



Driving greater inclusion and diversity

The IP Federation's commitment to improving diversity and inclusion in the IP professions has been led by the dedicated D&I working group formed last year.

Following the work on the IP Inclusive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Charter, the group has focused upon the Senior Leaders' Pledge. This has been an initiative of IP Inclusive which has been very successful with IP professionals working in private practice. It comprises a series of personal commitments to be made by senior leaders in an organisation to their actions to improve diversity and inclusion. It was identified that some of these pledge commitments might be difficult for an employee of a large organisation with its own diversity policies and strategies. A new Senior Leaders' Pledge for leaders of departments in larger organisations, including our IP Federation members, has been agreed and will be launched over the next few months. This will allow our members to demonstrate their personal commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The IP Federation has continued to support outreach activities in 2022 that aim to promote and widen access to STEM careers and the IP professions.

IP Inclusive's [Careers in Ideas](#) mentoring scheme was developed to help individuals interested in careers in the IP professions by pairing would-be recruits with mentors. Members of the IP Federation D&I working group (Julie Browne (Shell), Gordon Harris (Gowling WLG) and Jane Swift (Johnson Matthey)) have acted as mentors in 2022 for this excellent initiative.

In2scienceUK Workshop on Intellectual Property Careers (19 August 2022)

In2scienceUK is an organisation committed to promoting social mobility and diversity in STEM. They empower young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve their potential through life-changing opportunities that give them insights into STEM careers and research and boosts their skills and confidence.

The event was directed at children of secondary school age yet to make decisions about which career path to follow.

Vikki Townsend (Senior Patent Attorney, Rolls-Royce plc. and member of the IP Federation D&I working group) opened the talk on IP careers by sharing her own background as the child of a single, unemployed parent growing up in an industrial northern town in Thatcher's Britain attending the local state school. She explained children like her were not expected to achieve at university and succeed in professional careers, but with the encouragement and support of her father and a couple of good teachers she was able to do so. The panel of atypical IP professionals all had similar personal stories to tell.

Vikki went on to explain the goals of the IP Federation and IP Inclusive to encourage a more diverse pool of applicants to join the profession and to retain this talent by supporting them in their careers through initiatives such as the mentoring programme.

After a brief introduction into what IP is, Vikki went on to summarise the various STEM careers available in the IP profession including: patent attorney, patent examiner, patent analyst, patent

engineer, patent searcher and, of course, inventor! She continued by speaking more about the skills needed to be a patent attorney as distinct from the qualifications, and summarising her own experiences having worked in industry, government and private practice. To close, Vikki recommended the Careers in Ideas website as a helpful resource to prospective future candidates.

The other panellists, Bobby Smithson (Appleyard Lees IP), Janine Swarbrick (HGF Ltd) and Fred Nicolle (Simmons & Simmons), each shared their personal and inspiring stories and career experiences.

Jo Maniscalco from In2scienceUK sent her gratitude following the successful event.

"I just want to follow up with you after your workshop on Friday to say a massive thank you for your time and contributions!"

I thought the session went really well! You were all really clear and engaging and gave great insights and advice for the students to get thinking about. I hope you enjoyed delivering it and thanks again for taking the time to do so!

We have already collected a bit of feedback from the students and here are some comments I'd like to share with you:

'I really liked this workshop, it was refreshing to hear that you just need to do what you enjoy and that with many of the patent attorneys they didn't actually know what they wanted to do. It was very informative and gave lots of detailed information about the career of a patent attorney.'

'It was good, it gave me a better insight into the different careers and what they involve'

'The workshop was really insightful and eye opening. It definitely gave me a lot to think about and relieved some stress regarding my career options.'"

STEM Women UK Engineering Event (22 September 2022)

This event was directed at women undergraduates currently studying for STEM or combination STEM degrees.

Vikki Townsend joined the panel to talk about her experience as a woman working in a predominantly male engineering sector. She took the opportunity to promote the patents profession as a great STEM career option for women who have studied or worked in engineering, and to raise awareness of the efforts being made by IP Federation members and IP Inclusive to build more diverse work teams, where all people from all genders and backgrounds can feel valued and included.

The event was well attended (oversubscribed, in fact!) and promoted widely on LinkedIn. The organisers gave very positive feedback to the panel.

Vikki Townsend, Rolls-Royce plc
Julie Dunnett, Policy Advisor, IP Federation
Julie Browne, Shell International Ltd