

**UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

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Patent Public Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting

Stakeholder Training on Examination Practice and Procedures (STEPP)

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Director, Office of Patent Training
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UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



Stakeholder Training on Examination Practice and Procedure (STEPP) – Goals

- To further the USPTO's mission of delivering intellectual property information and education to external customers
- To improve the customer experience throughout the patent process
- To increase transparency with respect to how an application is examined at the USPTO

STEPP Program

- 3-day training program that focuses on the life of an application from docketing to allowance
- Training materials were derived from training delivered to patent examiners and other USPTO employees
- Training delivered by USPTO trainers

STEPP: 3-Day Training Program

Day 1: Courses

The Role of a Patent Examiner

Reading and Understanding an Application

Claim Interpretation

Wrap Up Q&A

35 USC 101, 112(a), and 112(b)

STEPP: 3-Day Training Program

Day 2: Courses

Planning a Search

Mapping Art to Claims

Overview of 35 U.S.C. 102 and 102

Q&A

STEPP: 3-Day Training Program

Day 3: Courses

Writing an Office Action and
Responding to Applicant

Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB)

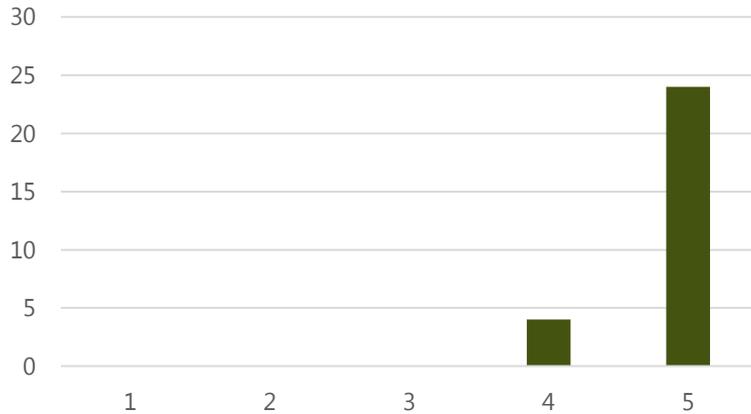
Double Patenting and Restrictions

Central Reexam Unit (CRU)

Course Wrap Up and Q&A

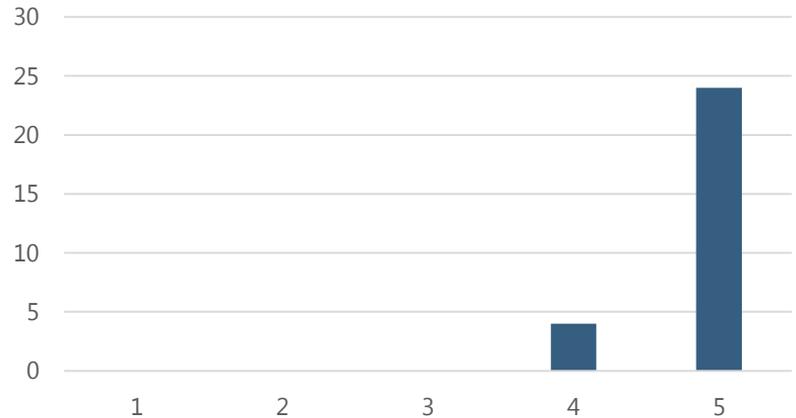
Course Ratings

My knowledge and skills increased as a result of this course.



■ My knowledge and skills increased as a result of this course.

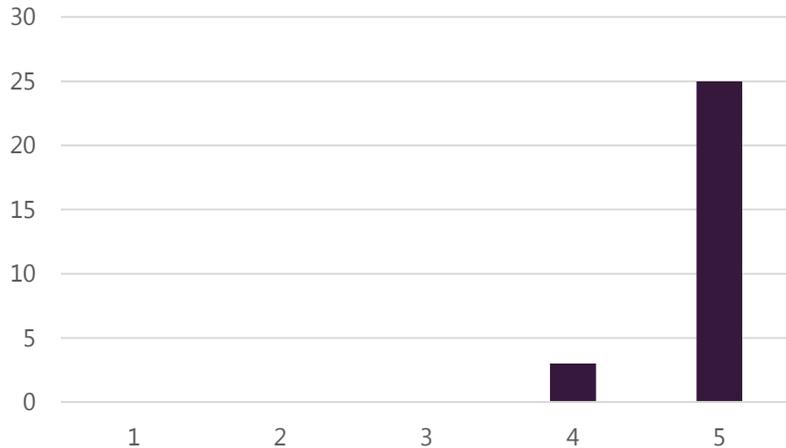
I would recommend this course to someone else.



■ I would recommend this course to someone else.

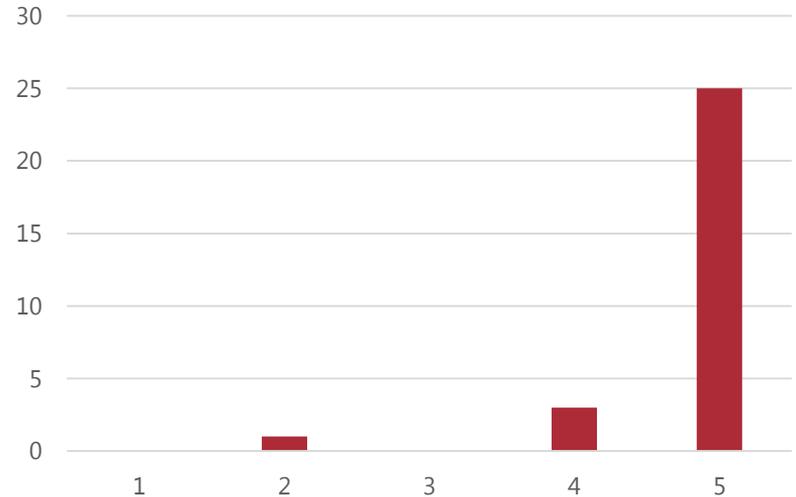
Course Ratings

I plan to apply the knowledge and skills learned in this course.



■ I plan to apply the knowledge and skills learned in this course.

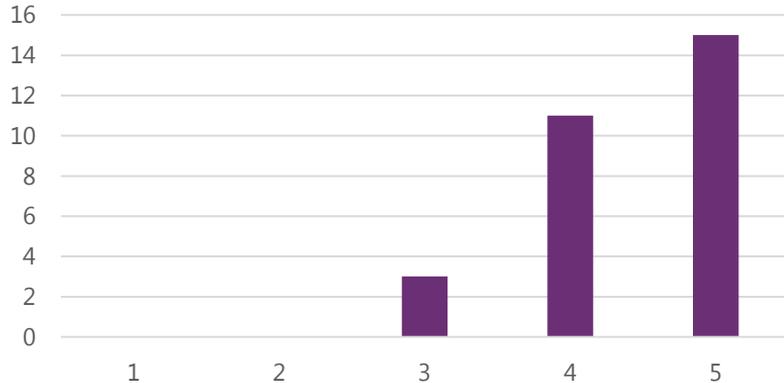
I understood the learning objectives



■ I understood the learning objectives

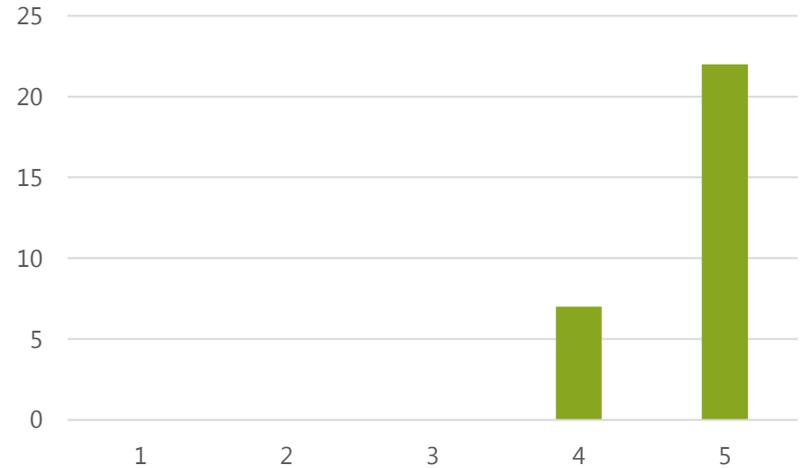
Course Ratings

There was a sufficient amount of time for me to understand the content.



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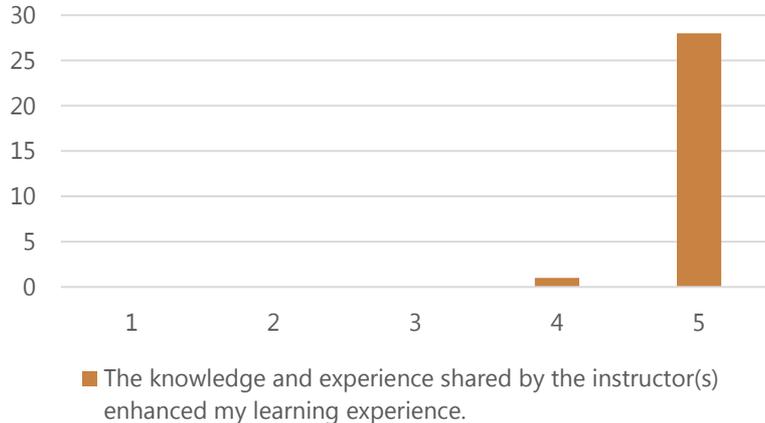
This course was easy to follow.



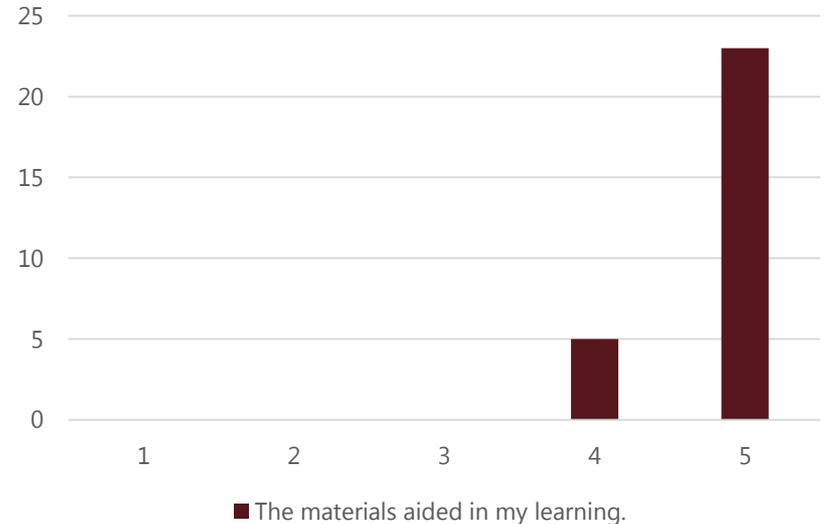
■ This course was easy to follow.

Course Ratings

The knowledge and experience shared by the instructor(s) enhanced my learning experience.

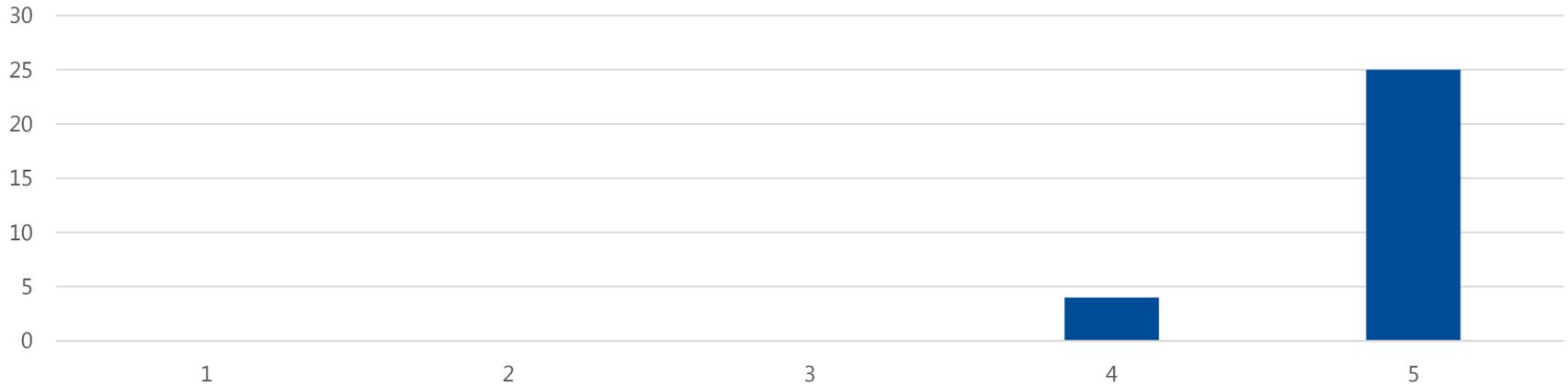


The materials aided in my learning.



Course Ratings

I was given ample opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the course material.



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Course Ratings

Do you have any additional comments regarding the STEPP Program?

- "Overall, I think this is a very beneficial program. I learned a lot of useful information that I can use in my practice"
- "The program was beyond my expectations and the approachability of the staff made this 3 day program a delight. I hope that future programs continue as this makes the USPTO seem more transparent and willing to assist the public and practitioners get strong valid patents"
- "I can't thank you enough! This was tremendous for my clients, my practice, my career, and my optimism about the US continuing as a leader of innovation! My commitment to fostering innovation is reinvigorated. Keep offering these types of training to the public!"

Course Ratings

- "Fantastic course. As someone who is transitioning into IP Law this was invaluable. The instructors were well prepared and accessible. The course materials were well developed. Truly amazing. Would definitely recommend this course to any practitioner, whether experienced or a novice practitioner"
- "Great program with tons of information, presented with clear resources, knowledgeable speakers and great organization. Everyone was very engaging"

Course Ratings

What was the best part of this course?

- "By far the hands on exercises were the most informative and impactful"
- "Information about the office's emphasis on 'compact prosecution' shed new light on the back and forth"

What recommendations do you have for improving this course?

- "Much less lecture and much more hands on. Possibly make lecture slides/videos available before the start of the program and jumping into the hands on exercises after brief lectures."

Next Steps

- Deliver STEPP workshops in each of the four regional offices over the next four quarters.
- Provide additional STEPP workshops in Alexandria. (frequency to be determined)
- Increase workshop size somewhat, while maintaining the ability to maintain the hands-on and answer questions.

Stakeholder Training on Examination Practice and Procedure (STEPP)



Stakeholder Training on Examination Practice and Procedure (STEPP) is a program designed to further the USPTO's mission of delivering intellectual property information and education to external stakeholders.

The program falls under the third pillar (*Pillar 3, "Excellence in Customer Service"*), of the Enhanced Patent Quality Initiative (EPQI), which places focus on improving the customer experience throughout the patent process. STEPP was developed to increase transparency with respect to how an application is examined at the USPTO.

Program Description

The STEPP program provides unique, day-in-the-life, experiences to those attending training. Material used within the program is derived from training delivered to patent examiners and other USPTO employees. In addition, training is delivered by USPTO trainers.

What does STEPP Cover?

Training delivered through STEPP focuses on the life of an application after the application is placed on an examiner's docket until the application is allowed.

Why Participate?

STEPP is designed to provide perspective by detailing what an examiner considers in preparing an office action. Training focuses on how an examiner is taught to use the MPEP to make patentability determinations and write an office action. Gaining perspective of an examiner's point of view will increase your situational awareness which can aid in compact prosecution.

Payment and Credit Currently, there is no cost to attend a course in the STEPP program.

The USPTO is currently in the process of determining whether CLE credits will be provided for attending a course within STEPP.



Please visit the STEPP website for more information:

<http://www.uspto.gov/patent/initiatives/stakeholder-training-examination-practice-and-procedure-stepp>

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STEPP: 3-Day Training on Examination Practice and Procedure

USPTO : Office of Patent Training

Start	End	Duration	Course Title	Description	
Day 1					
8:30 AM	9:00 AM	0:30	Welcome, introductions, housekeeping	Brief introduction and Q&A before the start of the course.	Module 1: Reading and Understanding an Application
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	1:00	The Role of a Patent Examiner	Presentation discussing the responsibilities, duties, and work expectations of a patent examiner.	
10:00 AM	11:00 AM	1:00	Claim Interpretation	Presentation focusing how claims are interpreted by patent examiners according to the MPEP including a discussion of 112(f).	
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00	101, 112(a), and 112(b)	Presentation describing how examiners use statutes to increase the clarity of the record based on how the claims have been interpreted.	
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00	Lunch		
1:00 PM	4:30 PM	3:30	Reading and Understanding an Application	Presentation and exercise providing an in depth look at how examiners are trained to read and understand an application. An accompanying exercise will allow trainees to walk in an examiner's shoes by picking up and working on a Sample Application.	
4:30 PM	5:00 PM	0:30	Wrap Up Q&A	Time dedicated to continuing any discussion with respect to the Sample Application and answering any additional questions.	
Day 2					
8:30 AM	9:00 AM	0:30	Morning Check In	Time for reacquainting trainees with the subject matter discussed in the previous module.	Module 2: Planning a Search and Applying Prior Art
9:00 AM	11:00 AM	2:00	Planning a Search	Presentation and exercise focusing on the tools available for searching (EAST, CAT, Google Patents, and the Global Dossier) and how these tools are used to formulate a search of both the claimed and disclosed inventions of the Sample Application.	
11:00 AM	12:30 PM	1:30	Overview of 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103	Discussion of 35 USC 102 and 103 and how they are used by examiners to determine whether claims can be rejected via prior art	
12:30 PM	1:30 PM	1:00	Lunch		
1:30 PM	4:30 PM	3:00	Mapping Art to Claims	Exercise allowing trainees to try applying prior art to claims of the Sample Application	
4:30 PM	5:00 PM	0:30	Q&A	Time dedicated to continuing any discussion on 102 and 103 with respect to the Sample Application and answering any additional questions.	
Day 3					
8:30 AM	9:00 AM	0:30	Morning Check In	Time for reacquainting trainees with the subject matter discussed in the previous module.	Module 3: Writing an Office Action and Post Examination Processes
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	3:00	Writing an Office Action and Responding to Applicant	Presentation detailing steps necessary to write an office action and reply to applicant once a response is received. The Sample Application is used as an example.	
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00	Lunch		
1:00 PM	2:00 PM	1:00	Double Patenting and Restriction	Presentation on how examiners are taught to apply both double patenting and restriction.	
2:00 PM	3:00 PM	1:00	Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB)	Presentation on the role of PTAB, why PTAB is important, current work load etc.	
3:00 PM	4:00 PM	1:00	Central Reexam Unit (CRU)	Presentation on the role of CRU, why CRU is important, current work load etc.	
4:00 PM	5:00 PM	1:00	Course Wrap-up and Q & A	Roundtable discussion and time for completing a course survey	

Questions and Comments

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