

Hong Kong residents to take "National Qualification Examination for Patent Agents"

Starting from this year, Hong Kong residents will be able to take the "National Qualification Examination for Patent Agents" administered by the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) and seek to qualify as patent agent in the Mainland afterwards.

Previously the Examination has only been open to Chinese nationals in the Mainland. As an initiative under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and following discussions between the HKSAR Intellectual Property Department and SIPO, the latter has now agreed to open the Examination to eligible Hong Kong residents. The next Examination is scheduled to be held in October this year in eight Mainland cities including Shenzhen.

Hong Kong residents wishing to take the Examination have to meet the following requirements:

- * Being permanent residents of HKSAR with Chinese citizenship;
- * Possessing graduate qualifications in the field of science or engineering from a tertiary institution in the Mainland, HKSAR or Macao or equivalent qualifications accepted by the Chinese Ministry of Education;
- * Having attained the age of 18;
- * Having two years' post qualification working experience in applied science or the legal field.

"Hong Kong residents who have passed the Examination can apply to obtain the Mainland 'Patent Agent Work Permit' after working as an apprentice in a Mainland patent agency for one year. Patent protection in the Mainland is given to inventions, utility models and designs. SIPO received over 300,000 patent applications in 2003 and anticipates that the number of applications will continue to increase in the coming years. This suggests that there is going to be increasing demand for patent agency services in the Mainland," said an Intellectual Property Department spokesman.

Applications for the October Examination can be submitted in person to the Intellectual Property Department at 24/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wanchai during the period from 30 April to 30 June 2004. For more details about the Examination and the application procedure, please visit the website of the

Intellectual Property Department: "<http://www.info.gov.hk/ipd/>". For enquiries, please contact the Intellectual Property Department through the following email address: john.wong@ipd.gov.hk

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