

FY-15 Interview Practice Training Summary

TC-level training was provided to all examiners in the Patent Corps for FY-15. Training consisted of the following: survey feedback, oral/written authorization, AIR Form, interview preparation, WebEx Refresher, interview principles, public interview room, and available interview resources. Below are highlights from the training.

Interview Survey

USPTO surveyed both examiners and stakeholders respectively on interview practice. Stakeholder's responses were positive on questions regarding advancing prosecution. Both stakeholders and examiners surveyed agreed that interviews explained rejections, discussed prior art, and clarified/better understood positions. Stakeholder survey is still currently available on our external interview practice website.

Oral/Written Authorization

USPTO updated its internet authorization policy to make it easier for patent applicants to authorize the use of video conferencing tools to conduct examiner interviews. The policy change to MPEP § 502.03 now allows the applicant or his/her representative(s) to use only Oral request to authorize a WebEx interview, in the same way they would request a telephone or in-person interview with the examiner, instead of submitting a written request.

See "Change to Internet Usage Policy to Permit Oral Authorization for Video Conferencing Tools by Patent Examiners" 80 Fed. Reg. 23787

Link: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-04-29/pdf/2015-10051.pdf>

Oral Authorization is for ONE TIME only within an application. For example, if an application requires multiple video conferencing interviews, applicant should give Oral authorization for each video conference interview.

AIR form

The Automated Interview Request (AIR) form is a new way for applicant to schedule an interview using the Internet, e.g., an alternative to leaving an examiner voicemail to schedule an interview. After the form is submitted, the examiner will respond to confirm the request or propose a new date/time. The examiner may also request additional information, e.g., requesting an agenda if one is not provided. The AIR form also provides a link to form SB/0439 which can be used for internet authorization.

Applicant can easily find the AIR form on our external website USPTO.gov by typing "AIR form" in the text search box or going to the external interview practice website:

<http://www.uspto.gov/interviewpractice> by clicking on "Complete the form"

Interview Preparation

Interview Preparation covered a refresher on the following two main areas:

- Familiarizing yourself with the application which included requesting an agenda, reviewing the record, and consulting others if needed.
- WebEx tips which included scheduling; obtaining written authorization; and starting the WebEx interview at least 15 min. early.

WebEx Refresher

Refresher portion included general reminders and tool review which included dialing-in, becoming presenter, and document sharing. Training also highlighted following WebEx milestones:

2012 - USPTO introduced WebEx as primary video conferencing tool and provided initial training on WebEx.

2013 – USPTO provided refresher WebEx training.

2014 - All examiners certified in WebEx by conducting 1-on-1 training with SPE.

2015 - USPTO provides updated WebEx refresher training.

Interview Principles

Covered USPTO guiding interview principles such as all requests for face-to-face interviews by the applicant should normally be granted, and a request for SPE participation by the applicant will also normally be granted. Also emphasized that some Applicants believe in-person interviews tend to be more productive and are highly valued by our stakeholders.

Public Interview Room Overview

A Public Interview Room is a video conference room on each USPTO campus designated for Applicants to use to connect and collaborate with examiners that are working remotely or at a different USPTO campus, which are different from regular interview rooms. Training covered internal procedures required to reserve a room. Reservation must be made at least two business days prior to interview.

Available Interview Resources

To further assist Examiners and Stakeholders in facilitating effective interviews, an Interview Specialist position has been created in each TC to be a subject matter expert in interview practice and serve as a resource. The list of TC Specialist can be found here:

<http://www.uspto.gov/patent/laws-and-regulations/interview-practice/interview-specialist>

Additional resources can be found on our external interview practice website:

<http://www.uspto.gov/interviewpractice>