

IPReg

**The Intellectual Property Regulation Board -  
Annual Report 2020**

**March 2021**

## Introduction

The Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg) regulates individual patent attorneys and trade mark attorneys and many of the firms that they work in. Our work covers a broad range of activities including:

- education and training requirements for qualification as an attorney;
- requirements for admission to the register for attorneys and firms;
- keeping the registers of attorneys and firms;
- setting the requirements for continuous professional development so that the knowledge, skills and expertise of attorneys is maintained at an appropriate level;
- setting and enforcing rules and regulations which set out the standards required of those we regulate; and
- handling complaints of misconduct made against an attorney or firm regulated by IPReg.

IPReg's strategic direction is set by its Board which comprises a lay (non-lawyer) Chair, four other lay members, and, currently, three patent attorneys and two trade mark attorneys. As of summer 2021, with scheduled retirements from the Board, there will be two patent attorneys and one trade mark attorney, with another to be recruited. This is to ensure the Board has the lay majority as required by the Legal Service Board's (LSB) [Internal Governance Rules](#).

The IPReg executive team which takes forward IPReg's day-to-day operational work is a small team led by the Chief Executive Officer, Fran Gillon and Head of Registration, Shelley Edwards. These roles are in turn supported by a Chief Finance Officer, an Assurance Officer, an Authorisations Officer, a Director of Policy, and an Administrative Officer.

This report sets out some key information about IPReg's activities during 2020.

## 1. Chair's Foreword, Lord Chris Smith

I wrote last year's Report just as Covid-19 was taking off, the first national lockdown was imposed, and we were beginning to have to get used to new and different ways of working. We're now a year on, and what a strange and difficult year it has been. All of our staff have been working from home for a year now, without the facilities and camaraderie that come from an office environment; but I have to say I take my hat off to them all. They've coped with difficult circumstances, they've worked assiduously, and they have kept the IPReg show very much on the road. A big "thank you" to them all.

With rather fortuitous timing, we had managed well before the pandemic struck to get our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system into much better shape, with a complete overhaul, and this has proved to be a godsend with the challenge of home working. A major test of the robustness of the new system was the re-registration process this winter, and it does seem to have happened pretty smoothly. I'm relieved and delighted.

Because of the impact of the pandemic, we paused for a few months in initiating the major review of all our regulatory codes, guidance, and procedures; with all of our stakeholders addressing the immediate needs of a Covid-dominated world, it wasn't the right moment to seek views and engagement with a regulatory review. Now, however, we are embarked on precisely this exercise, and it will be the most important element of our work for the next couple of years. We've established a sub-committee of our Board to oversee the detail of the review; we've brought in extra help to make sure we can do it as comprehensively as we can; and we've already asked in a call for evidence for advice on the issues and items that we need to address. We do very much hope that everyone involved in the world of IP will give us their thoughts, their issues, their demands, and their complaints. It's only by considering all the problems carefully that we will come up with the right solutions. And we do very much want to get it right.

For much of the past year we have also been working hard on the oversight of the education providers who run - and examine - the courses that provide entry into the profession. We have continued (with some success) to urge improvement for one particular provider where there had been some concern expressed by students. We have reviewed and improved some of our accreditation procedures. We have engaged with providers about the need for online examination in the pandemic world, and the associated need for rigour in maintaining standards. And we have continued to discuss the possibility of new providers entering the field.

One of the most interesting questions that arose early in the course of the pandemic was what would happen to the market in IP as the economy took a battering from a succession of national lockdowns. The answer appears to be – for now, at least – that IP is every bit as important, and needed, as it always was. Perhaps even more so. The development of scientific understanding of, and response to, Covid has shown forcefully how crucial science and innovation are to our economic future. Ensuring that IP can be protected is at the heart of that. Arguably, it's never been more important.

Let's hope the year ahead will be different from the one that's gone.

## 2. Chief Executive's Foreword, Fran Gillon

Where do I start?

What a year!

We hardly had time to unpack in our lovely new office when the pandemic started. From March 2020 the entire IPReg team has been working from home. I am very proud of the way in which each member of the team has risen to the challenges that working from home in a pandemic presents and that we have continued to provide a good service to our registrants and consumers.

As you will see from this report, we have again achieved a significant amount during the year. However, it was obvious early on in the pandemic that it would be sensible to postpone the launch of our major review of our regulatory arrangements until everyone had adapted to their different working environments. That decision paid off - we have had very good responses (in number and quality) to our Call for Evidence which closed recently; I am absolutely sure that this would not have been the case if we had launched the process in March 2020 as originally planned!

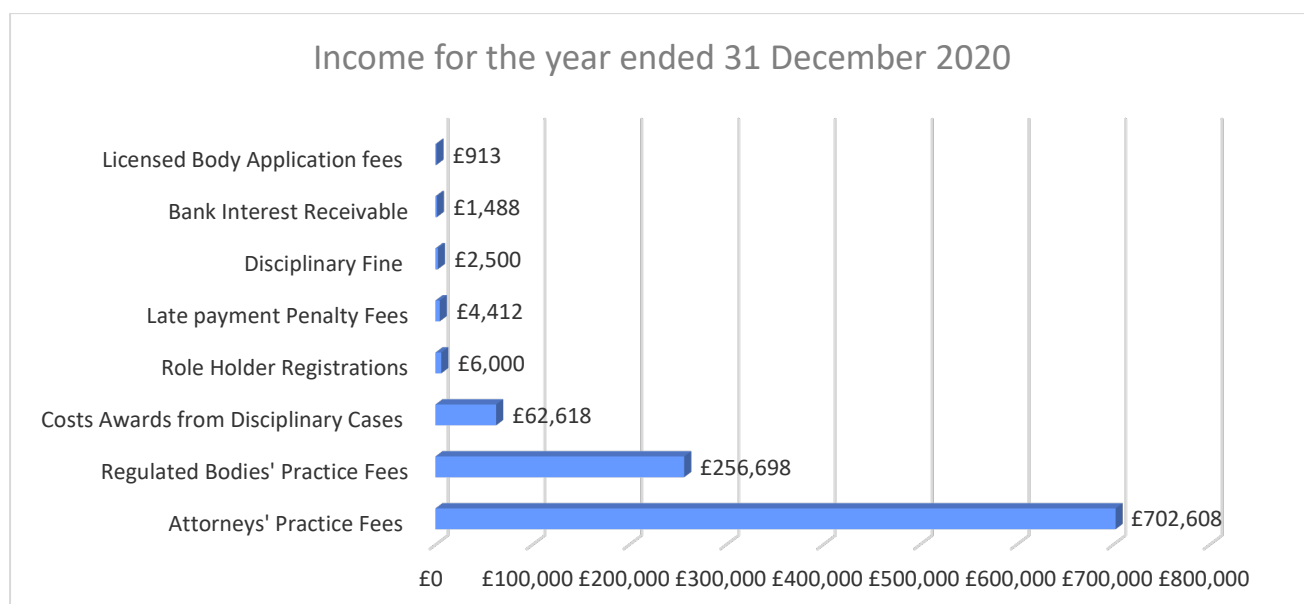
As we look forward to the rest of 2021, I would like to thank our retiring Board members, Alicia Chantrey, Keith Howick, Nick Whittaker and Steve Gregory for their support and encouragement during the time I have been CEO.

## 3. 2020 – Key Facts and Figures

### 3.1 Financial - Income

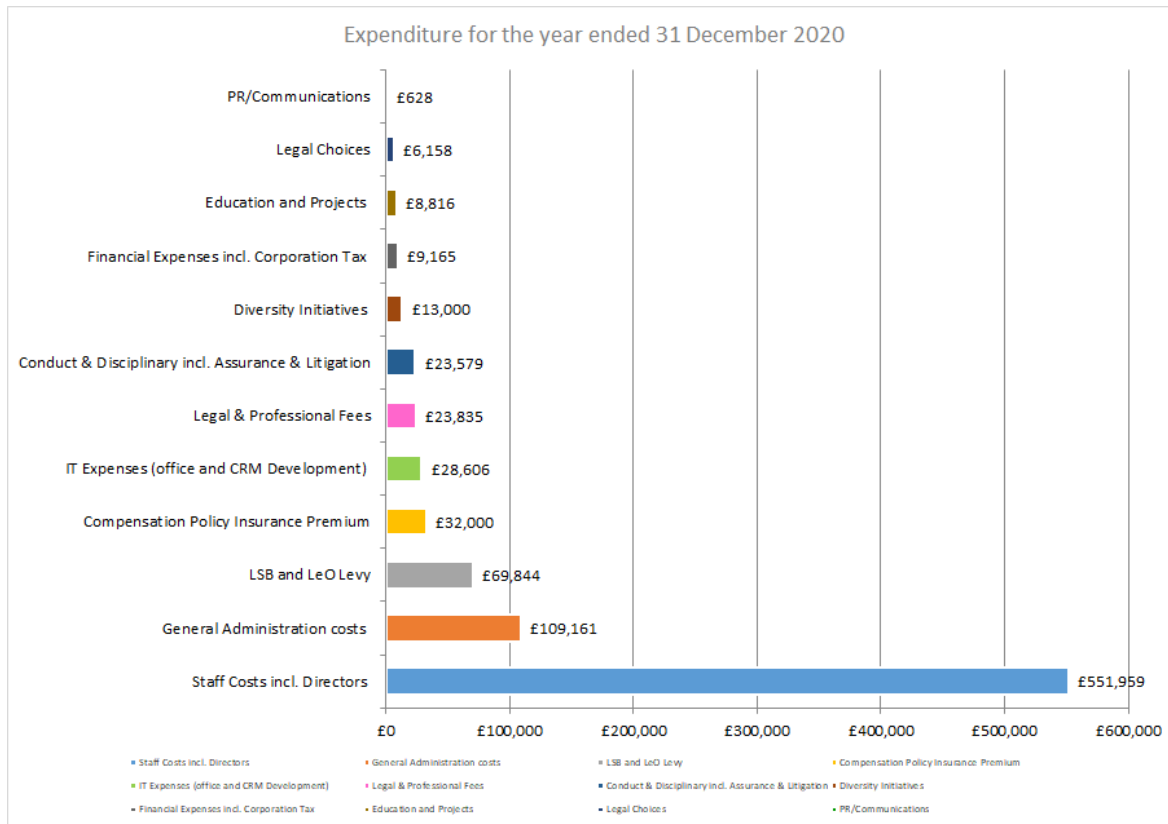
IPReg's income derives mainly from practice fees paid by registered attorneys and firms. Some limited additional income is derived from (for example) application fees from firms applying to be licensed or registered with IPReg. IPReg is financially independent. Since January 2010, IPReg has received no financial assistance from either CIPA or CITMA, nor does IPReg remit any practising fees to either CIPA or CITMA. A breakdown of Income for the year ended 31 December 2020:

Figure 1 – Breakdown of Income for 2020



### 3.2 Financial - Expenditure

Figure 2 – Breakdown of Expenditure for 2020



#### Staff Costs

Staff costs include salaries, director’s remuneration, employer’s National Insurance, staff benefits and pension costs.

#### IT Expenses (office and CRM)

This is largely made up of costs relating to maintenance of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Additionally, costs shown include those to support and maintain the office IT platform and software licences.

#### General Administration Costs

This includes general office costs including the licence fee and services for the office. Also included is the provision against the recoverability of a costs award of £26,391.

#### Legal Services Board and Legal Ombudsman Levy

In common with other legal regulators, IPReg pays a “levy” to cover the costs of the [Legal Services Board \(LSB\)](#) the body with statutory oversight of the legal regulators. The levy is based on IPReg’s proportion of the total number of regulated lawyers.

Additionally, the running costs of the [Legal Ombudsman](#) are met by regulated lawyers using a three-year reference period ending 31 March to calculate the average number of complaints made to the

Ombudsman. Each regulator contributes a minimum of £5,000 unless there were 10 complaints or more in the rolling three-year period in which case the cost increases. IPReg's contribution is the £5000 minimum.

#### Conduct & Disciplinary incl. Assurance and Litigation

This relates to external legal costs and internal costs associated with assurance and disciplinary matters and includes Board member fees and expenses for committee hearings and associated costs such as photocopying.

#### Compensation Policy Insurance Premium

IPReg maintains an insurance policy under which grants may be made to compensate consumers for losses or hardship suffered due to a registered attorney or an employee/manager of a registered firm, either as a result of fraud or other dishonesty, or a fraudulent or dishonest failure to account for money. This policy is maintained as these type of losses are typically not covered by the professional indemnity insurance which the registered attorney and registered firms are required to have in place.

#### Legal and Professional Fees

This relates to costs for legal advice on areas such as audit and accountancy services and contracts, as well as costs such as insurance, Practical Law and Westlaw subscriptions. Practising fees for the professionally qualified members of staff are also included here.

#### Financial Expenses including Corporation Tax

This includes bank charges, card provider service charges and corporation tax on bank interest.

#### Legal Choices

This is a funding instalment for the [Legal Choices website](#) (a joint project undertaken by all the legal regulators to provide consumers with information on legal services to help them make informed decisions when choosing legal services providers).

#### Diversity Initiatives

IPReg has a statutory objective to promote a diverse legal profession and accordingly supports initiatives aimed at promoting this objective. Item 4.7 of this Report provides information on diversity initiatives funded by IPReg.

#### Education Projects

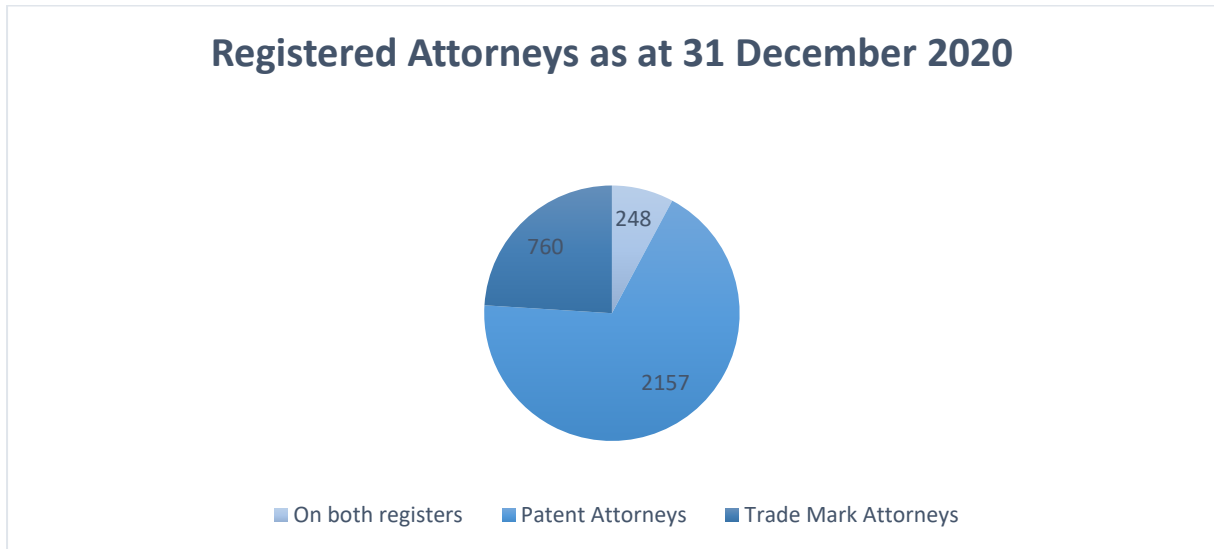
Costs for this are largely the Board's Education Group costs. Additionally, funding research by the Professional Associations Research Network into measuring the impact of CPD.

#### PR/Communications

Costs associated with Board members' activities with the profession and students.

**3.3 Who we regulate:** as at 31 December 2020 there were 3165 registered attorneys of which: 248 were registered as both a patent and a trade mark attorney, 2157 registered as patent attorneys and 760 registered as trade mark attorneys.

Figure 3 – Breakdown of attorneys by type



Patent attorneys make up just over two-thirds (68.2%) of registered attorneys, trade mark attorneys represent 24% and those who are both a patent attorney and trade mark attorney comprise 7.8%.

### 3.4 Admissions

In 2020, there were 116 admissions to the attorney register, 70 of these were patent attorneys and 46 were trade mark attorneys. There were 13 admission to the firms register.

Figure 4 – Breakdown of Admissions to Register 2020



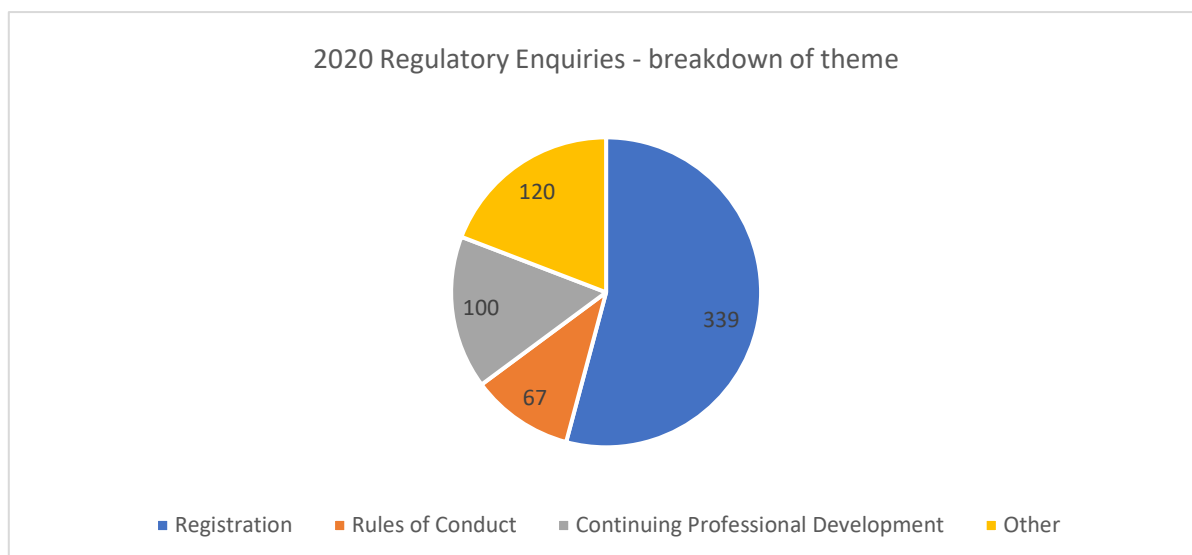
The bar chart above sets out the number of admission to the patent attorney register and the trade mark attorney register received by IPReg each year over the last ten years (since IPReg’s inception).

The decrease in the number of individual applications was due largely to the fact that some assessments were delayed as a result of the pandemic. The chart also includes the number of firms admitted entry on to one or both registers. To be admitted to the register, attorneys must complete a rigorous examination and training programme. To remain on the register attorneys must undertake further professional training each year. Successful admission to the patent and/or trade mark attorney register means that an individual or firm is registered with and regulated by IPReg and is subject to its rules and regulations. From a consumer protection perspective, using an IPReg-regulated attorney or firm affords consumers the confidence that in the event of any problem arising from the work carried out they will be protected by professional indemnity insurance and can in some cases complain to the Legal Ombudsman and/or IPReg. In addition, there are certain types of work (e.g. the conduct of litigation) that only attorneys and firms registered with IPReg or another legal regulator can carry out.

### 3.5 Enquiries Report 2020

Each year IPReg receives a number of enquiries about various aspects of regulation and the legal sector. This section analyses the enquires we received in 2020.

*Figure 5 – Breakdown of Regulatory Enquiries received in 2020*



Of the 626 regulatory enquiries received, over half, 54% (339 enquiries), related to qualifying and registering as an attorney, 19% (120 enquiries) were Other/Miscellaneous, 16% (100 enquiries) were about Continuing Professional Development, and 11% (67 enquiries) concerned the Rules of Conduct. Although the total number (626) of regulatory enquiries is a 108% increase from the 300 reported in the 2019 Annual Report this is due mainly to the different recording process that we now have in place on the new CRM system.

Previously, we had to run a system that required intensive administration by the IPReg team. This included filtering the 9000+ email enquiries and then manually categorising and documenting the regulatory (as opposed to administrative) enquiries in an Excel spreadsheet. The new CRM system provides an online enquiry portal which enables people to self-categorise the reason for their enquiry from a defined list. Under the new system, an enquiry can cover more than one topic hence the apparent increase in enquiries.



## **Qualification/Registration Enquiries**

Registered Trade Mark Attorney (77 enquiries): includes routes to qualification, how to demonstrate experience, options for recognition for a non-EU country qualification;

Intellectual Property Litigation status (76 enquiries): 66 of these were administrative in that they were individuals uploading their litigation certificates, the 10 regulatory enquiries included approaches from lawyers from overseas (India and Egypt) seeking information on whether they can obtain IP litigator status, and the regulatory basis for attorneys obtaining the litigation certificate within 3 years of coming on to the register;

Patent Attorney (74 enquiries): includes routes to qualification, options for recognition for qualifications from overseas (qualifications from Australia, Ireland and New Zealand) and who can provide supervisory experience;

Firm/Company (49 enquiries): includes how to become a firm regulated by IPReg, when you can become a sole trader, how to set up as a limited company, address for service, client information sharing, whether can appoint an overseas patent attorney as a partner;

Qualified lawyer from European Union (17 enquiries): includes how to qualify in UK as a qualified lawyer in France, Germany, Italy, Spain; a Registered European Lawyer; Brexit implications;

Re-registration/Readmission (12 enquiries): 4 related to readmission to the register, others were a combination of miscellaneous and account administration queries;

On both Patent and Trade Mark Attorney Registers (11 enquiries): how to register intellectual property, how to qualify from Egypt, India and UK, professional indemnity insurance issue, fees capping, EU Mutual Recognition;

As a qualified lawyer from a non-European Union country (11 enquiries): how to qualify in UK when a qualified lawyer in Australia, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka;

Solicitor wanting to qualify as a Registered Trade Mark Attorney (8 enquiries): 6 were UK solicitors practising for more than 2 years (the fast track requirement for UK solicitors), others were a trainee solicitor and an individual who has not practised for two decades;

Sat an approved historic examination or course (4 enquiries): 1 related to a historic Joint Examination Board examination, the remaining items were miscellaneous.

## **Rules of Conduct Enquiries**

Attorney Queries - Miscellaneous (39 enquiries): these are wide-ranging and include queries about the orderly wind down of a practice, Certificate of Good Standing requests, working in-house requirements, terms of business, roles of Head of Legal Practice and Head of Finance and Administration, fee capping, misrepresentation of titles, having an unincorporated body as a client, concern regarding the opposing party being represented by a lawyer with whom a regulator has taken disciplinary action electronic filing, concerns regarding an anonymous blog, exercising rights of audience in a small claim hearing, issues obtaining Professional Indemnity Insurance;

Enquiries from Non-Attorneys (12 enquiries): includes the reporting of a law firm failing to submit a revised patent specification, a micro business seeking assurances on funds protection, files ownership, complaints process and client account requirements, protected titles, whether a conviction precludes registration, client fee capping;

Entity structure (5 enquiries): how to become a registered firm, % of shares which can be owned by a non-lawyer individual, status of professional activities conducted, a non-authorised manager;

Conflict of interest (4 enquiries): opening a client account, fees, client account requirements, whether funds are protected if appointing a small attorney firm to validate an international patent;

File transfer (5 enquiries): seeking file ownership/review of past certificates guidance, restrictive covenants with previous employer, use of liens, initiative to agree case data transfer protocol;

Clients (2 enquiries): procedure/person to appoint for complaints handling review, seeking guidance on a developing client issue;

### **Continuing Professional Development Enquiries**

Attorney CPD (100 enquiries): although the majority of enquires in this category concerned the annual CPD declaration process, other enquiries included whether a particular activity qualifies as CPD, requirements in light of an extended absence from active practising, whether non-interactive activities cap still applied and the impact of a casual employment contract on CPD requirements;

### **Other Enquiries**

Miscellaneous (96 enquiries): the vast majority relate to the administration of the individual's IPReg Pro account and the annual return, others concerned requests for Certificates of Good Standing;

Leave of absence (15 enquiries): includes retirement, parental leave, whether a firm can appoint a temporary Head of Legal Practice who is not a Director, impact of a career break or retirement;

Research (9 enquiries): includes requests for data on numbers of managers, attorneys with Higher Courts Litigation and Advocacy Certificates, firms regulated by IPReg, verification of an individual's standing on the register, seeking information on different regulatory spheres to inform a law book.

As a result of these enquiries we published Frequently Asked Questions regarding the attorney qualifying path and made the guidance on the annual renewal process clearer. The information captured from these enquiries will inform the guidance we provide to our new regulatory arrangements.

## **3.6 Complaints made to IPReg**

We can deal with complaints about “regulated persons”; this includes registered attorneys, registered firms (including alternative business structures), as well as managers and employees of registered firms. Where we receive information that a regulated person may not have met the standards of professional practice set out in the [Rules of Conduct](#), or where we have information that a registered person's character and suitability to be on the register has been called into doubt, we consider taking action under the [Disciplinary Procedure Rules](#).

If a complaint about a regulated person is received, we may seek additional information before deciding how to proceed. We can also initiate complaints where it appears to us that a regulated person has breached one or more of the Rules of Conduct or has otherwise been non-compliant with any of our regulatory requirements.

In 2020, IPReg received or initiated complaints against 10 regulated persons, all of whom were registered attorneys or firms:

- Failure to follow instructions – 3
- Practising without insurance – 1
- Delay/failure to progress – 1
- Costs information deficient/excessive costs – 2
- Failure to keep informed – 1
- Misconduct – 1
- Failure to advise or poor/wrong advice - 1

Where it appears that one of our regulatory arrangements has been breached, we can refer it to the Complaints Review Committee which will consider whether there is a *prima facie* case to be answered. The Complaints Review Committee may close the case or deal with it summarily if it would be disproportionate to refer it to a full disciplinary hearing before the Disciplinary Board. The Disciplinary Board is an independent Board made up of lay and professional members of the Joint Disciplinary Panel and has a wide range of sanctioning powers up to, and including, imposing fines of up to £5 million on individuals (£25 million on registered bodies and £250m on an ABS) and removal from the register(s).

Additionally, a complaint about IPReg was received in May 2020 from an MP. The complaint was about PII and was made on behalf of their constituent who was a registered attorney. The complaint was not upheld. The complaint was indicative of a small number of attorneys who do not renew their PII and are then unable to obtain any PII at all. IPReg takes this issue very seriously and attorneys who practise without compliant PII are likely to have disciplinary action taken against them.

### 3.7 First Tier Complaints

Registered attorneys and firms must have effective procedures in place to deal with complaints. IPReg's [Rules of Conduct](#) require all regulated attorneys in private practice to have an established procedure for dealing with complaints (those who work in-house will follow the complaints procedure of the firm for which they provide legal services). Clients must be informed at the point of engagement about the process for making a complaint and written details of the complaints procedure must be provided to the client on request. A complaint made by a client to the registered attorney or firm, is known as a "first tier complaint".

During our annual registration renewal process, all regulated attorneys in private practice must provide us with information about the number of first-tier complaints they received during the previous year. If the attorney works in a regulated firm, it is the firm that provides this information. Collecting this information can help us to identify good practice or, if we identify what appear to be widespread or systemic issues, we can require information to allow us to investigate further.

When a complainant is not satisfied with the way a regulated attorney or firm has handled their complaint they may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman.

Complaints statistics for the reporting year ended 31 December 2020, were collected from:

- Firms – 235 firms reported on the number of complaints received, with 39 of those firms declaring receipt of one or more complaints; and

- Sole practitioners –116 sole practitioners reported on the number of complaints received, with 2 sole practitioners declaring receipt of one or more complaints.

The four main areas of reported complaints for 2020 (for regulated entities and sole practitioners) are:

- Costs information deficient/costs excessive – 77 total complaints (65 complaints in 2019);
- Failure to advise – 22 total complaints (12 complaints in 2019)
- Delay/failure to progress – 18 total complaints (21 complaints in 2019); and
- Failure to follow instructions – 20 total complaints (19 complaints in 2019).

The nature of these complaints continues to reinforce the importance of providing clear information to consumers about price, service and quality, please see the [Transparency Guidance](#) which will be re-issued.

### 3.8 Regulatory Action

In 2020, IPReg suspended from the register:

- 73 registrants (34 trade mark attorneys, 34 patent attorneys, 5 on both registers) for non-payment fees
- 3 registrants (2 patent attorneys and 1 on both registers) and 1 firm for failure to provide information on Professional Indemnity Insurance.

In 2020, IPReg removed 34 registrants (18 trade mark attorneys, 15 patent attorneys, 1 on both registers) from the register for failure to pay their practising fee.

### 3.9 Covid-19

As part of our move to a new office in December 2019, we upgraded our IT hardware. That equipment and the new CRM system enabled the team to transition with minimal disruption to remote and home working.

During 2020 we introduced a waiver process so that attorneys who had lost their job as a result of the pandemic could remain on the register without having to pay their annual practising fee. Although overall the sectors that we regulate have not been impacted as badly as other parts of the legal services market, we have granted three waivers (from four applications).

### 3.10 Regulatory Performance

IPReg's performance management datasets can be found [here](#).

### 3.11 Promotion of IPReg and its regulatory approach

The Board and Executive actively network with other organisations so that a wider audience understands IPReg's regulatory approach and purpose and its value as an independent specialist regulator as well as to help gain market insight. In 2020, the Chair and Chief Executive together represented IPReg at 5 events, the Chair an additional 5 events and the Chief Executive another 29 and other representatives of the Board attended 5 events. Events attended included student induction days and multi-stakeholder meetings with regulatory, business and industry representatives.

## 4. Review of progress against 2020/2021 Business Plan activities

### 4.1 Introduction

IPReg is focusing on improving the way in which its core regulatory activities are undertaken. This programme of change is in addition to our business as usual “core activities”, which include;

- considering applications from individuals and entities for registration;
- providing advice on our regulatory arrangements;
- investigating complaints and taking disciplinary action where necessary;
- dealing with enquiries via both the new online contact form and the “Info” email box;
- a rolling accreditation process of qualification agencies and considering applications from new entrant agencies;
- responding to LSB consultations and requests for information (e.g. regulatory performance data); and
- policy development.

### 4.2 Keeping the registers – a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system

The new CRM system went live in September 2019 and so the annual registration renewal process for 2020 was the first time that the new system was used in practice. Although there were obviously some differences to get used to (for registrants and the IPReg team) the process went well. Feedback from individual attorneys has been that they have found the annual renewal process easy to navigate and they were able to submit their annual returns quickly. We have also had feedback from account administrators of large firms that they have valued being able to manage easily the details relating to their firm’s attorneys and have found the step by step process easy to use. Over the course of 2020 we were able to identify a number of efficiency gains as a result of the new CRM system. In addition to the admission process and the online enquiries which are set out above, other improvements include: not having to hire a temporary member of staff to manually process fees; not having to work additional days to provide renewal assistance; fully automated self-service for attorneys and firm administrators; ensuring annual renewal declarations of fitness to practise are made before fees are paid to identify attorneys who IPReg may need to investigate; ensuring current Professional Indemnity Insurance information is provided and verified and a Continuing Professional Development Declaration (or waiver request) is made prior to payment of practising fees (the system prohibits payment of fees without these); online register entries identify where there have been disciplinary findings against an individual or firm; and provision of a centralised information source which means we can much more readily report on the datasets the CRM holds (e.g. for LSB performance management datasets, CPS compliance, enquiry themes, complaints and identification of registration trends) much more quickly than we could on the previous system.

The first three months of 2020 were spent ensuring the new process worked well and the most recent annual renewal began in November 2020 (for 2021 fees) and ran very smoothly. We expect that over time it will be even less resource intensive for the team as attorneys and firm administrators become more familiar with the system and how it works and require less direct

practical assistance. This will enable us to transfer resources to work on the business-as-usual matters.

### **4.3 Improving our regulatory arrangements**

The regulatory arrangements cover the full range of activities undertaken by regulated individuals and firms – from the requirements to qualify as a patent or trade mark attorney, the process for admission to the register(s), conduct and other requirements while on the register(s), complaints and disciplinary matters and removal or retirement from the register(s).

We are reviewing the regulatory arrangements in their entirety. Unless there is evidence that a detailed, prescriptive rule is necessary (or there is a statutory requirement to include a specific matter), we intend to rely on high-level, broadly stated principles and give firms the flexibility to determine how they comply with those principles. We are particularly keen that our regulation of the IP sector supports innovation and disruption and that we understand and take into account how regulatory measures affect new entrants and innovation.

In October we published a [Call for Evidence](#) asking for views on the matters that IPReg should consider. We had originally planned to launch the consultation in the first quarter of the year but it was obvious very soon after the start of the pandemic that we should postpone it until later in the year when firms and individuals could be reasonably expected to undertake more meaningful engagement in the process. The consultation ran for 12 weeks and closed on 1 February 2021. Almost 40 responses have been received and they will all help to inform the significant piece of work.

### **4.4 Improving the application process for individuals and entities**

The individual application process is now online, provided through the CRM system, and has significantly streamlined the overall process, providing a much better and quicker user experience. We worked throughout 2020 (and a significant part of 2019) to automate the entity application process and are hopeful that we will be able to provide this online in summer 2021.

### **4.5 More appropriate categories of registrant**

The work to consider whether we need to change the current categories of registrant is an integral part of the review of our regulatory arrangements. It was originally identified through our evidence gathering about the market and the way attorneys/firms work and the change in business models as a result of the pandemic which will also inform this element of the review.

### **4.6 Accreditation and monitoring of training providers**

Brunel University's new trade mark attorney qualifying pathway was accredited by IPReg in 2020. In addition we also reaccredited Brunel's patent attorney qualifying pathway.<sup>1</sup> In order to increase transparency of the accreditation process, we published (for the first time) the [assessment report](#) of the independent specialists who undertook the process. We will continue to publish these reports in future. Additionally, we introduced annual reporting requirements for all IPReg-accredited agencies. These include progress updates on accreditation recommendations, student feedback, results

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<sup>1</sup> Accreditation normally lasts for 5 years.

breakdown. The first round of this annual reporting was completed at the end of 2020 and Education Working Group feedback on the reports was provided to all agencies.

The Basic Litigation Skills Course provided by CPD Training UK was also reaccredited for the standard 5 years in 2020.

As a result of the pandemic and in line with government guidelines course providers had to change their delivery mechanisms for learning and assessment. CPD Training UK made successful applications to us for accreditation of its virtual and physical courses.

CPD Training UK was not alone in needing to review the standard delivery of its offer in light of the extenuating circumstances presented by 2020. We required all qualifying pathway providers<sup>2</sup> to assure us of appropriate quality assurance standards for their proposed online assessments. The IPReg Education Working Group considered these applications using the assessment and appeals procedures in the [IPReg Accreditation Handbook](#) and agreed and/or made suggestions, to the proposals. Online assessment proposals for 2021 were reviewed and informed by reviews of the 2020 online assessments and any lessons learned as well as encouraging capitalising on the potential gains that this mode of assessment can present.

#### Other 2020 workstreams of the IPReg Education Working Group and team

We continued working with Queen Mary University London with the aim of ensuring that IPReg's reaccreditation recommendations are taken forward and student feedback obtained by CITMA is leading to the necessary improvements in course administration, structure, content and delivery.

We reflected more widely on IPReg's accreditation processes resulting in development of, consultation on, and implementation of an [accreditation withdrawal procedure](#). We hope to never have to use the procedure but it is important to have a transparent and accountable process in place in case of such circumstances.

We published [Frequently Asked Questions](#) regarding the attorney qualifying pathways.

We had initial discussions with CIPA about its Mercer Review of the training, support and assessment of patent attorney trainees, and with the PEB regarding the scheduling of the (re)accreditation of its Final Diploma examinations, in the context of that review.

#### **4.7 Diversity Funding**

IPReg funded the following diversity initiatives in 2020:

- £5,000 to [Stemettes](#) which seeks to encourage girls and young women to become interested in studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects and to help give them confidence to network and speak in public; the funding will enable publication of 5 issues of its magazine;
- £8,000 to [In2scienceUK](#) sponsoring 10 students to go through their "IP Scholars" tailored programme of workshops and skills days including an introduction to careers in the intellectual property sector, careers advice and mentoring.

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<sup>2</sup> Bournemouth University, Brunel University, Nottingham Trent University, the Patent Examination Board and Queen Mary University London

We worked closely with [IP Inclusive](#) through 2020 to determine the appropriate timing, mechanism and questions of a diversity questionnaire for registered attorneys (published in January 2021). In December 2019, the Board allocated £2,000 to IP Inclusive's 2020 operating costs.

Towards the end of 2020 we appointed an external organisation to conduct the questionnaire (in January 2021), analyse its findings and provide diversity training for the IPReg team and Board. We also agreed a Policy on Inclusive Language [[link to follow when published](#)].

#### **4.8 Law Tech**

In July IPReg was delighted to be invited to join [Law Tech UK's](#) Regulatory Response Unit (RRU) and contribute regulatory expertise to its regulatory [sandbox pilot](#). The sandbox has been designed to fast track potentially transformative ideas, products and services that address the legal needs of businesses and society. IPReg is working closely with all the organisations represented on the RRU to ensure the success of the pilot.