

## Graduate Case Study

**Name:** Adam Yates  
**Job Title:** Technical Assistant  
**Degrees:** BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences  
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 University of Edinburgh  
**Practice Area:** Patents  
**Technology Areas:** Biotechnology



### Experience at Dehns:

I started at Dehns in 2008 after completing a PhD and a short stint as a Research Fellow in academia. After my experience in academia I knew that I wanted a job with a scientific focus, but I also knew that my future lay away from the lab bench!

The laboratory in which I studied for my PhD produced a number of inventions that became the subject of patent applications and it was through this exposure that I first learnt of the patent profession. I attended a careers talk during which the career was described as one which combines scientific, legal and linguistic skills; this sounded interesting and so I applied for and got a trainee position with Dehns.

I work on cases for a variety of clients, including large pharmaceutical companies, SMEs and universities and these cases cover a wide variety of different technologies. The work is both interesting and intellectually challenging; not only do I need to understand the technical subject-matter of a case, but I also need to consider the relevant laws that apply to a given situation.

No two days at work are the same, but a typical day might include considering a letter from a Patent Office Examiner which raises some objections to a patent application, corresponding with clients regarding such letters and trying to develop a creative way to develop a persuasive argument against any objections. I find it very satisfying if one of my suggestions turns out to be successful. Other work includes reading and analysing information about a new invention and then drafting a new patent application for that invention. Attending Hearings at the EPO is also part of the job.

Trainees at Dehns are involved in case work from day one, and as such much of the training is 'on the job', which gives you a real sense of responsibility. You share an office with a more experienced trainee which means you always have someone other than your supervising partners to answer your questions. In my first year at Dehns I obtained the Postgraduate Certificate in IP Law from Brunel University. Alternatively, Dehns trainees might complete the Certificate at Queen Mary, University of London. These courses give a good grounding in the fundamentals of IP law and provide exemption from the foundation level UK qualifying exams. As I am starting to find out, the final qualifying exams require a lot of hard work and preparation, but your private study is supplemented by in-house tutorials and lectures organised by CIPA.

Dehns is a very friendly firm with a sociable group of trainees, and, after nearly three years in the job, I am confident that the choice of a career as a patent attorney with Dehns was the right one for me.

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