Junior Examiner

**Years Experience:** 1-2 years

**Education:** At least a B.S., often an M.S. in engineering or science (for utility patent examiners)

**Art area knowledge:** Medium

**Patent knowledge:** Low

# Background

Academic and/or professional experience with engineering, science, design, or legal. Have gone through the patent examination academy and have started training with a mentor.

Examiners who are no longer in their probationary period but who have very limited experience.

# Method of Working

The specific style work planning, examination, and writing is very much dependent on the junior examiner’s mentor.

These examiners have much lower expectancies than the other examiners in their art unit, and are still very much in a learning phase. Academically they are likely to have come from an engineering background but skills required to be a successful examiner are very different than those they learned in school or in practice as engineers. In their first year or two on the job, they are:

* Learning the legal and statutory requirements around examination
* Learning how to efficiently read through patent application documents
* Learning how to identify an inventive concept
* Learning how to conduct search
* Learning how to formulate arguments in an office action

Successful work requires significant interaction with their mentor.

# Motivations and Goals

The junior examiner is motivated gain more independence from their mentor, to gain promotion, and to get awards.

Mid-level Examiner

**Years Experience:** 3-6 years

**Education:** At least a B.S., often an M.S. in engineering or science (for utility patent examiners)

**Art area knowledge:** Medium to high

**Patent knowledge:** Medium

# Background

Academic and/or professional experience with engineering, science, design, or legal. The mid-level examiner has been examining for many years and has earned some level of independence but is by no means and independent examiner with full signatory authority. Some office actions can be sent out without review and the examiner will receive credit for all non-final office actions prior to reviewer signature.

# Method of Working

The mid-level examiner is much more independent from his/her mentor. The mentor may only provide cursory reviews to office actions because there is a trust that has been built.

While the mid-level examiner has achieved a certain competency with all of the skills associated with examining, they may still be developing the deep, crystalized knowledge in their art area and are improving their skills, especially around search and potentially in their ability to quickly identify the inventive concept. In general, this examiner type has enough experience to have a sense of whether an application will ultimately be patentable when they first review the application.

# Motivations and Goals

The mid-level examiner is motivated by both promotion and awards, although some mid-level examiners are happy to stay at the GS12 level and not try to become a primary. These examiners may still be highly motivated to get awards, but they are not motivated by promotion.

Junior and Mid-Level Examiners

Changelog

Project: ###### – Project Name

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| Version | Date | Who | Modifications |
| [X.X] | **[XX/XX/XX]** | **[First Last]** | **[Describe what’s changed since the prior version]**  Initial version created based on data collected from focus groups held from 01/23/15 |
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