

EIP



National Careers Week: How I started my career in IP by Tom Swift

In support of National Careers Week, trainee patent attorney, Tom Swift discusses his journey into IP and gives advice to others looking to start a career in IP.

Hi Tom, what initially attracted you to a career in IP?

I have a passion for applied science and technology. I was attracted to a career in IP by the challenge and the opportunity to engage with the forefront of innovation.

Did you set out to get any specific skills/experience before starting your career?

I strived to gain experience of as broad a range of science and technology as possible. This has enabled me to work for clients across different specialisms. A key skill for IP law is drafting patents and communications; therefore, I also practiced technical writing.

How did you begin working at EIP?

Before I started at EIP I was a fellow in the physical chemistry department at the University of Bristol. I had collaborated with several local companies to deliver innovation and this inspired me to pursue a career in intellectual property. I joined EIP as a patent scientist last September.

What are some valuable technical skills you have learnt so far?

I have been fortunate to have already worked for several different clients which has enabled me to develop technical skills across a wide range of patent law. The most valuable of these skills is probably the ability to analyse third-party patents and prior art documents when considering validity, patentability, and infringement.

What did you wish you knew before you became a trainee patent attorney?

I wish that I had known that no one expects you to know everything when you start training. There is a lot to learn when training as a patent attorney, much of which can only be learnt through experience: everyone in the profession understands that.

Do you have any advice for others looking to start a career in IP?

I would recommend obtaining as much experience of IP and different IP employers as you can. It is important to find a specialism and workplace that suits both your technical expertise and your personality. I would also suggest reading as much as you can, there are many books, articles, and even blogs on IP law. Many of these sources are well written and can contribute to your understanding of the IP profession.

If you are considering your career options, please reach out to us for a non-committal conversation about your future in IP at: careers@eip.com.