant’s choice using the Referee proforma. We would also be very grateful if you would complete the new Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form, although this is not compulsory.

* *Application Form:*you must return your original application form and any attachments **plus three copies** (so four in total) individually stapled or Treasury tagged in the top left-hand corner to the address provided below and at the end of **the Application Form**.
* *References and referee proforma:*Applicants should give the referees proforma to **three professional referees** of their choice.These can include instructing solicitors (including government lawyers), patent or trade mark attorneys, Intellectual Property Office hearing officers, head or senior members of chambers, senior or other partner in practice, leaders and judges or tribunal chairs.

The choice of referees is important – those who can speak with authority on an applicant’s abilities as an advocate are most helpful to the Selection Board. The three referees’ proforma and postage paid and addressed return envelopes (if provided) should be passed on to the three professional referees of your choice as soon as possible.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your referees return the proformas to the address and by the deadline given below.

* *New Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form:* We now have a new equality and diversity monitoring form which mirrors that used by the CPS and although it is not compulsory, we would be very grateful if you could complete the form.Only one copy is necessary as it will not be sent to the Selection Board. Please keep it separate from the other papers.
* *Closing date for applications and references:* Applications must reach us no later than **17:00 on Tuesday 30 April 2019.**
* *If you wish your application to be acknowledged, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard.*

**Selection**

A Selection Board appointed by the Attorney General will consider applications. The selection will be made on the basis of the application form, references and interviews. If you are selected for interview, you will be expected to give a short presentation to the Board. You will be given further details about the presentation before the date of the interview. The Attorney General will appoint the advocates who appear to him to be best qualified regardless of disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, religion/belief or political affiliation. Women, members of ethnic minorities and those with disabilities are particularly encouraged to apply. Although most of the work is based in London and Newport, South Wales, applications from outside of these areas will be considered

The *standard rate* of pay will be £125 per hour for the successful applicants. Fee notes must set out clearly what work has been done.

**Address to send applications**

Please send your original application form and any attachments, **copied three times** (four in total), individually stapled or Treasury tagged in the top left-hand corner and one copy of Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form (if you have completed one) to:

Comptroller’s Counsel Recruitment,

Raoul Colombo,

PDTMD,

Intellectual Property Office,

Room 2G33,

Concept House,

Cardiff Road,

Newport,

South Wales,

NP10 8QQ.

**Further Information**

If you have any queries, please feel free to raise them in the first instance with Raoul Colombo at the Intellectual Property Office on 01633-811407 or by emailing him at raoul.colombo@ipo.gov.uk. Some of your questions may be answered on the following sheet of additional information.

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**When will I hear about my application?**

After the closing date we need to allow time for papers to be distributed to members of the Selection Board. Interviews will begin around two weeks after the closing date; candidates can expect to hear the results about two or three weeks after. All candidates will receive a letter once the Attorney General has approved the Board’s decision.

**Do I need to complete the application form in manuscript?**

No, and indeed we would prefer you to use a word processor, particularly if your writing is not very legible. Putting the answers in a different font from the questions can help.

**What happens if one of my referees is late sending in his/her reference?**

If reference forms have not arrived by the closing date for applications, we will ring either the candidate or the referee and chase them. Equally, if we have received references but not an application form, we will get in touch with the candidate to check whether they sent one in.

Information contained in references is important to the Selection Board and if, after chasing, we do not receive both forms, your application is very likely to be unsuccessful. ***It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that your referees return the proformas by the deadline. Please stress to them the importance of doing so.***

**If I have forgotten to put in 3 copies of my form will I be penalised?**

No. Obviously you should take care in the filing of your application papers, but information such as this is not given to the Selection Board. There are no trivial ‘technical knockouts’. However, the board will take into account the amount of care that you appear to have given to completing your form.

**Do I have to be a member of a particular set of chambers?**

No. Each candidate will be considered on his/her merits only, not on what chambers they practise in.

**When will I know the length and subject of the presentation I will need to give at interview?**

If you are selected for interview, your letter of invitation for interview will carry details about the subject and duration of the presentation. You will be asked further questions about the presentation as part of the interview.