

**The USPTO is looking for engineers and scientists to work closely with entrepreneurs to process patent applications, reduce the backlog of unexamined patents, and speed up the overall process, allowing businesses to move their innovation to market more quickly, and giving them more opportunities to create new jobs.**

### What is a Patent Examiner?

A patent examiner is a federal employee who examines patent applications to determine whether or not a patent can be granted for various new inventions — many of which are on the cutting edge of tomorrow’s technological breakthroughs. Patent examiners review two types of applications — design patents and utility patents. Design patents protect the ornamental appearance of an article, e.g. a watch face, while utility patents protect an invention, e.g. the watch itself.

As a patent examiner, you will:

- Search prior art to ensure that an invention is new and unique
- Review patent applications to ensure conformity to formal requirements
- Write office actions communicating your findings on patentability to inventors and patent practitioners

### Basic Qualifications

Minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in engineering or science. Successful completion of a full 4-year course at an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor’s degree, or higher, that included a major field of study, or specific course requirements, in a variety of engineering and science disciplines. Check <http://uspto.usajobs.gov> for the most recent job announcements.

### Compensation

Your earning potential is one of the most important aspects of pursuing federal employment. Most agencies use the General Schedule (GS), which is the predominant pay scale for federal employees. The grade level assigned to a position determines the pay level for that job. Most patent examiners start with the USPTO as a GS-7 or GS-9. **The accompanying annual salary for that GS range is \$57,071 to \$86,601.** For more information, visit [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov) (keyword: pay).

### Benefits

USPTO’s comprehensive federal benefits package rivals those offered by top U.S. corporations. Our balanced work-life package includes:

- Flexible work schedules including telework
- Paid leave: starting with 13 days of vacation, 13 days of sick leave
- Paid overtime and/or compensatory time
- 10 paid holidays each year
- Incentive awards program
- Health benefits plan and retirement package
- Business casual dress policy
- Transit subsidy
- Job security
- Competitive salary

### Real, Valuable Work Experience for Students

Our unpaid, volunteer USPTO Extern Program provides talented high school and college students interested in engineering, science, and law with unique opportunities to gain valuable skills and professional experience. Here’s how:

- Explore your career options while developing or enhancing your personal and professional skills;
- Experience what it’s like to be a patent examiner, and learn about protecting intellectual property; and
- Gain first-hand knowledge of the responsibilities of patent practices and decision-making processes.

To learn more about our student opportunities or to apply, please visit [www.uspto.gov/jobs/student-programs](http://www.uspto.gov/jobs/student-programs).

The process to fill a patent examiner vacancy typically takes 10 weeks. This chart outlines the steps in the process.

Patent Examiner Hiring Process (10-week timeline)	
Week	Job Opportunity announcement (JOA) closes on USAJOBS.gov
1	HR reviews applications for qualifications (2 weeks)
2	
3	Hiring officials review applications, conduct interviews, and make selections (4 - 6 weeks)
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	USAJOBS status update: "Selected or Not Selected"
9	HR extends job offers (1 - 2 weeks)
10	

You can check status anytime on USAJOBS.gov.

### Patent Examiner Pay Scale, Fiscal Year 2020



Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
5	\$46,073	\$47,609	\$49,145	\$50,681	\$52,217	\$53,753	\$55,290	\$56,826	\$58,362	\$59,898
7	\$57,071	\$58,972	\$60,874	\$62,776	\$64,678	\$66,579	\$68,481	\$70,383	\$72,285	\$74,187
9	\$66,615	\$68,836	\$71,057	\$73,277	\$75,498	\$77,719	\$79,939	\$82,160	\$84,381	\$86,601
11	\$76,734	\$79,291	\$81,849	\$84,406	\$86,964	\$89,522	\$92,079	\$94,637	\$97,194	\$99,752
12	\$88,002	\$90,936	\$93,870	\$96,804	\$99,738	\$102,672	\$105,606	\$108,540	\$111,474	\$114,408
13	\$104,646	\$108,134	\$111,623	\$115,112	\$118,600	\$122,089	\$125,577	\$129,066	\$132,554	\$136,043
14	\$123,659	\$127,781	\$131,903	\$136,024	\$140,146	\$144,268	\$148,389	\$152,511	\$156,633	\$160,754
15	\$145,457	\$150,306	\$155,155	\$160,004	\$164,854	\$169,703	\$170,800	\$170,800	\$170,800	\$170,800



One of the **best places to work** in the federal government.

## Why should you work for the USPTO?

- **Bringing innovation to life:** Your expertise will focus on analyzing advanced, complex concepts leading to America's modern breakthroughs
- **Challenging, Engaging Atmosphere:** USPTO is the largest IP rights entity in the nation where you'll gain experience, training and mentorship you won't get anywhere else
- **Your Career, Your Way:** You will have a well-defined career path that gives you specific milestones to reach for while advancing throughout your career
- **Flexible Work Schedules:** USPTO's award-winning telework program makes finding work-life balance very easy by providing you with the ability to create a lifestyle that suits your needs

For more information please call 1-800-786-9757 or visit us at [www.uspto.gov/jobs](http://www.uspto.gov/jobs)

**U.S. Citizenship Required**

## About the USPTO

Our work spurs the kind of American innovation that can change the world.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has been serving the economic interests of America for more than 200 years. We are responsible for granting U.S. intellectual property rights for patents and trademarks.

Our efforts have provided inventors exclusive rights over their discoveries. It's an effort that continues to contribute to a strong global economy, to encourage investment in innovation and to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit for the 21st century.



The USPTO is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, with offices in California, Colorado, Michigan and Texas.



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