



Europäisches
Patentamt
European
Patent Office
Office européen
des brevets

EPO Quality Initiatives

“Get it right the first time”



Our staff is our main asset

Hire the best...

Minimum requirements :

- Master's degree in science or engineering
- Work experience is advantageous
- Excellent knowledge of either English, French or German and the ability to understand the other two

... and invest in them

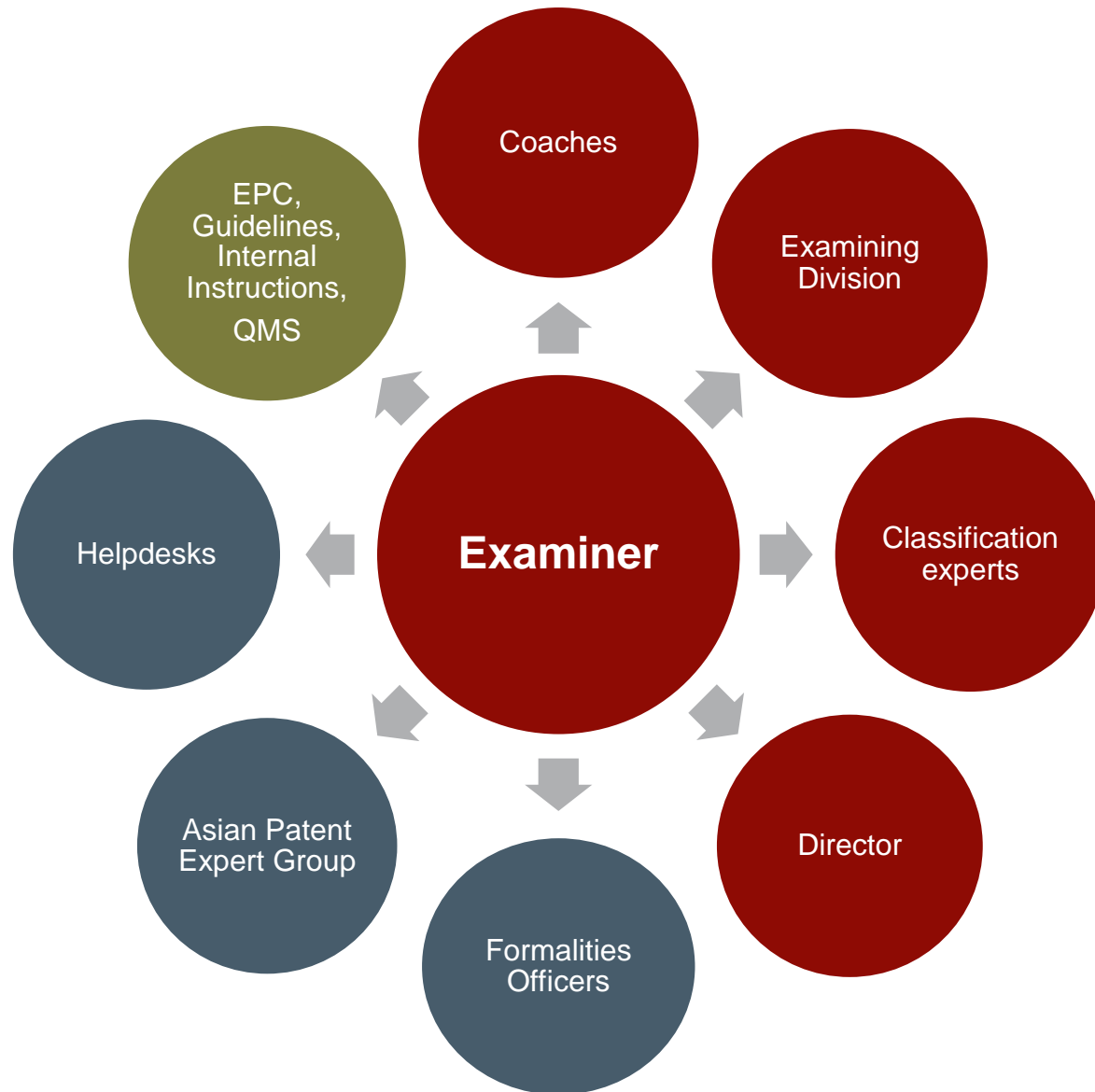
For all new examiners for first 2 yrs:

- 51 days classroom training
- On the job coaching by experienced examiners (all actions reviewed by coaches)
- Continuous career-long training

Long-terms benefits for applicants and the EPO

- 4 yrs to fully train an EPO examiner - new recruits develop the skills required to process applications from filing through to the final action, incl. opposition
- For applicants and the EPO this results in consistency, efficiency and enhanced legal certainty

Examiner Support Network



Documentation is key

The EPO has the world's largest collection of documents

- over **800 million records** of patent and non-patent literature documents in over 120 databases

EPO examiners also have access to:

- Subscription-only **external databases** such as chemical abstracts
- The EPO's **standards documentation**. This has increased to over 2.6 million documents in 2015 (17% increase over 2014)
- The EPO has almost 100% coverage of Bibliographic and, abstract and image data for **Chinese, Korean and Japanese patent literature**
- **Full-Text**, English language, machine translated Asian prior art:
 - China since 1985, Korea since 2008, Japan since 1999

The EPO ethos: “Get it right the first time”

Search is the patent grant process cornerstone:

- Identification of all **most relevant** documents for subsequent prosecution at earliest stage possible
- Thorough **written opinions** address all technical, legal and claim drafting issues
- Extended **top-up** searches, but no “salami search” approach
- When ISA=EPO, **no** further EPO search is required representing a direct saving of at least \$2000 for applicants

Furthermore:

- All procedures are carried out to the **same high standard** (National searches, PCT and EPC)
- **Full recognition** of earlier EPO work results in subsequent phases (examination or regional phase)

Applicants can rely on EPO’s search reports and opinions to build a strategy for further prosecution at the EPO and most likely at many other offices

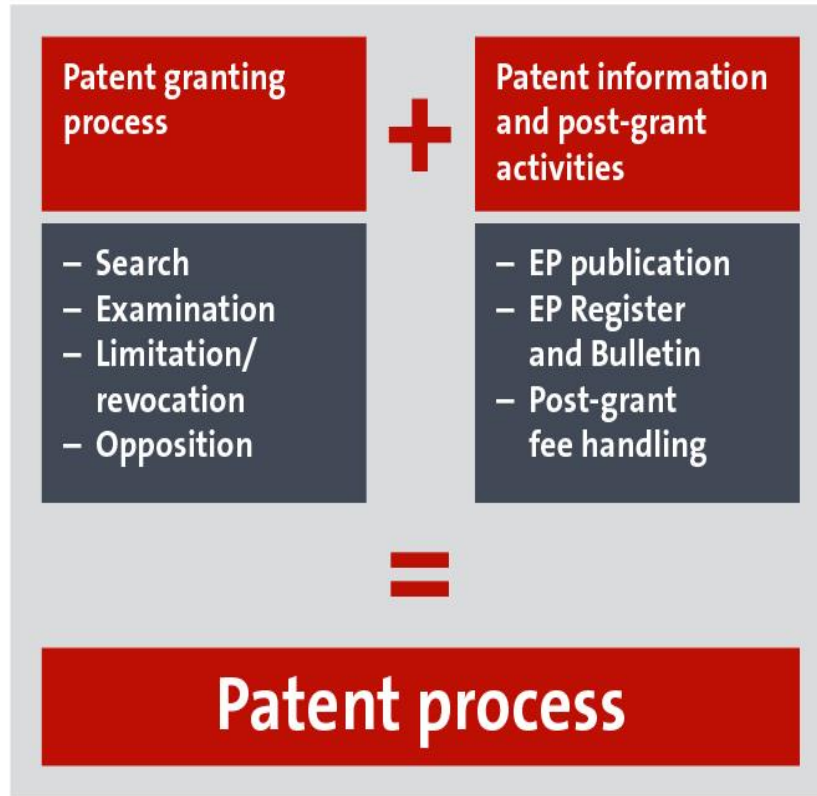
Legal certainty = cost effectiveness

Quality Assurance

Product	Quality Checks							
	Examining Division	Director	CASE	Product Audit	Classification Q. Control	Oppositions	Opposition Metrics	Appeals
Search Report	■	■	■	■				
Classification	■	■			■			
Oral Proceedings	■	■						
Grants	■	■	■	■		■		
Refusals	■	■		■				■
Oppositions	■	■		■			■	■

- **CASE**: **C**onformity **A**ssurance in **S**earch and **E**xamination
 - in-process, ensures errors are corrected before dispatch to applicant
 - all grants are checked and a random sample of searches
- **Product Audit**: random, in process check of search/examination products
- **Classification Quality Control** process ensures high classification quality
- **Opposition Metrics**: examine root causes for partial or complete revocation

ISO 9001 certification scope



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Our QMS includes:

Procedures for detecting and dealing with nonconforming products

Process and product audits aimed at fostering continuous improvement

Systematic recording and processing of corrective and preventive actions



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