

EIP

UKIPO Fee Increases from April 2026: What It Means for Your IP Strategy

Overview

The UK Intellectual Property Office (UKIPO) has announced its first major fee increase in years, effective 1 April 2026. This change will affect patents, trade marks, and designs, with fees rising by an average of 25%. While the adjustment reflects inflation and operational costs, it also supports investment in modernising services, including the introduction of the new OnelPO system. Despite these changes, UKIPO fees will remain among the most competitive globally, maintaining the UK's reputation as a cost-effective choice for first filings.

When Was the Last Fee Increase?

The UKIPO has maintained stable fees for a remarkably long period. Patent fees were last increased in 2018, design fees in 2016, and trade mark fees have remained unchanged since 1998. This extended freeze means that even after the upcoming rise, UKIPO fees will still be relatively low compared to other major IP offices, maintaining the UK's reputation as a budget-friendly jurisdiction for IP protection.

What's Changing in April 2026?

From April 2026, the official fees for filing and maintaining IP rights in the UK will increase. For example, the online patent application fee will rise from £60 to £75, and the patent search fee will go up from £150 to £200. Renewal fees will see the most significant changes, with the cost of renewing a patent in its 20th year jumping from £610 to £810.

Why UK First Filing Still Makes Sense

Despite this, filing your patent application first in the UK remains a smart and competitive strategy. It provides an affordable route for claiming priority under the Paris Convention and offers access to the UKIPO's relatively efficient examination process. Many businesses value this approach for its fairly speedy process and its cost advantages when compared to filing first in other jurisdictions such as the European Patent Office (EPO) or the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

However, filing first in the UK may not always be available, particularly if the invention was devised outside the UK, has foreign national inventors and/or applicants, or other local filing requirements apply. It is recommended to speak to an EIP patent professional for tailored advice.

Strategic Recommendations

With these changes on the horizon, businesses should act now to optimise their IP strategy:

- **File new applications before 31 March 2026** to lock in current fees
- **Renew early:** up to three months in advance for patents, six months for trade marks and designs
- **Review IP budgets** and update cost forecasts
- **Audit your portfolio** to reassess non-core rights

What About the EPO?

The EPO typically reviews its fees annually, and while no official announcement has been made yet, an increase in 2026 can also be expected. EIP will continue to monitor developments and provide updates once details are confirmed.

Next Steps

We encourage clients to speak to EIP to plan filings and renewals ahead of the April 2026 deadline. Acting now can help mitigate the impact of these changes and ensure your IP strategy remains cost-effective.

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