Popular Threads on Solosez

Patent Exam Advice

As I've indicated before I'm a 3L still contemplating the solo life.

But I am taking the patent exam later this summer/fall and was hoping some of the IP guru's in the firm could pass on any of their sage wisdom. I really can't afford to shell out $1800 for the PLI course (that's the student price) but please be blunt if that is my best option for preparation.

Also, I think I forgot to say that my favorite adult drink is a nice Reisling or Pinot Grigio. I have to schnauzers Haley and Gabby.

I used the Patent Resources Institute set of binders and took the practice tests innumerable times. I read the materials and did not use any audiotapes. It was good preparation and the binders serve as a good resource once you are practicing patent law. It helped a lot to prepare outlines of each chapter.

Bert P. Krages, Oregon

I took the computerized version of the patent exam at the end of April. I have no connection with PLI but I prepared for it using PLI's home study course. If you have the discipline to ensure you put the time in, in my opinion, that is the way to go. They have a software program that allows you to customize practice exams to focus on weak areas or combine chapters. It also contains several prior exams. One last piece of advice, read the significant chapters of the MPEP a few times each.

By the way, I passed and expect to receive my registration number very soon.

Bruce Vargo, New Jersey

The other well-known alternative to Kayton's course is PLI (Practicing Law Institute).

It was a difficult exam. I had been practicing in a firm for about a year before taking it, so that made it a lot easier.

Faustino A. Lichauco, Masachusetts

Well, PLI is considered the Cadillac of patent bar courses because that's what it is. For someone who has two G's readily available, I would say go for it. But I spent a grand total of $45 on my patent bar preparation, and I passed. I am not some test-taking freak or anything like that. I am only saying that you can pass without relying on some impossibly expensive review course.

I downloaded a $35 "review package" (basically a bunch of PDFs), and a $10 exam simulation software, which contained full exams from when they used to administer a written exam and publish the questions. The software allowed me to simulate, for example, the entire April 2002 exam. I did that after I went through tons of questions and an outline of the MPEP on those PDF files. I would not recommend this unless you have taken some patent law courses. You need to understand sections 102 and 103.

The key is that the PTO repeats several of the old questions from those written exams. In practicing them, you see a number of questions that will likely show up on your own exam. And by practicing these old questions, you will learn how to answer the new ones as well. Eventually, you will find the old questions where the answer key indicates that examinees were given credit for two or three different answers, and when you understand the reasons why more than one answer could be correct, you will be on your way.

Still, the biggest help I got was from the good people at www.intelproplaw.com. Their forums are great, and I probably would have had to shell out for a review course without them. I wish you the best of luck. Don't be afraid of this exam, just be prepared.

Jim Hickey, Illinois

Another vote for PRG/Kayton here. I've heard mixed things about PLI (but mostly favorable).

John P. Moy, Virginia

I took the patent bar back in 1996, and the prep course I took was all on audio tape, and I seem to remember it was around $900. Unfortunately I cannot remember the name of course.

However, I do recommend you take a prep course for it. It was a very difficult exam, and I could have sworn I failed it when I walked out of the examination room, but somehow I passed.

Michael A. Blake, Connecticut

I'm with Mike. I took Irving Kayton's course run by PRG, and I can tell you I never would have passed (at least not on the first try) without the prep
course.

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

It's been 10 years since I took the patent bar, but back then, at least, Kayton's course (from PRG, http://www.patentresources.com/) was considered the best course--it had more attendees and a higher pass rate than PLI at the time. As someone who knew zero about patent law before starting the course, it was invaluable to me. That said, the course is not cheap.

Kevin W. Grierson

Thats who I used too. It was pure drudgery, but, I passed, so I can't say it was horrible. And, it was cheaper than the others.

Michael A. Blake

I had purchased a review course. . . http://www.patbar.com/ which was horrible. Low quality materials, bad audio tapes, disorganized, really just crappy. I've heard from others since that the newer courses from them are very good and helpful, so there must have been some dramatic turn around. The one nice thing was that the course author was available by email and responded to questions quite rapidly.

Steven O'Donnell, Pennsylvania

The past exams were the best study tool. . . more accurately, the answers the PTO gave were the best study tool. I think they only keep the last several exams available on the website, I have these left from when I was studying. If anyone wants them, let me know. They didn't test on the 1999 Act, so keep that in mind.

10/00
10/01
11/99
4/00
4/02
4/99
8/98

Steven O'Donnell