ID5

ID5 Catalogue of Quality Services Involving Users

In light of the recent increase in the number of design applications, conducting examinations promptly and appropriately is a priority for all the ID5 partners. The Chinese National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) – the ID5 partners – are actively conducting quality management activities in order to guarantee the fastest and highest quality examination processes for users applying to register their designs.

Sharing information on quality management initiatives between the ID5 partner offices has been an ongoing activity over the last few years. For this reason, the ID5 partners launched a new project regarding quality management co-led by the CNIPA and the EUIPO. The main goal of the project is to exchange information regarding quality management initiatives between the five partner offices and to identify quality initiatives with user involvement mainly in the field of designs.

The first step of the project consisted of drafting a questionnaire on the different aspects of quality management implemented throughout the offices for ensuring the best possible quality, services and products for users. This questionnaire was provided by the CNIPA and was answered by all of the ID5 offices.

The second step of the project was related to the development by the EUIPO of a catalogue of quality services involving users. The catalogue includes highlights and examples of services, initiatives and projects in each of the ID5 offices in which users are fully involved. It also shows the efforts that the ID5 partners are currently undertaking to provide users with high quality products and services.

The purpose of this catalogue is to give a systematic overview to the users of the services and initiatives being carried out by each office, as well as to show the impact they have on the quality of the products and services provided to them.

The presentation of the initiatives in this catalogue includes a short description of each service, its goals and objectives, the relevant key figures, and highlights the main benefits for the users.

CNIPA
China National Intellectual Property Administration
CNIPA

QUALITY POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

CNIPA
China National Intellectual Property Administration

The basic examination process at the CNIPA is filing, payment, classification, examination, and grant or refusal. The CNIPA aims to encourage invention-creation; assess all design applications according to the law and in conformity with the requirements of being objective, fair, correct and timely; continuously improve examination; ensure the consistent implementation of standards; correctly conduct examination; and clarify design rights and propriety.

Furthermore, all the information related to quality management at the CNIPA is disseminated internally or externally through meetings with applicants and their attorneys, onsite investigations and workshops, and road shows.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the CNIPA's quality policy is to clarify the examination quality requirements, perfect the examination quality management, and continuously improve the examination quality. Its scope covers all the Plan-Do-Check-Act quality management cycle.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Continuous improvement of examination quality
02	Deliver objective decisions in a timely manner
03	Clarify design rights and propriety

USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

CNIPA
China National Intellectual Property Administration

Once a year, a user satisfaction survey is conducted to gather external users' satisfaction with the CNIPA's examination quality. The CNIPA contracts the survey to a third party through a sampling questionnaire about the preliminary examination, re-examination, invalidation, etc.

This satisfaction survey, which is an external evaluation and part of the 'double supervision, double evaluation' mechanism, objectively reflects the examination quality and indicates the weak links in the quality management method.

The CNIPA communicates the results both internally and externally in order to direct their resources to those areas that require more effort and improvement.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main purpose for conducting the user satisfaction survey is to assess the satisfaction of users with the services as well as to identify goals and priorities for improvement. The annual satisfaction report is used in reviewing the internal quality management method.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Improved quality of products/services
02	Facilitate a constructive dialogue between the CNIPA and users
03	Identify quality defects and other priorities for improvement

COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

CNIPA
China National Intellectual Property Administration

The CNIPA has built multiple channels to receive complaints and consultations, such as the online design examination review platform, the online consultation platform and the hotline. Anyone can review the design applications and the patents through the patent examination review platform. The Patent Examination Administration Department will cooperate with the relevant departments and deal with the reviews.

Additionally, the CNIPA will investigate the relevant application to check whether there is quality defect or other aspects that should be focused in the quality assurance. Moreover, CNIPA will work on the common quality issues by utilising the quality assurance system and the examination guidance system.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of encouraging complaints and/or inquiries from users is to ascertain their experiences, restore satisfaction and further improve products/services by identifying common complaints that can be shared and evaluated.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Identify quality defect or other aspects that require quality assurance
02	Enhanced examination guidance system
03	Improve user communication

EUIPO

EUROPEAN UNION
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE

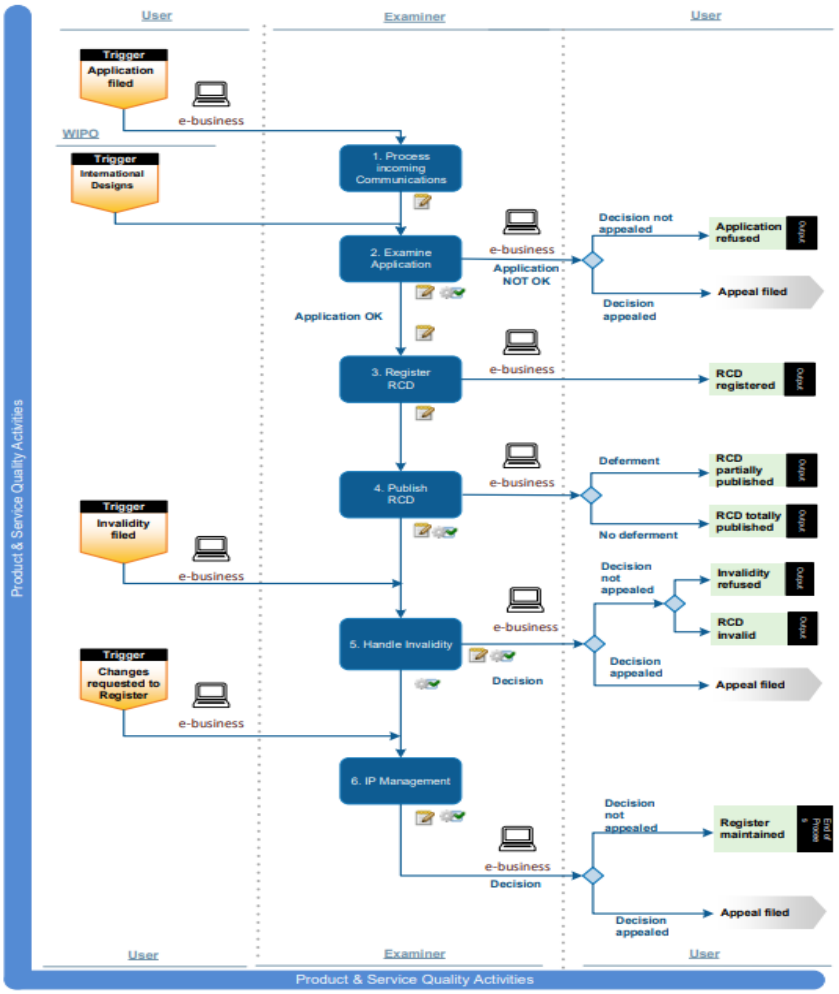
EUIPO

QUALITY POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Quality lies at the heart of the EUIPO's Integrated Management Systems Policy and this is where the EUIPO commits to the highest standards of excellence by continually improving its processes to provide efficient and effective results. The Office's quality policy covers all of its activities.

In order to ensure the registration of intellectual property rights that meet customers' quality standards, the EUIPO has established an integral and comprehensive quality assurance framework.



MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Service Charter is a commitment established in the EUIPO Work Programme which describes the level of service excellence that the EUIPO aims to deliver. The EUIPO aims to provide excellent services which satisfy the three pillars of timeliness, accessibility and quality of decisions. Every quarter the results of the Service Charter are analysed, improvement actions are proposed and the effectiveness of actions taken is evaluated. All of these are reflected in a quarterly report that is published in the intranet and that can be accessed by all EUIPO staff (Knowledge Circle Quality report).

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Improved and efficient processes
02	Suitable, adequate and effective services/products
03	Faster and satisfactory decisions

USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Periodically, the EUIPO carries out a user satisfaction survey to identify goals and priorities for improvement, as well as to assess the satisfaction of their users with the services they provide. The Customer Service department is responsible of this report. User feedback is crucial to the ongoing process of improving quality for all their users and so, since 2005, they have been measuring levels of satisfaction with their services and decisions relating to the registration of trade marks and designs through large-scale satisfaction surveys conducted by independent firms.

The user satisfaction survey is sent by email to the users of their services. These users receive the email with a link to a secure web-based questionnaire from an external market research agency who carries out this survey on the behalf of the EUIPO. The questionnaire can be completed in any of the EUIPO's five working languages. This survey helps the EUIPO to have a clear picture of how users see the EUIPO, what they think of them and the services they provide in various areas including: legal practice, online tools, trade mark and design registration, and customer and information services. Additionally, they have in place an 'immediate feedback' mechanism which measures satisfaction at the end of each process, such as requesting users to provide their feedback at the end of the filing process.

The responses received are analysed and a report is compiled. This report is communicated both internally and externally, and departments are requested to consider any opportunity for improvement highlighted in the report.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to measure the user's satisfaction in a more dynamic way, which also results in more effective, reliable responses from the user about the delivery of the service/product. The main aspect to be measured is the overall satisfaction with the service received.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Enhanced user satisfaction
02	Ensure consistency and predictability of decisions
03	Identify opportunities for improvements

COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

At the EUIPO, the Customer Care team (Customer Department) comprises a First Line and a Second Line Information Centre and a Complaints team. They are responsible for managing the user information and support service, which includes dealing with users' telephone and written queries and providing them with general information on all aspects of the registration procedure.

This team does not, however, have the competence to answer complaints about the legal reasoning of the decisions granted by the EUIPO, including those of the Boards of Appeal. Those are forwarded to the relevant area (Operations Department, Customer Department, Board of Appeals and Legal Affairs Department). Complaints regarding Human Resources issues are handled by Human Resources. The complaint can be submitted via an online form. This is the EUIPO's preferred means of communication since it ensures that the complaint can be handled without any delay. Alternatively, it can be sent via fax or by post.

The EUIPO uses the complaints and inquiries as a source of information regarding the needs of their users, as well as dealing with potential problems and detecting opportunities for improvement across the products and services that the EUIPO offers. Every item of feedback received is analysed and, if needed, the corresponding department defines an improvement action.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Meeting users' expectations also involves an effective and efficient handling of complaints. Therefore, the EUIPO aims to identify the needs of their users and identify potential problems and opportunities for improvement using the complaints and inquiries as a source of information. The EUIPO was one of the first organisations in Spain to hold the ISO 10002:2014 certification.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Detect opportunities for improvement and resolve potential problems
02	Enhanced complaint handling mechanism
03	Invaluable input for departmental action plan

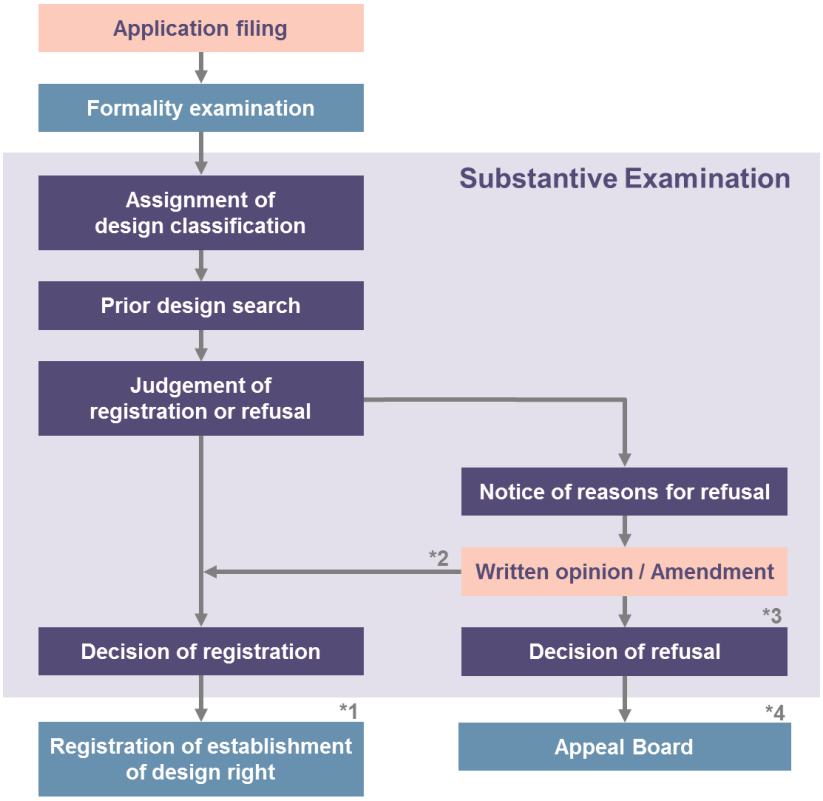
JPO
JAPAN PATENT OFFICE
JPO

QUALITY POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The JPO aims to grant globally reliable design rights of high-quality and to achieve design examination that is of the highest quality in the world. The scope of the JPO's 'Quality Policies on Design Examination' covers the design examination practices that are carried out by the staff of the design division and the design examination divisions.

Furthermore, the relevant information with regards to quality is communicated internally and externally. Internal communications are carried out through meetings, training programs and the JPO's intranet which makes accessible related information and documents. External communications are carried out by the following means: holding meetings with applicants and attorneys; setting up a special committee consisting of external experts; preparing and releasing reports on the examination quality; and uploading related information on the JPO's website.



*1 Subject to the payment of registration fee
*2 When reasons for refusal have been overcome by means of written opinions/amendments
*3 When reasons for refusal have not been overcome
*4 Applicants may file a request for an appeal against the examiner's decision of refusal

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The JPO's quality objectives (numerical targets) concerning design examination consist of: (1) the level of user satisfaction with communications from examiners as collected in the survey; and (2) the number of interviews (oral examination) by examiners by means of visits or video-conferencing.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Further improvement of examination quality
02	Deliver design examination decisions that are of the highest quality in the world
03	Easy accessibility of quality information and related documents

USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The JPO conducts a user satisfaction survey once a year. It targets major applicants and their representatives (attorneys) in the area of design registration. A questionnaire is sent to these users via a specific website, which is inaccessible to the others, asking them to choose one of five levels of satisfaction with the quality of design examination and to give their opinions. By doing so, the JPO can find out the level of user satisfaction. Every year the JPO compiles a report of the survey's results. This report is presented to the design examiners and published on the JPO website.

Additionally, every year or so, the JPO holds meetings with users and user organisations from a variety of technological fields to exchange the latest information of mutual interest. The JPO's design examiners sometimes visit applicant companies to conduct face-to-face communication.

The JPO communicates the results both internally and externally. Based on the feedback acquired through the survey, including statistical analysis and individual opinions, the Committee on the Quality Management for Design Examination (QMC) sets future initiatives and priorities that the design examiners should work on to further enhance the examination quality. These initiatives are then implemented by the design examination divisions.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of conducting the user satisfactory survey is to assess user satisfaction with the quality of the design examination. The QMC also uses the user satisfaction survey report as one of factors when setting future initiatives and priorities that the design examiners should work on to further enhance the examination quality.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Further enhance the quality of design examination
02	Facilitate a constructive dialogue between the JPO and users
03	Identify quality defects and other priorities for improvement

COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The JPO receives complaints and/or inquiries from users. Users submit their complaints and/or inquiries on the quality of examination via the JPO website. This can be done in either English or Japanese.

Complaints or inquiries from users are shared with the relevant divisions, including the design examination divisions, as a starting point for possible improvements of the design registration system and practices.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of encouraging complaints and/or inquiries from users is to ascertain their experiences and further improve products/services by identifying common complaints that can be shared and evaluated.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Identify quality defects or other aspects that require quality assurance
02	Further improvements of services/products
03	Improve users' communication

Korean Intellectual Property Office

KIPO

QUALITY POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Korean Intellectual Property Office

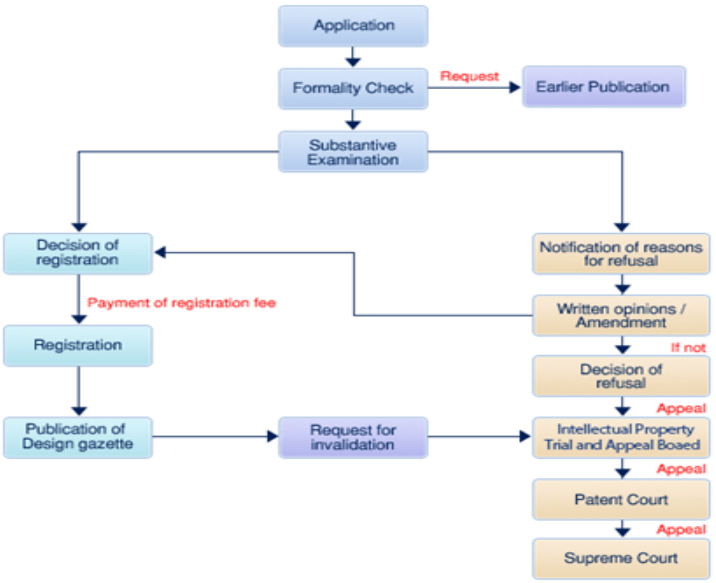
The KIPO has set up a quality policy and objective to promote awareness among examiners on the importance of the quality of industrial design examination. There are two examination systems: the substantive examination system (SES) and the partial-substantive examination system (PSES). The PSES applies to articles which are sensitive to trends and have a short lifecycle (Locarno Class 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 11 and 19).

The goal of KIPO's quality policy is to contribute to the development of the design industry by creating strong design rights. Its scope covers the planning of quality management, sharing the plan with examiners, and reviewing and checking the results of quality.

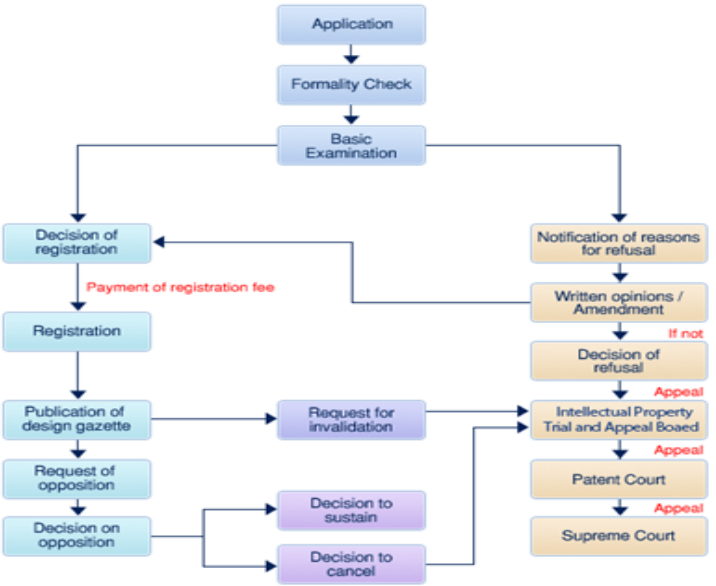
The quality policy is communicated both internally and externally. Internal communication is carried out to other divisions, among examiners, and an in-house study group. External communication is carried out by an evaluation quality council, a customer satisfaction survey, and meetings with the major applicants and attorneys.

The focus on examination quality is to reduce errors, and thereby ensure faster and more accurate results. It also allows for a flexible and pre-emptive response to rapidly changing design environments with the advent of new technology designs.

[Substantive examination for industrial designs]



[Partial-Substantive examination for industrial designs]



MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the quality policy is to reduce mistakes caused by examiners and ensure faster and more accurate decisions to our users.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Ensure users receive strong design rights
02	Reduce errors committed by examiners
03	Faster and more accurate decisions

USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Korean Intellectual Property Office

An annual user satisfaction survey is conducted by the KIPO to ascertain the external user satisfaction with the examination quality and to draw up measures to improve the examination quality. The satisfaction survey is conducted on the following: overall satisfaction with examination quality, understandability of notices/decisions, adequacy of the judgement of the registration requirements, fidelity of the refusal decision, and differences in judgments from different examiners.

The results from the survey are disseminated both internally and externally after being analysed to draw conclusions. That is, based on the answers received and past figures, the KIPO determine what generated applicants' satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and use the results for planning the examination quality management.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main purpose for conducting the user satisfactory survey is to determine external users' satisfaction with the examination quality and in so doing, draw up measures which would improve the examination quality.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Improve users' overall satisfaction with examination quality
02	Further improve the consistency of examiners' assessments
03	Clarify users' doubts/concerns regarding registration requirements, notices and decisions

COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Korean Intellectual Property Office

Besides the aforementioned external Examination Quality Management Committee and satisfaction surveys, applicants may inquire directly to the examiner about the filed application and may comment on the examination process to the policy division via the internet or telephone.

Issues frequently mentioned by users are discussed with the examiners and used for improving the examination process or revising the examination guidelines.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

By encouraging users to send in their complaints and/or inquiries, the KIPO aims to detect opportunities for improvement and to consider the opinions of users when undertaking initiatives.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Detect opportunities of improvement
02	Enhance examination guidance system
03	Incorporate the opinions of users in all initiatives undertaken by the office

UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
uspto
USPTO

QUALITY POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

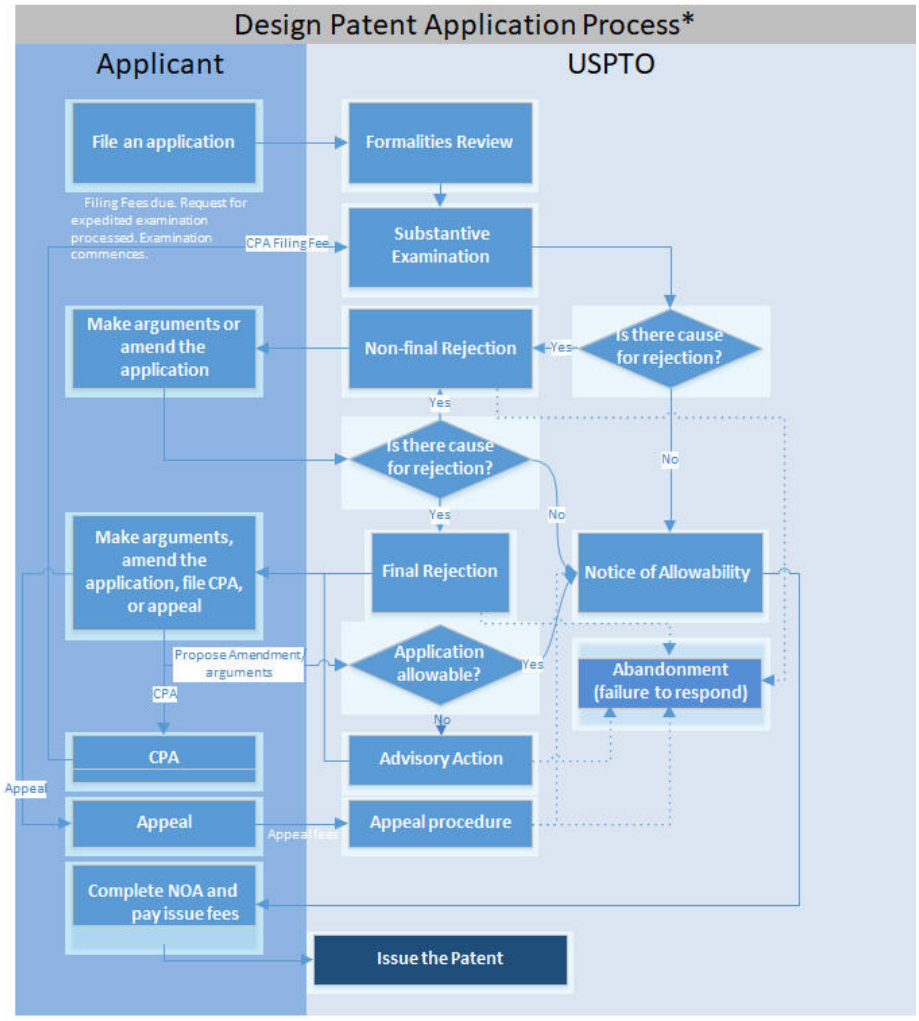
uspto

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The design examiners are organized together in a Technology Center that focuses on applications for design patents. The Manual of Patent Examining Procedure is available to examiners and sets forth practice and procedures for examining design patent applications.
Each design examiner is provided with a Performance Appraisal Plan, which includes a quality element that sets forth quality related requirements and expectations.

In addition, the design Technology Center partners with the USPTO's Office of Patent Training on providing quality related training to design examiners. Similarly, the USPTO's Office of Patent Quality Assurance (OPQA) provides quality related feedback to design examiners and management. Examiners and Stakeholders are also provided opportunities to interact and learn from each other in a variety of contexts. The USPTO partners with stakeholders to host an annual Design Day that emphasizes to examiners the importance of high quality rights and ensuring quality is a priority.

Finally, quality information is communicated both internally and externally through a number of avenues including meetings, trainings and memorandums.



* This chart highlights the general design patent application process and does not include all possible outcomes or procedures. Please refer to the USPTO MPEP for specific guidance on filing procedures and the application process.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Performance Appraisal Plan for design examiners and Technology Center managers outlines specific quality elements such as formalities, searching, writing, and legal analysis that the examiner is responsible for. Additionally, the USPTO sets quality metrics goals which are monitored by the Office of Patent Quality Assurance (OPQA).

The USPTO also adheres to quality management system principles by implementing and following policies and procedures in an effort to meet the USPTO's 2018-2022 strategic plan.
This includes leveraging internal controls, data evaluation, the Master Review Form (MRF), customer feedback, etc. for continuous quality improvement.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Emphasizes the importance of high quality rights
02	Ensuring quality is a priority
03	Opportunities for examiners and stakeholders to interact and learn from each other

USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

uspto

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

OPQA administers a semi-annual survey to assess external perceptions of examination quality. This panel-based survey is administered to approximately 3,000 agents, attorneys, and inventors. The respondents are asked to provide their perceptions of patent examination quality for the 3-month period preceding the survey. Results from the survey are a vital quality indicator and are helpful for validating the findings in our compliance reviews. The survey addresses satisfaction with examiner interactions, examiner decisions, rejection practice, and search quality.

The survey results are communicated both internally and externally, and are used to help validate internal review findings and identify the impacts various interactions have on overall perceptions. Linking the external perceptions with the internal monitoring program ensures that resources and initiatives are focused on the areas of utmost importance to customers.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The USPTO's quality metrics focus on statutory compliance reviews that evaluate whether the written work products comply with patentability statutes (35 U.S.C. 171, 112, 102, 103), process reviews that focus on the efficiency and consistency of internal processes, and perception surveys from both external and internal stakeholders.

OPQA administers external and internal surveys to gather feedback on quality, including on design related patent applications. All of this data collected by OPQA is shared with managers and examiners in the design Technology Center.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Assess external perceptions of examination quality
02	Opportunities for examiners and stakeholders to interact and learn from each other
03	Helpful for validating the findings in USPTO's compliance reviews

COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

uspto

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Users and stakeholders are encouraged to send their complaints and/or inquiries via any of the numerous avenues available to them. One common way is for applicant to call the supervisor of the examiner. There is also a Patents Ombudsman Office that assists applicants throughout the application process when they feel that the examination has stalled and working with the examiner and their supervisor is not helping. The Patents Ombudsman Office has representatives in each technology center to help resolve issues. The Patents Ombudsman Office can be contacted via their website, telephone, or email.

Information garnered from the complaints received are tracked in a database. This allows the USPTO to identify common complaints that can be shared and evaluated for future improvements.

MAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of encouraging complaints and/or inquiries from users is to ascertain their experiences and further improve products/services by identifying common complaints that can be shared and evaluated.

ADVANTAGES FOR USERS

01	Learn about users' experiences and perceptions
02	Resolve potential issues
03	Improve services/products