

Invitation to Participate in Roundtables on Examination Time Goals

The USPTO recently began an initiative to conduct a holistic study of examination time goals. The Office published a Federal Register Notice on October 25, 2016 to announce the effort to external stakeholders and obtain their feedback.

The last assignment of expectancies for examination time was over 40 years ago, with only two minor adjustments during that time. Over the years, significant changes to the examination process have occurred, including increased complexity of application subject matter, exponential growth of available prior art, increased demand for more detailed office actions, use of electronic tools and changes in interpretation of law due to court decisions. In addition, because the current examination time goals were assigned based on the United States Patent Classification system, the USPTO's transition to the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) has caused the Office to reassess the assignment of examination time goals. Further, the Office's commitment to enhanced quality continues to shape best practices for examination time. All of these factors will be assessed in our wide reaching effort to analyze examination time.

Of course, no endeavor of this magnitude would be complete without hearing from our stakeholder community. The Office plans to use the public feedback as an input to help ensure that the Office's examination time goals accurately reflect the amount of time needed by examiners to conduct quality examination in a manner that responds to stakeholders' interests.

A complete description of the opportunities to participate, as well as the Federal Register Notice, can be found at the Examination Time Analysis (ETA) Outreach website - <http://www.uspto.gov/patent/initiatives/eta-external-outreach>.

The ETA Outreach effort will include a series of interactive roundtable events to share ideas, feedback, and experiences. Each event will consist of a:

- Panel presentation on the use of examination time goals in the context of individual examiner evaluation and as an input into the model used to forecast pendency and hiring needs.
- Forum for informal and interactive discussion on the insights and interests of attendees with respect to examination time goals and quality, pendency, cost for services, and/or other topics related to the Request for Comments that may be informative.

The Roundtable events will be conducted in Alexandria, Virginia; Dallas, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; Denver, Colorado; and San Jose, California.

Information on the first two roundtables to be conducted in Alexandria, Virginia and Dallas, Texas is below:

Dates:

- The Alexandria roundtable will be held on Monday, November 14, 2016, beginning at 9:00 am Eastern Standard Time (EST) and ending at 11:00 am EST.
 - The Alexandria roundtable will include a virtual option for online participation.
 - Registration to attend the Alexandria roundtable is requested by November 7, 2016.

- The Dallas roundtable will be held on Tuesday, November 29, 2016, beginning at 10:00 am Central Standard Time (CST) and ending at 12:00 pm CST.
 - Registration to attend the Dallas roundtable is requested by November 22, 2016.

Addresses:

- The Alexandria roundtable will be held at USPTO Headquarters in the Madison Building, Madison Auditorium, Concourse Level, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria, VA, 22314.
- The Dallas roundtable will be held at the USPTO's Texas Regional Office in the Terminal Annex Federal Building, 207 S. Houston Street, Suite 159, Dallas, TX, 75202.

Information on the roundtables to be conducted in Detroit, Michigan, Denver, Colorado, and San Jose, California will be provided at <http://www.uspto.gov/patent/initiatives/eta-external-outreach> as soon as it becomes available.

Registration:

Registration is required, and early registration is recommended because seating is limited. There is no fee to register for either roundtable, and registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration on the day of either roundtable will be permitted on a space-available basis beginning 30 minutes before the roundtable.

To register, please send an e-mail message to ExternalExaminationTimeStudy@USPTO.gov and provide the following information: (1) your name, title, and if applicable, company or organization, address, phone number, and e-mail address; and (2) which roundtable you wish to attend. If you wish to attend the Alexandria, VA event, please state if you plan to attend virtually or in-person. Each attendee, even if from the same organization, must register separately. If you need special accommodations, e.g., due to a disability, please inform the contact person upon receipt of registration.