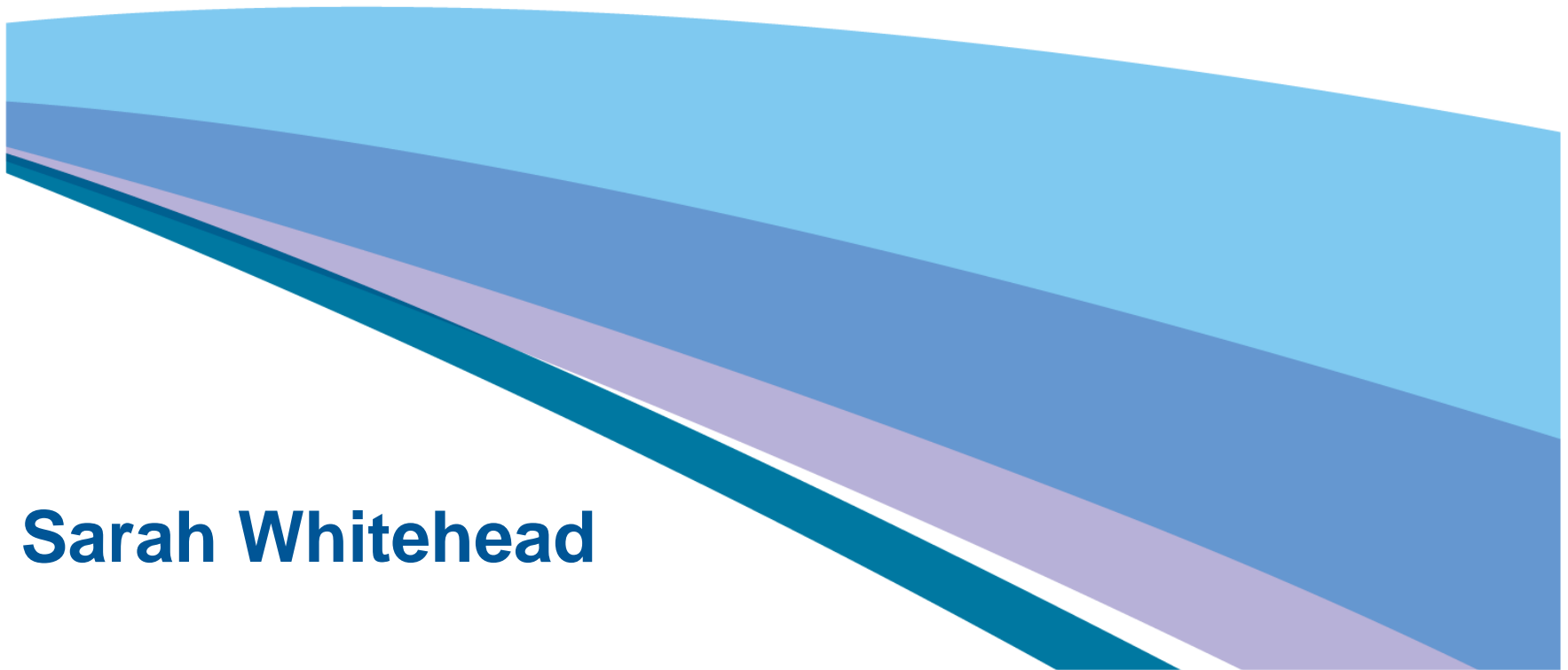




Intellectual  
Property  
Office

# Enhancing Patent Examiner Capacity at the UK IPO



**Sarah Whitehead**

# Initial Search and Examination Training (ISET)

- Lectures on core patent law topics
- Patent IT training (PROSE, PDAX, Epoquenet)

## Transition Casework

- Working in tutor groups
- More independent working
- Dummy cases
- Real life cases

## Joining new groups

- 1-to-1 mentorship with line manager



# Further Associate Examiner Training

- Further search tools
  - Two/three months after initial training ends
  - Two sessions
- IPO Tours
- Telephone training
- Advanced Search and Examination (ASET)
  - 13-18 months into the Office
  - 17 sessions
- Wider Legal Framework (WLF)
  - 20-22 months into the Office
  - 12 sessions




# Diploma/Masters in IP Law

- Run with the University of South Wales
- Most examiners take it around 3/4 years in the Office
- Diploma is 2 years of weekly lectures
- Highly recommended for all patent examiners for progression to senior examiner



# Training for Examiners and Senior Examiners

- Regular examiner training (RET)
    - A yearly series of ~26 seminars
    - Attend all over a five year rolling period
  - Examiner Line Manager Essentials (ELME)
    - Management training course specific to the examiner job
    - Complements Civil Service management courses
  - Topics in Patent Searching (TIPS)
    - Maintaining our IT skills in searching
  - Technical training
    - Maintaining our technical skills in the area we work
    - On site training, visits, reading, conferences, trade shows...
    - Technical Reps in each group and dedicated website
- 

# Bespoke Training for biotechnology examiners:

## Technical training

- Provided at the IPO by University of Bath
- Bespoke training
- Delivered as a series of lectures over four one-day sessions
- Practical experience – helps understand what the skilled person can and cannot do.
- Just because something can be done, doesn't make it easy: insufficiency and inventive step often turns on this



# Bespoke Training for biotechnology/ Pharma examiners: Legal training

- Specific issues arise: plurality (multiple sequences), one basic concept -> multiple uses; Medical use claims; Support, Insufficiency (and plausibility); search strategies;
- Most training is extremely practical: revision of real case-work
- Group quality forums: discuss specific cases or specific legal issues
- New court judgements: analysed, summarised, practice discussions held, practice agreed.
- Specialised practice guidelines



# International

- KIPO examiner visit to the UK (28<sup>th</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> June) looking at Supplementary Protection Certificates and Patent Term Extension.
- Upcoming SIPO/UK IPO examiner exchange, focus includes biotechnology, biopharma, and chemistry cases





# Any questions?

- Manual of Patent Practice  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/patents-manual-of-patent-practice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/patents-manual-of-patent-practice)
- Chemical guidelines  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-patent-applications-relating-to-chemical-inventions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-patent-applications-relating-to-chemical-inventions)
- Medical guidelines [www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-patent-applications-for-medical-inventions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-patent-applications-for-medical-inventions)
- Biotechnology guidelines  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-patent-applications-for-biotechnological-inventions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-patent-applications-for-biotechnological-inventions)

