

# Patents

Patents protect new, original ideas and inventions by registration

Registered Patents are renewable after 4 years then every year up to 20yrs. Meanwhile they can be licensed to others for commercial exploitation

In order to qualify for Patent protection, the idea/invention must be:

- a product or process (not a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work)
- capable of industrial application, having a technical effect
- completely new, unique, or a new inventive step in an existing process
- unknown anywhere in the world before filing (kept secret)
- not obvious to anyone with knowledge and experience in the subject

***N.B.*** It is important to keep ideas secret as there is a strict requirement for novelty/originality.

UK Patent applications are made through the [Intellectual Property Office \(IPO\)](#), or for UK and European filings through the [European Patents Office \(EPO\)](#). Applications can take a long time to approve, as they need to undergo all the necessary tests into originality and functionality.

Permission may be granted before applying for patent protection outside the UK and can be applied for separately via:

[EPO European Patent Office](#),

[PCT Patent Co-operation Treaty](#), via WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization, or Direct to Country of trade if not under any Treaty.

For detailed information and advice, see the [Intellectual Property Office \(IPO\)](#) website.

For more information on Middlesex Intellectual Property please see

[Intellectual Property Rights: Students](#)

A small claims track has recently been launched at the Patent County Court to hear cases of copyright infringement, which would otherwise have been too expensive for the victim to pursue:

<http://www.itma.org.uk/news/2012-09/patent-county-court-reform>

For general copyright advice, email the Copyright Officer [Kate Vasili](#)