



# Careers in Ideas *Summer of IP 2026* launch event

Andrea Brewster OBE (she/her)  
Lead Executive Officer, IP Inclusive  
13 May 2026



# Introduction to Careers in Ideas

Andrea Brewster OBE  
Lead Executive Officer  
IP Inclusive

# Careers in Ideas

*Summer of IP 2026*

Launch event 13 May 2026



- Raising awareness of IP-related careers
- Improving access
- Diversifying the pool that the IP professions recruit from
- For all IP sector careers (including “business support”)
- For all diversity strands, not just for example gender balance or social mobility



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# *Careers in Ideas: What we do*



- Information, events and resources for students and their advisers
- Resources to support IP professionals' careers outreach activities
- Mentoring Hub
- Building relationships, to help us reach the recruits who most need our information and support:
  - With relevant charities and community interest groups
  - With schools, colleges and universities
- Working with IP sector organisations (for example employers, membership bodies and regulators) to improve access and fair recruitment



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# *Careers in Ideas: What we do*



- Website:  
<https://careersinideas.org.uk/>
- Showcases all sorts of IP-related careers:
  - Basic information, for example job description, entry requirements and essential skills, prospects
  - “Ideas People” personal stories



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# Careers in Ideas and IP Inclusive



- Careers in Ideas is the outreach arm of [IP Inclusive](#)
- IP Inclusive's aims:
  - To promote and improve equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing in the UK's IP professions
- *We can't do that without a diverse pipeline of new recruits*
  - Equally, there's no point bringing in diversity if it isn't welcomed and nurtured within the sector



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# Contact details

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- Summer of IP 2026:
  - <https://careersinideas.org.uk/summer-of-ip-2026/>
- Mentoring Hub:
  - <https://careersinideas.org.uk/mentoring-hub/>
- Socials:
  - LinkedIn: [Careers in Ideas](#)
  - Instagram: [careersinideas](#)
- Email: [contact@careersinideas.org.uk](mailto:contact@careersinideas.org.uk)
- IP Inclusive:
  - <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/>
  - [contact@ipinclusive.org.uk](mailto:contact@ipinclusive.org.uk)
  - LinkedIn: [IP Inclusive](#)



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# Introduction to the Summer of IP 2026

Helen Smith  
IP Inclusive

# Summer of IP 2026

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- A series of free events and activities through the summer of 2026
- Raising awareness of IP sector careers
- Opportunities to learn about the various careers in IP, gain practical experience of an IP workplace and meet IP professionals
- Intended for anyone interested in careers in IP - secondary school, college and university students, graduates, career changers



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# *Summer of IP – Careers in Ideas events*



- General introductory events and resources from Careers in Ideas
- A range of topics: what IP is, different types of IP, different IP careers and roles, workplaces, application procedures and tips...and more
- Pre-recorded resources available from June 2026
- Live events in June and July with the chance to ask questions – bookings will open soon
- Recordings (and slides if appropriate) available afterwards
- Informal 'coffee dates' with IP professionals
- More details at: <https://careersinideas.org.uk/summer-of-ip-2026/information-for-participants-summer-of-ip-2026/>



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# *Summer of IP – Employer activities*



- Opportunities, activities and events from individual IP sector employers
- Taster events, Workshops, Informal networking and coffee dates, Work experience placements and more
- Get a feel for what it's like to work in IP
- Events are listed on our [Events webpage](#) and more will be added throughout the summer
- Apply directly to the organiser of the activity
- Hurry: places are limited and there are application deadlines to meet!



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- Full details via the Summer of IP webpage <https://careersinideas.org.uk/summer-of-ip-2026/>
- Sign up for our live introductory events via the [Events Calendar](#)
- Pre-recorded events and event recordings will be available on [our Introductory events webpage](#)
- Find out about and sign up for employer activities and events via the [Events Calendar](#)
- Sign up for a coffee date with an IP professional in your area of interest on the [Coffee dates webpage](#)



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# Introduction to IP and why it matters

Thomas Hailes

IP Counsel

DSM-Firmenich

# What is IP?

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**Intellectual Property** = good ideas, e.g. inventions, designs, brands, art, music, software

- Allows creators to protect their ideas and profit from them
- Work in IP = Protect ideas from unwanted copying

Protected in law by **patents, designs, copyright, trademarks, etc.**



# *IP protection benefits everyone*

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- Ideas are £ in today's economy - IP enables owning & profiting from them
- Protects & encourages world-changing innovation – from your phone to your clothes, IP shapes the world around us!
- Disclosure of **patents** adds to public knowledge, fostering further innovation and solving problems, making everyone's life better
- **Trademarks** help consumers trust what they buy



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# Diverse career opportunities in IP

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IP offers diverse career opportunities!



- **Law?** Become an IP solicitor or barrister
- **Business?** Join an in-house IP team at a company
- **STEM?** Help protect inventions as a patent attorney
- **Creative?** Work in trademarks, designs or copyright
- **Other options:** Civil service, academia, publishing, IT
- **Indirect roles:** Marketing, finance, admin, HR



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# *The IP sector needs you!*

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## **Five reasons** to choose an IP career:

1. Increasingly vital to the economy & rapidly growing
2. Rewarding work protecting world-changing innovation
3. Intellectually and financially rewarding, with great salaries & benefits
4. Global opportunities
5. The IP sector wants YOU!

**So what are you waiting for?** Get ahead of the curve in this lesser-known but high-potential field!

Learn more at [careersinideas.org.uk](https://careersinideas.org.uk)



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# Patent Attorney role

Georgia Rundle

Trainee Patent Attorney

Marks & Clerk LLP

# Role: Patent Attorney

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- 2017 – 2021
  - Durham University: Integrated Masters in Biology
- 2021 – 2022
  - A year trying things out...
- 2022 – today
  - Marks & Clerk, Trainee Patent Attorney



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# *Role: Patent Attorney*



## **My Role:**

- Work under two partners of the firm – “inherited” cases
- Drafting patent applications
- Responding to examination reports
- Client care
- Networking events

## **Skills Used:**

- Communication e.g., complex ideas to people with varying technical understanding
- Literary skills – writing
- Comprehension – finding differences between a client’s technology and a competitors
- ‘Soft’ people skills



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# *Role: Patent Attorney*



## **Role Requirements:**

- At least a 2:1 or above in a STEM bachelors degree from a ‘top’ university
- Strong, consistent academic record
- Preferably have some research or industry experience
- Individuals with Bachelor’s degree, Masters, PhD or PostDoc’s are all welcome
- Strong writing skills that is concise, coherent and accurate

## **Personal Traits:**

- You enjoy reading and writing and are considered good at it!
- You are happy with a desk job and enjoy “locking in” on tasks
- You are curious about how things work and generally grasp ideas quickly
- You can explain complex concepts in simpler terms or in a concise manner
- You accept the exams (and typically are quite good at them) – exams are a non-negotiable part of the early role
- Interest in commercial side of companies



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# *Role: Patent Attorney*



## **Positives:**

- Work on a wide variety of subject matter
- Interesting
- Intellectually stimulating (most of the time)
- More '9 to 5' than other areas of law
- Well paid, corporate benefits available
- Allows you to pursue a career in science without being lab/industry based

## **Negatives:**

- EXAMS! Not '9 to 5' during exam period
- Long training period - 4 to 6 years until qualification
- Heavily deadline-orientated
- Performance structures (billing targets)
- Family will probably never understand what your job 'actually is'...



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# Role: Patent Attorney



Step 1: Research the role

- Is this right for you?
- Can you get some experience (e.g., summer internship)?
- Reach out to an existing trainee patent attorney for a call!

Step 2: Research the jobs

- What type of place do you want to work? In house or in a firm?
- Large company or small company?
- What exam help do they give?

Step 3: Apply

- You've got to be in it to win it
- It is competitive – more applications increases your chances?

Step 4: Interview

Step 5: Start a position



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# Trade Mark Attorney role

Tiernan Graham

Trade Mark Attorney

Dehns

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# *Role: Trade Mark Attorney*



- Graduated from the University of Bristol in 2021 (undergraduate degree in Law and a master's degree in International Law), and started working at Dehns as a Trade Mark Assistant in October that year.
- Studied an Intellectual Property module during second year of university, and also gained work experience shadowing barristers during college.
- Passed QMUL PG Cert in TM Law and Practice in 2023 (=part-qualified).
- Passed NTU TM Practice Certificate in 2024 (=fully qualified).



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# *Role: Trade Mark Attorney*



- Advising clients on, and assisting with, the protection and enforcement of their trade marks. These can include business names, product names, logos and slogans, as well as more unusual signs such as shapes, sounds, and colour combinations. Protection involves clearance searching/availability advice and then prosecution/registration, and enforcement involves opposition proceedings, cease and desist letters, etc.
- It's a very commercial area of IP – commercial agreements relating to trade marks are very common (coexistence, assignments, licencing).
- Also advise on related issues such as designs, copyright, and domain name/company name disputes.



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# *Role: Trade Mark Attorney*



- Most employers will likely be looking for candidates to achieve a 2.1 undergraduate degree. However, unlike the patent attorney job role, there are no specific subject requirements to be a Trade Mark Attorney (language skills are advantageous but not essential).
- Any experience to show an interest in IP/law would help (e.g. a work experience or placement scheme), but again is not essential.
- Key skills: organisation, attention to detail, strong written and oral communication, research ability – think about examples from your degree or any part-time work that showcase these.



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# *Role: Trade Mark Attorney*



- **Diverse client base.** Every business, in every commercial field, has a trade mark – this means working with companies of all sizes, and learning about industries you might not have come across before. This keeps the job fresh and interesting.
- **Community.** The TMA profession is small, and so you get to know colleagues in the UK and overseas quite well.
- **Time-pressure.** Timescales for trade mark matters tend to be shorter than for patents (weeks/1-2 months, rather than 6 months+).
- **Billing!** (Although this is less relevant at the training stage, and is a feature of most legal jobs.)



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# Role: Trade Mark Attorney



- Be prepared to do your own research – there seems to be quite limited awareness of the Trade Mark Attorney job role and career path amongst Careers Services, so you might have to put in more time to find out about the opportunities that are available.
- Research different firms so you can make an informed decision about where you would like to work.
- Engage with news stories about IP – certain disputes get picked up by mainstream media and being able to talk about and have an opinion on these is really valuable in an interview.
- Check your CV and Cover Letter *over and over* again!



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# IP Support roles

Daniel John

Director

IP Support, The Law Support Group

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# *Introduction to me and my career*



- I'm a Director at IP Support, specialising in the recruitment of IP and business services professionals.
- I previously worked in a range of IP support roles across several leading UK practices and in-house legal teams.
- That background gives me a practical, insider understanding of how these roles work day-to-day.
- I moved into recruitment over 12 years ago, driven by the opportunity to help others build and progress their careers in IP.
- Now, I work closely with both candidates and employers in the IP sector, supporting growth and providing staffing solutions across all business services functions.



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# *IP business services*



- Business services functions work alongside attorneys and provide a range of legal and operational services
- They include areas such as:
  - Patent, Trade Mark, and IP Paralegal teams
  - Formalities and Records teams
  - HR, Finance, Business Development, IT, and Project Management
- Paralegal and Formalities teams play a critical role in the IP process, managing filings, deadlines, and the maintenance of IP rights. Over the past decade, their role has evolved into one of significant importance, continuing to grow in responsibility and value
- Other business support teams focus on areas such as people, finance, systems, and business growth, ensuring the firm runs efficiently
- It's a collaborative environment where different teams work together to support legal and commercial outcomes



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# Role requirements



- Strong attention to detail and organisation
  - Ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines
  - Good communication skills
  - Problem-solving mindset and adaptability
  - Commercial awareness and interest in how businesses operate
- 
- For most roles there is no qualification requirements, however, relevant qualifications can support progression depending on the area:
    - CIPA / CITMA Para courses and more recent advanced qualifications like the EPAC and APPC
    - CIPD (HR)
    - CIM (business development / marketing)
    - AAT / ACCA (finance)
- 
- Many employers will support you through these qualifications while you work



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# *Positives and negatives*



## **Positives:**

- Exposure to leading global brands, innovative companies, and new technologies
- Wide variety of career paths across different business services functions
- Strong opportunities for progression and professional qualifications
- Transferable skills that can open doors across industries
- Increasing recognition of business services as a specialist, skilled career
- Strong financial progression with a good work/life balance

## **Negatives:**

- Demanding deadline-driven environment across many teams
- High expectations around accuracy and consistency
- Some roles can feel repetitive early on
- Learning curve can be steep depending on the function or area
- Roles can be highly competitive. You need to stand out and make noise in a crowded market



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# *How to enter the profession*



- Most employers use a blend of direct and agency recruitment
- Agencies like IP Support can:
  - Help you understand the market and available opportunities
  - Match you to roles that suit your skills and long-term goals
  - Provide guidance on CVs, interviews, and career progression
- Entry routes include:
  - Applying directly to IP employers for entry-level roles
  - Internships and trainee schemes (now available across most business support functions, not just legal roles)
  - Apprenticeships or graduate programmes
- Practical tips:
  - Show attention to detail in your application
  - Demonstrate interest in business, law, or innovation
  - Highlight transferable skills — organisation, teamwork, communication
  - Be open-minded — entry roles can lead to strong long-term careers





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# IP Solicitor role

Alex Driver

Principal Associate

Gowling WLG LLP

# Role: IP Solicitor

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## Career summary to date:

- Principal Associate in IP team at Gowling WLG
- Focus on patent litigation (10+ years' experience)
  - Tech
  - Life Sciences
  - Things in between...
- Background in Engineering Science (Masters), then conversion into Law



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# Role: IP Solicitor



## Brief summary of the role:

- Working with clients to understand options to protect / defend against patents (monopoly rights)
- In some cases advising how to avoid litigation
- Pre-litigation work
- Once in litigation coordinating all the conduct of litigation
  - Preparing pleadings and investigation of factual framework
  - Letters to the other side (usually stropky!)
  - Coordinating with barristers for hearings
  - Working with experts / witnesses and drafting evidence
  - Coordinating trial prep and procedures
- NOT – patent filing
- NOT – transactional IP



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# Role: IP Solicitor

## Role Requirements:



- Science degree can be useful e.g. biochemistry / chemistry for Life Sciences cases, but not necessary.
- Clients want the strategic insight / analytical / coordination / drafting skills from solicitors and understand others in the team will provide the scientific knowledge.
- Good drafting, attention to detail, time management, ability to break down an issue are all necessary skills.
- Ability to pre-empt by being able to stand back and see the situation from different sides.
- University degree no longer necessary.



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# Role: IP Solicitor



## Positives and Negatives of the role:

- Intellectually rewarding
- Covers different scientific fields
- Work with wide variety of individuals (e.g. clients, barristers, experts). All those people are enthusiastic and engaged. Most are top of their game e.g. Nobel Prize winners
- Teamwork
- Ability to plan workload (compared to say corporate law)
- Often more science than law
- Reasonably well-defined career progression
- Opportunities for travel
- Winning clients / revenue can be difficult at more senior levels



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# Role: IP Solicitor

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## Application tips and advice:



- Show enthusiasm
  - What areas of law are of interest?
  - Why are you interested in those areas?
  - What recent developments have there been which you have been following?
  - Understand the commercial implications
- Know what a solicitor does and what a barrister does. What's the difference?
- Accurate drafting is one of the most important skills of being a solicitor. Demonstrate it!
- Work experience. Anything in the legal field is good. If it's outside that field what are the transferrable skills?



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# IP Barrister role

Becky Knott

Barrister

Hogarth Chambers

# Role: IP Barrister

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- English Language and Literature.
- Qualified Trade Mark Attorney (2018) and Trade Mark Attorney Litigator (2020).
- Graduate Diploma in Law.
- Bar Transfer Test.
- Called to the Bar, November 2022.
- Pupillage with Hogarth Chambers, April 2023.
- Tenancy with Hogarth Chambers, April 2024+.



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# Role: IP Barrister

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- **Area of IP:**
  - Trade Marks, Copyright, Designs, Breach of Confidence.
- **Summary of the role:**
  - Advising on potential litigation (starting/avoiding).
  - Advocacy in a range of forums.
  - Written submissions.
  - Reviewing evidence.

# Role: IP Barrister

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- **Role requirements:**
  - Law degree/GDL + non-law degree.
  - Bar Practice Course.
  - 12 months of pupillage.
- **Tips to enter the profession:**
  - Advocacy experience.
  - Mini pupillages.
  - Speak to as many people as possible.



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# Role: IP Barrister

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- **Positives:**
  - Self-employment: freedom.
  - Variation.
  - Satisfying.
- **Negatives:**
  - Self-employment: uncertainty.
  - Stress: responsibility.
  - Sometimes very long hours.



# IP Office Examiner roles

Philip Lawrence

Senior Patent Examiner

Intellectual Property Office

# Role: Intellectual Property Office

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## What is the Intellectual Property Office?

- The IPO is part of the Civil Service
- In charge of IP rights registration and IP policy (domestic and international)
- Approximately 1,600 staff
- Based in Newport, South Wales with a London office



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# *Role: Intellectual Property Office*

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## **Jobs at the IPO**

- Patent examiners – STEM background
- Trade mark and design examiners
- Trade Mark hearing officers – legal background
- Policy staff
- IT staff
- Admin staff



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# *Role: Intellectual Property Office*

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## **Benefits of working at the IPO/the individual roles**

- Lots!!
- Varied workload
- Wider development opportunities
- Work/life balance
- Being part of the Civil Service



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# *Role: Intellectual Property Office*

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## **How to find out about IPO careers**

- Civil Service jobs
- LinkedIn/Facebook
- [www.IPO.gov.uk](http://www.IPO.gov.uk)



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# How to apply

Becky Brooks

Senior Associate, Patent Attorney

Mewburn Ellis

# Resources - Information

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- [IP Careers Website](#)
- [Government website](#)
- [UKIPO channel](#)
- [IPKat blog](#)
  
- Patents: [EPO website](#)
- Trade Marks and Designs: [EUIPO website](#)
- Trade Marks: [The Fashion Law](#)



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# Resources – How to apply

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- [IP Careers Website](#)
- LinkedIn
- Company websites:
  - Open days
  - Internships
  - Trainee roles
- Recruitment agencies



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# *Recruitment process*



- Trainee Attorney roles (private practice):
  - Yearly recruitment cycles
  - CV + Cover letter
  - Two-stage interview process: technical and non-technical
- Paralegal/administrator roles:
  - Apply direct or through recruitment agencies



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# Recruitment process

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- Examiner roles:
  - Apply through Civil Service Jobs website
  - Interview – questions and interactive tasks
- Solicitor roles:
  - Vacation Schemes
  - Training Contract



# Careers in Ideas Mentoring Scheme

Anne Burgato

IP Inclusive

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# *Careers in Ideas Mentoring Scheme*



## **What is it?**

- Aims to help would-be recruits navigate their way into the IP professions
- Improving access and diversifying the pool that the IP professions recruit from
- <https://careersinideas.org.uk/mentoring-hub/>



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# *Careers in Ideas Mentoring Scheme*



## **Why was the mentoring scheme set up?**

- A formal mentoring process helps achieve one of the IP Inclusive and Careers in Ideas goals of making the profession more accessible
- An appetite from the profession to support diversified recruitment
- Outreach work indicates that there are talented candidates with much to contribute but insufficient access to information and support to enter the profession



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# Careers in Ideas Mentoring Scheme

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## Who is it for?

- Undergraduates and recent graduates
- Post-graduate and postdoctoral students
- Professionals seeking a career change into or within IP
- Applicants having trouble getting their foot in the door



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# *Careers in Ideas Mentoring Scheme*

## How we administer the mentoring scheme



- The mentoring itself is provided by volunteer mentors
- The online MentorLoop platform hosts and administers the mentoring programme, including a mentor-mentee messaging system and feedback
- Mentors provided with training on IP Inclusive formal requirements and Mentoring Skills
- Mentors enter onto scheme following completion of training
- Mentee applications reviewed and approved by the mentoring admin team



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# Careers in Ideas Mentoring Scheme

## How the mentoring scheme works



- Once approved into the scheme, mentees self-match to mentors
- Contact encouraged via MentorLoop platform
- The mentoring relationship is 1:1
- Relationship is driven by the mentee and mentor – there is no set agenda or requirements
- Meeting frequency and duration as agreed between mentor and mentee.
- A typical mentoring relationship is between 1 and 3 months
- Mentees may only have one mentor at a given time.



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# Careers in Ideas Mentoring Scheme

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## Useful addresses

- Mentoring scheme admin team
  - [mentoring@careersinideas.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@careersinideas.org.uk)
- Websites
  - <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/careers-in-ideas-mentoring-hub/>
  - <https://careersinideas.org.uk/mentoring-hub>



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# Thank you!

Q&A breakout sessions...