

It Takes **Skill** to Recognize **Ingenuity**

# Engineers *and* Scientists

Job announcements now open for  
**Patent Examiners**

**Learn more:** [www.uspto.gov/jobs](http://www.uspto.gov/jobs)

**Apply online:** <http://uspto.usajobs.gov>

UNITED STATES  
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



# The USPTO is looking for engineers and scientists to work closely with entrepreneurs to process patent applications, reduce the backlog of unexamined patents, and speed up the overall process, allowing businesses to move their innovation to market more quickly, and giving them more opportunities to create new jobs.

## What is a patent examiner?

A patent examiner is a federal employee who examines patent applications to determine whether or not a patent can be granted for various new inventions — many of which are on the cutting edge of tomorrow’s technological breakthroughs. Patent examiners review two types of applications — design patents and utility patents. Design patents protect the ornamental appearance of an article, e.g. a watch face, while utility patents protect an invention, e.g. the watch itself.

As a patent examiner, you will:

- Search prior art to ensure that an invention is new and unique
- Review patent applications to ensure conformity to formal requirements
- Write office actions communicating your findings on patentability to inventors and patent practitioners

## Basic qualifications

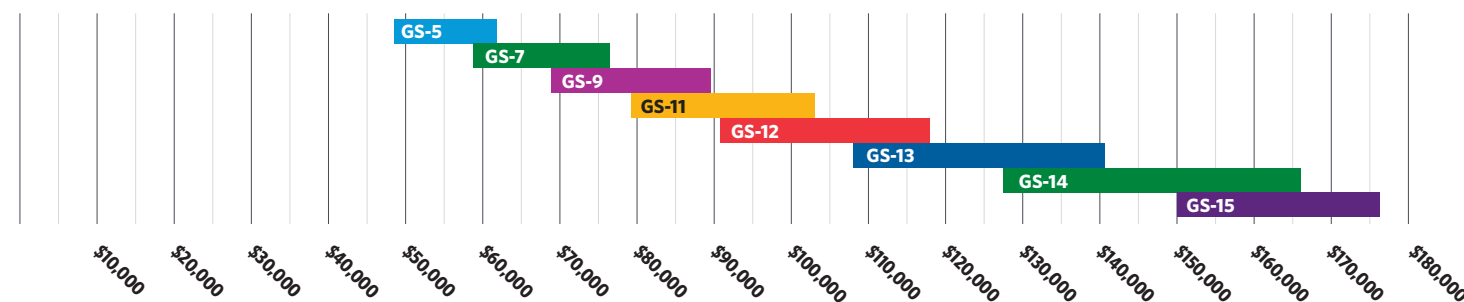
Minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in engineering or science.

Successful completion of a full 4-year course at an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor’s degree, or higher, that included a major field of study, or specific course requirements, in a variety of engineering and science disciplines. Check <https://uspto.usajobs.gov> for the most recent job announcements.

## Compensation

Your earning potential is one of the most important aspects of pursuing federal employment. Most agencies use the General Schedule (GS), which is the predominant pay scale for federal employees. The grade level assigned to a position determines the pay level for that job. Most patent examiners start with the USPTO as a GS-7 or GS-9. **The accompanying annual salary for that GS range is \$58,910 to \$89,391.** For more information, visit [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov) (keyword: pay).

## Patent Examiner Pay Scale, Fiscal Year 2022



## Benefits

USPTO’s comprehensive federal benefits package rivals those offered by top U.S. corporations. Our balanced work-life package includes:

- Flexible work schedules including telework
- Paid leave: starting with 13 days of vacation, 13 days of sick leave
- Paid overtime and/or compensatory time
- 11 paid holidays each year
- Incentive awards program
- Health benefits plan and retirement package
- Business casual dress policy
- Transit subsidy
- Job security
- Competitive salary

## Real, valuable work experience for students

Our unpaid, volunteer USPTO Extern Program provides talented high school and college students interested in engineering, science, and law with unique opportunities to gain valuable skills and professional experience. Here’s how:

- Explore your career options while developing or enhancing your personal and professional skills;
- Experience what it’s like to be a patent examiner, and learn about protecting intellectual property; and
- Gain first-hand knowledge of the responsibilities of patent practices and decision-making processes.

To learn more about our student opportunities or to apply, please visit [www.uspto.gov/jobs/student-programs](http://www.uspto.gov/jobs/student-programs).

The process to fill a patent examiner vacancy typically takes 10 weeks. This chart outlines the steps in the process.

Patent Examiner Hiring Process (10-week timeline)	
Week	Activity
	Job Opportunity announcement (JOA) closes on USAJOBS.gov
1	HR reviews applications for qualifications (2 weeks)
2	
3	Hiring officials review applications, conduct interviews, and make selections (4 - 6 weeks)
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
USAJOBS status update: "Selected or Not Selected"	
9	HR extends job offers (1-2 weeks)
10	

You can check status anytime on USAJOBS.gov.

Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
5	\$47,557	\$49,142	\$50,727	\$52,312	\$53,897	\$55,482	\$57,067	\$58,653	\$60,238	\$61,823
7	\$58,910	\$60,873	\$62,836	\$64,799	\$66,762	\$68,725	\$70,688	\$72,651	\$74,614	\$76,577
9	\$68,762	\$71,054	\$73,346	\$75,638	\$77,930	\$80,223	\$82,515	\$84,807	\$87,099	\$89,391
11	\$79,206	\$81,846	\$84,486	\$87,125	\$89,765	\$92,404	\$95,044	\$97,684	\$100,323	\$102,963
12	\$90,838	\$93,866	\$96,894	\$99,923	\$102,951	\$105,980	\$109,008	\$112,037	\$115,065	\$118,093
13	\$108,017	\$111,618	\$115,218	\$118,818	\$122,419	\$126,019	\$129,619	\$133,219	\$136,820	\$140,420
14	\$127,644	\$131,899	\$136,153	\$140,408	\$144,663	\$148,917	\$153,172	\$157,427	\$161,681	\$165,936
15	\$150,144	\$155,148	\$160,153	\$165,158	\$170,163	\$175,168	\$176,300	\$176,300	\$176,300	\$176,300



One of the **best places to work**  
in the federal government.®

## Why should you work for the USPTO?

- **Bringing innovation to life:** Your expertise will focus on analyzing advanced, complex concepts leading to America's modern breakthroughs
- **Challenging, engaging atmosphere:** USPTO is the largest IP rights entity in the nation where you'll gain experience, training and mentorship you won't get anywhere else
- **Your career, your way:** You will have a well-defined career path that gives you specific milestones to reach for while advancing throughout your career
- **Flexible work schedules:** USPTO's award-winning telework program makes finding work-life balance very easy by providing you with the ability to create a lifestyle that suits your needs

For more information please call 1-800-786-9757  
or visit us at [www.uspto.gov/jobs](http://www.uspto.gov/jobs)

***U.S. citizenship required***

## About the USPTO

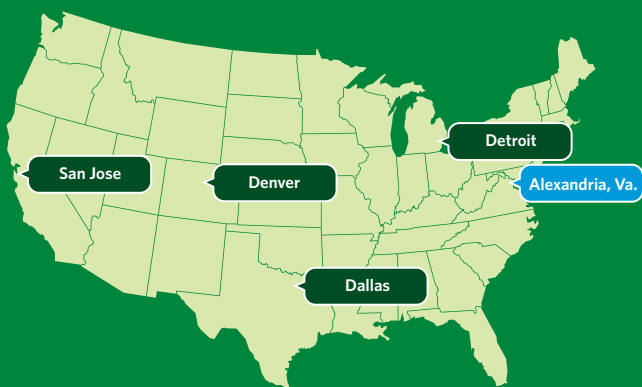
Our work spurs the kind of American innovation that can change the world.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has been serving the economic interests of America for more than 200 years. We are responsible for granting U.S. intellectual property rights for patents and trademarks.

Our efforts have provided inventors exclusive rights over their discoveries. It's an effort that continues to contribute to a strong global economy, to encourage investment in innovation and to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit for the 21st century.



*The USPTO is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, with offices in California, Colorado, Michigan and Texas.*



# America's innovation agency: Virtually no place better to work



A patent examiner is a federal employee who examines patent applications to determine whether or not a patent can be granted for new, cutting edge inventions. Your expertise can help to bring innovation to life. As an examiner, you will focus on analyzing advanced, complex concepts that ultimately protect American **intellectual property (IP)** and breakthrough inventions. Join us, and find out for yourself why the USPTO remains one of the best places to work in the federal government year after year.



## Put your hard work to work

You worked hard to earn a specialized STEM degree. Now use it for a mission-focused career that protects American innovation.



## A mission-focused mindset

As you pursue your STEM degree, get involved as an extern at the USPTO, attend a recruitment event, follow us on social media, and check out our USPTO Jobs page. Also, consider boosting your writing/communications skills.

## Grow your professional skills

Your STEM background will help you investigate inventions and determine if they should receive patents. Through challenging work, your technical skills can grow.



## Bring innovation to life

By granting patents as an examiner, you'll help businesses quickly move their innovations to market, which will create new jobs and expand commerce.



## Impact lives and the economy

Many patents, like those in the health sector, can positively impact lives. You'll end your work day knowing that the patents you grant positively impact the U.S. economy.



## Enjoy work-life balance and career satisfaction

Why choose anything less than a fulfilling job?

**80% of USPTO employees are happy with their jobs and 92% believe that the work they do is important.**

Do work that you are passionate about in a culture of camaraderie, diversity, inclusion, and community.



### Compensation

Most patent examiners start with the USPTO as a GS-7 or GS-9.

The accompanying annual salary for that GS range is **\$57,071 to \$86,601**.



### Basic qualifications

To apply, you must be a U.S. citizen and also possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree in engineering or science.



### Promotion potential—your career, your way

You will have a well-defined career path that gives you specific milestones to reach for while advancing throughout your career. Patent examiners, based on their achievements, are noncompetitively promotable up to the GS-13 level!

**Your career as a patent examiner is just a click away.  
Apply now on USAJobs.gov.**

USPTO offices: Alexandria, VA | Dallas, TX | Denver, CO | Detroit, MI | San Jose, CA

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Week	<h2>Patent Examiner Hiring Process (10-week timeline)</h2> <p>Job Opportunity announcement (JOA) closes on USAJOBS.gov</p>
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4	
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6	
7	
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USAJOBS status update: "Selected or Not Selected"	
9	HR extends job offers (1 - 2 weeks)
10	

You can check status anytime on USAJOBS.gov.

It Takes **Skill** to Recognize **Ingenuity**

## Introducing USPTO Patent Examiner Rebecca V.

**“I find the ability to set my own schedule is a great benefit. The flexibility has allowed me to adopt a work schedule that balances well with my personal life.”**



### **What is your educational background?**

I graduated from George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering in 2012.

### **What made you accept a position at the USPTO?**

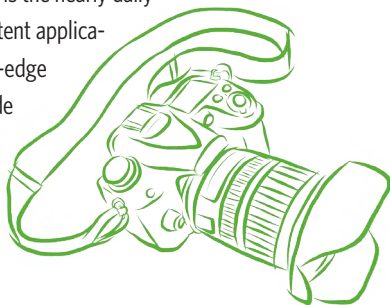
After graduation, I was seeking a Washington, D.C., area engineering position. My father, who happens to be a patent attorney, suggested that the USPTO might be a good fit. So I did some investigating and was impressed by the competitive salary, benefit structures and flexible work schedules being offered. As a result, I made the decision to apply for the position of patent examiner.

### **What is your job at the USPTO?**

I joined the USPTO as a patent examiner in 2013. My job is to review and analyze patent applications to determine if they are eligible to be issued as U.S. patents. Like most examiners, I concentrate on specific technology areas. For me, those include video compression and various camera technologies.

### **Why do you like working at the USPTO?**

I find the ability to set my own schedule is a great benefit. That flexibility has allowed me to adopt a work schedule that balances well with my personal life. Also, the teleworking program provides for even more flexibility in choosing work hours. Another great benefit is the nearly daily exposure to new technologies. Patent applications are often directed to cutting-edge products and methods, and provide a constant source of learning, which I really enjoy.



### **How would you describe a typical work day?**

My day typically begins with a look at the status of the patent applications on my docket calendar. The docket will determine whether my day is primarily devoted to handling a new patent application, or preparing a written reply to a response previously filed by a patent applicant. Other common activities include telephone conferences with patent attorneys representing patent applicants, and attending training sessions regarding new or updated operating guidelines.

### **What is the most interesting case you've worked on?**

I reviewed an application for an invention that detected fraud in self-checkout scanners. I found this interesting because its real-world application was so easy to visualize. In addition, I was quite impressed with solutions offered by the invention itself.

### **Why do you think being a patent examiner is a great first job out of college?**

For one, the salary schedule coupled with benefits is certainly competitive. Also, it is difficult to imagine another comparable position elsewhere which offers such a high degree of work schedule flexibility. Further, the constant exposure to new and cutting-edge technologies always keeps things interesting.

### **What advice would you give someone interested in becoming a patent examiner?**

Self-discipline and a willingness to learn are two vital skills to have as a patent examiner. Examiners operate independently to get the job done. In addition, technologies are constantly evolving, so it is necessary to spend time learning what is new in a given field.

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Step-by-step instructions for using

# USAJOBS<sup>®</sup>

Account Setup ■ Resumes ■ Searches ■ Job Applications

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The USPTO is looking for talented professionals to support our mission. The best way for you to join one of the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® is to visit USAJobs.gov (keyword: USPTO) and apply online. Here's an inside look into the application process:

## Account Setup

Creating an account in USAJobs is your first step to the application process.

Go to USAJobs.gov. Click on the “Create an Account” button at the top right corner and begin filling out your personal information.

USAJobs account setup page

USAJobs resume page

## TIPS AND FEATURES:

1. You can log in using your email address and password instead of your username and password.
2. If you forget your username or password, your account is searchable using an email address but you will have to answer security questions in order for your username/password to be emailed to you.
3. A USAJobs account will also allow you to:
  - Access your resume and supporting documentation at any time
  - View your application status

## My Account PROFILE

Once you've set up your account, the next step is to build your profile which includes your personal information, current citizenship status and Veteran's preference status.

USPTO uses an automated hiring system interface with USAJobs, so you only have to enter your profile information once during the initial registration process.

Some frequently used features to the system include: automatic email notifications/reminders, password updates, and application edits.

## RESUME

You can either “build a new resume” or “upload a new resume.” Both methods are accepted by the USPTO.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- **Tailoring your resume is especially beneficial if you're searching for jobs in a field that requires specialized skills.** You can save up to five different versions of your resume.
- Information you input is not automatically saved, so be sure to use the "Save" feature frequently.
- Uploaded resumes have a **3MB** size restriction.

## Job Search & Saved Searches

There are multiple ways to search in USAJobs including: browsing, advanced or international search, Jobs in Demand and Most Popular Jobs. You can also search by job series or position title.

**You can save up to ten customized job searches to find jobs matching your criteria such as: title, series, grade, location, agencies, etc.**

Once you've created your customized searches, USAJobs will email results of job announcements that match your search criteria on a daily, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis as desired. Just click "Create a New Saved Search" to get started.

## Saved Jobs and Documents

Once you find jobs you are interested in applying for, you can save up to 25 announcements in your profile by simply clicking the "Save Job" button.

**You can upload up to five supporting documents in your application profile that are requested either at the time of application or once qualification determinations are made.**

Examples of supporting documents include:

- Veteran's documentation — DD214, SF-15, and/or letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs
- Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50) when applying with reinstatement eligibility
- Disability documentation
- Cover letter
- Transcripts from educational institutions
- CTAP/ICTAP when applying internally or externally as a surtplus or displaced federal employee.

## Application Status

Once you have applied for a position, you can monitor the status of your application in USAJobs. Anytime there is a change in your position status, it immediately becomes visible in your profile.

For more information on using USAJobs, visit:

<https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/tutorials>

## About the USPTO

*The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has been serving America's economic interests for over 200 years. We are responsible for granting U.S. intellectual property rights through patents and trademarks. Our efforts have provided millions of inventors exclusive rights to their discoveries.*

Based on employee feedback through the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, the USPTO was ranked as one of the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® in 2015 by the Partnership for Public Service, an independent nonprofit organization.



★ One of the **best places to work**  
in the federal government.®



United States Patent and Trademark Office

Alexandria, VA

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[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)



## Meet our student volunteers

The USPTO offers unpaid externships year-round through our eight-week Student Volunteer Program, which allows college and graduate students to gain valuable experience in their field of study. Opportunities include externships in trademark law, HR, IT, international affairs, procurement, and other intellectual property-related areas. Meet a few of our recent student volunteers inside.

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**uspto**

# Alex Carpenter

HOPE COLLEGE — Majors: English Literature, Political Science

***"The people in my office have been helpful, professional and friendly. They have made my time at the USPTO enjoyable and informative."***

When you ask Alex Carpenter why he chose an externship with the USPTO, his answer is simple. After working for a law journal, he wanted to experience the other side of journalism. That led him to an opportunity with the USPTO Office of the Chief Communications Officer (OCCO). During Alex's externship, he never had a typical work day. Because the opportunities were so widespread, he was often busy juggling assignments both inside and outside the office. Alex drafted blog posts, edited speeches, worked with audio and visual technicians and examined press interviews.

What's his advice for a student considering an externship with the USPTO? "Go for it! If there is something you want to do or someone you want to meet, just ask. If the USPTO can make it happen, they will."



# Thomas Hajec

VIRGINIA TECH — Major: Economics, Minor: Chemistry

***"I have really enjoyed the freedom and trust given to me while externing at the USPTO. Everyone treats you as they would any other employee in the office, with respect and high expectations."***

If you ask Thomas Hajec his favorite part of his externship with the USPTO Office of Human Resources, his answer may surprise you — meetings. According to Thomas, not only do you get a feel for how a professional meeting is conducted, but you also get to observe that everyone, including him, voices their ideas. During his externship, Thomas was assigned to set up and conduct focus groups to support Hispanic recruiting efforts. He enjoyed this opportunity because it gave him insight into what another culture values.

Thomas is preparing to begin his final year of college. What are his plans for the future? "Working with the USPTO has helped me decide that I will likely consider a government position. I've witnessed some of the benefits that come with working at the agency. Who knows? Maybe I'll apply for a full-time position with the USPTO next summer!"



***"Don't be afraid to go outside of your comfort zone. The USPTO does a lot of cool things besides issuing patents. Take advantage and explore different areas that might not first come to mind when you think of patents and intellectual property."***

According to Andrew Cuatto, one of the best parts of his externship in the USPTO Office of the Undersecretary was being challenged to work with patent data and see the various ways it could be useful. One of Andrew's assignments was to conduct data analysis on a variety of issues, including ways to improve websites and integrate patent data into the landscape of open data usage. Andrew liked having the opportunity to broaden his horizons and see some of the different aspects of a federal agency.

What was the coolest part of Andrew's externship? Having the opportunity to attend a meeting for the Cancer Moonshot Initiative in Vice President Joe Biden's office. "It was cool to get to sit in on such an important meeting and see different branches of the government working together to achieve a common goal."



***"Being able to see so many people in a position that I hope to eventually reach in terms of public service has been inspiring to me."***

Why did Nithya Pathalam accept an externship with the USPTO Office of the Chief Communications Officer (OCCO) this summer? With an interest in intellectual property (IP) law and a desire to experience life in Washington, DC, this opportunity presented the best of both worlds. Nithya spent her summer working on the USPTO website, updating the USPTO's monthly publication — Inventors Eye, organizing 2,000 FAQs, and helping to coordinate the logistics of a trip taken by the agency director to California.

Nithya enjoyed working in OCCO because the office is involved in everything that is happening internally and externally, related to the agency.

What's next for Nithya? Whether she chooses to attend law school to pursue an IP law career or fulfills her desire to have a public service career with the federal government, her externship has prepared her to succeed.



# Andrew Cuatto

UNIV. OF MICHIGAN — Majors: Economics, Mathematics

# Nithya Pathalam

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY — Majors: Poli Sci, Biology

# The USPTO Extern Program



The USPTO Extern Program is the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's unpaid externship (student volunteer) program. Externships are 12 weeks and provide students the opportunity to interact with experts in various disciplines, while developing personal and professional skills.

Opportunities are available in the areas of engineering, science and law. Students learn about the agency's mission and get to experience what it is like to be a patent examiner, specifically the responsibilities of various patent practices, including obtaining a practical working knowledge of patent decision-making processes.

Most students participate in the program during the summer. However, spring and fall

opportunities are available on a limited basis. Externships are typically available at our agency headquarters in Alexandria, VA, and our regional offices in Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; Detroit, MI; and San Jose, CA.

In addition, we provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. These include on-demand sign language interpretation, real-time captioning, memory aid recording devices, office video phones, screen readers and more.

Visit [www.uspto.gov/jobs/student-programs](http://www.uspto.gov/jobs/student-programs) to learn more about the USPTO Extern Program. Please note that we do not provide lodging or accommodations.

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## Introducing Patent Examiner and former Extern

# Shannon



***“My favorite assignment was a hearing aid application because it was a device that has benefited my family. It was cool to see inventors working to improve that existing technology.”***

If you ask Shannon why she applied for an externship with the USPTO, her answer would be simple. “In college, I heard about the intersection of engineering and law and was eager to learn more about the field. I felt that the Externship Program would provide the initial exposure to intellectual property I was looking for.”

During Shannon’s two-month externship in the summer of 2011, she worked on patent applications involving semiconductor technology. What she enjoyed most was obtaining first-hand patent examining experience. “I was assigned real cases and used the actual search tools full-time examiners use. My favorite assignment was a hearing aid application because it was a device that has benefited my family. It was cool to see inventors working to improve that existing technology.”

As Shannon reflects on her experience, she believes participating in the externship program is a good opportunity because it provides more than a glimpse into the life of a full-time examiner. She had to prioritize her cases to meet deadlines, conduct research to determine whether the technology disclosed in patent applications already existed, speak with attorneys and complete legal and technical writing, just as full-time examiners do.

Today, Shannon holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from the University of Virginia, and she has been a full-time patent examiner for two years. She continues to do work on semiconductor technology, as she did as an extern. Her favorite part of her job is being able to clearly understand its expectations. “I know my exact duties and can easily construct a list of priorities. The USPTO provides all the resources that are required to succeed in my job.”

And if you ask Shannon why she likes working at the USPTO, she enjoys the agency’s sense of community. “People are welcoming and eager to help new examiners. I also like that the USPTO offers a diverse array of employee affinity groups, which are organizations based on shared interests. They provide opportunities to meet co-workers outside the office.”

If you have an interest in engineering and law, Shannon recommends that you pursue an externship and ultimately a full-time examiner position with the USPTO. “Since joining the agency, I’ve always felt welcome and secure. I can certainly say that you cannot find this community and flexibility in every organization.”

## Introducing Patent Examiner and former Extern

# Uyen

Uyen's journey at the USPTO began in 2011, when she was an eight-week summer extern. Uyen learned about the USPTO from her brother, who was already a patent examiner. Neither of them knew about the program, so when Uyen began researching the agency, she was surprised to discover the opportunity. "I was interested in applying for a job as an examiner, and I thought the externship program would be a good opportunity to learn more about the job itself."

When Uyen started as an extern, her first stop was the Patent Training Academy, where she spent eight days learning about examining patent applications. From there, she was assigned to a group that examined applications related to electrical circuits and systems, and she worked alongside a patent examiner.

"I enjoyed my externship experience. It was nice being on campus and living in Alexandria, about 15 minutes from Washington, D.C. The public transit system was so convenient, I took the Metro from work into D.C. I loved visiting the museums, restaurants, and neighborhoods."

Starting at the USPTO as an extern helped Uyen realize that working for the agency as a patent examiner was a good fit for her. "The combination of my brother working at the agency and my externship experience positively influenced my decision to pursue a full-time job. Through the externship, I was able to understand the responsibilities and challenges of being an examiner. However, what was most important to me was the satisfaction of having a career I could see myself excelling in."

Upon receiving her Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of South Florida in 2013, Uyen immediately joined the USPTO. She says, "The work I do as an examiner is similar to my experience as an extern, so I think the program did a good job at preparing me."

Today, Uyen lives in Florida and is an examiner in the Patents Hoteling Program (PHP). She was able to return to her native Florida as a full-time teleworker after meeting all of the PHP requirements.

She examines patent applications related to static memory. "I see how my decisions impact the consumer through products like cell phones, games and computers. It's amazing to see patents applied to the real world and shape technologies that we use every day."

Uyen recommends the agency as a great place to work. "I have a good work/life balance, and I'm happy. I would suggest students participate in the extern program to get a feel for what being an examiner is like."



***"What was most important to me was the satisfaction of having a career I could see myself excelling in."***



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