

Careers in Ideas

PurposiveStep

Applying to train as a patent or trade mark attorney

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Tips on CVs and additional selection tasks

Julie Barrett – who am I?



- ▶ Grandmother, mother, friend, singer, colleague, mentor, writer, lecturer, tutor ...
- ▶ Fellow of CIPA, ex-Patent Attorney (Chartered & European):
40+ years in industry & private practice, plus academia
 - Skills, careers & subject lecturer/tutor (University of Essex, QMUL)
- ▶ **PurposiveStep** Consultancy: IP-related careers & businesses
- ▶ IP Inclusive, Careers in Ideas, special interest in
 - social mobility – improving access to the profession/careers in IP

CVs: **Purposive** Tips – appearance & impact

- ▶ **Not more than 2 x A4 pages** (printable on one double-sided A4 sheet)
- ▶ **Words and numbers only:** beware graphics, fancy design
 - Some templates available on web are not ideal
 - Fancy design/layout is not advised for law or technical jobs
 - Can be good for applications to more creative industries or roles
- ▶ **Clear** layout, including defined section headings
 - To aid reading – understanding of CV structure
 - e.g. main headings and sub-headings; *italics are also useful*

CVs: **Purposive** Tips – layout & structure

- ▶ **Four sections (main headings):**
 - Personal profile (max. 3 lines)
 - what do you bring to the table, what are you looking for = summary
 - Education & Qualifications;
 - Employment & Work experience;
 - Other *relevant* information
 - languages, software/databases, willingness to travel/relocate
 - **Start each section with the most recent** (and work backwards)
- ▶ **Perfect English:** spelling, grammar, punctuation
 - Bullet points are ok, but ensure they make sense to others

CVs: **Purposive** Tips – content & substance

- ▶ Your CV should answer the question: why should they choose me – **how do I fulfil all the highlighted criteria?**
- ▶ **Read in full** the job description and job advert (job spec.)
- ▶ **Highlight all relevant words/short phrases indicating what employer expects from a successful applicant**
 - Use one colour for must-haves, e.g. qualifications/experience/skills
 - Use another colour for preferred-to-haves/desirable attributes
- ▶ Populate the four sections of your CV, as on previous slide

CVs: **Purposive** Tips – identify & fill gaps

- ▶ **Identify gaps:** highlight all the words/short phrases you have used in your CV that echo those in the job spec.
- ▶ Does *every* one of those in the job spec appear in your CV?
 - Gaps are highlights in the job spec. without corresponding highlights in your CV
 - Also, ‘*must-haves*’ in the job spec should appear often in your CV
- ▶ **Fill any gaps:** If you’re not sure how, think more laterally
 - Tell: **what experiences have you had in your life as a whole**, e.g. at school, university/college or home, that could fill gaps?
 - Show: **how can the way you apply for this role/the application documents demonstrate** you have the required qualities/skills/etc?

Additional job application tasks

As well as (a) sending in some combination of application form, covering letter, CV, and – perhaps also – samples of your written work; and (b) attending an interview, you may also have to undertake one or more of the task(s):

- ▶ One of the most common for patent jobs is to have to describe an everyday article,
 - like a bicycle or paperclip or toilet cistern (you will be given/told the article)

- ▶ Practise some of these before the interview
 - What parts is the object made up of?
 - How do the parts interact?
 - What effect does their interaction have/what is the object used for?
 - What is/seems unique (or special) about the object? – ensure you mention that

Common selection tasks – esp. priv. pract.

- ▶ **Language-related** tests – general knowledge (in your field)
 - Vocabulary or terminology – clear/succinct definitions
 - Grammar, spelling, punctuation – precise and accurate (clarity, again)
- ▶ **Subject-matter** tests – technical (patents), legal
 - Revise anything you specifically mention in your CV, e.g., dissertation
- ▶ **Case studies** – keep calm and carry on!
 - Show your thinking – this is more important than what you know
 - Use some ‘common’ sense if you don’t know the answer
 - Point out problems/issues still to be solve; pros & cons
- ▶ **Problem questions** – know what IP is *for* and aim for that

Common selection tasks – esp. industry

- ▶ **Presentations** and talks – may include non-IP people
 - use *clear* slides, speak slowly, stick to what you understand
- ▶ **Psychometric profiling** – usually HR-administered
 - answer quickly, don't think or worry (there's no 'right' answer)
- ▶ Share in a meal or other **social event**
 - avoid 'messy' food and alcohol! Show interest, ask questions
- ▶ **Team exercises/assessment centres** – esp. big law firms
 - contribute but don't dominate, include others, lead when necessary

Thank you!

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You are welcome to connect with me on LinkedIn

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or email/phone to request some guidance