

Report of the 2012 salary survey of the IP profession in the UK

Hosted by Fellows and Associates

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1. Introduction

This report presents data from a salary survey of the Intellectual Property profession in the United Kingdom, which was collected between the 8th of January and the 7th of February 2012. For a detailed description of the survey design, weaknesses, and collection method, please refer to Appendix I. An overview of the survey questions and answer options can be found in Appendix II.

2. The sample

2.1. Sample size

A total of 308 respondents started the survey, and the completion rate was 77.6%.

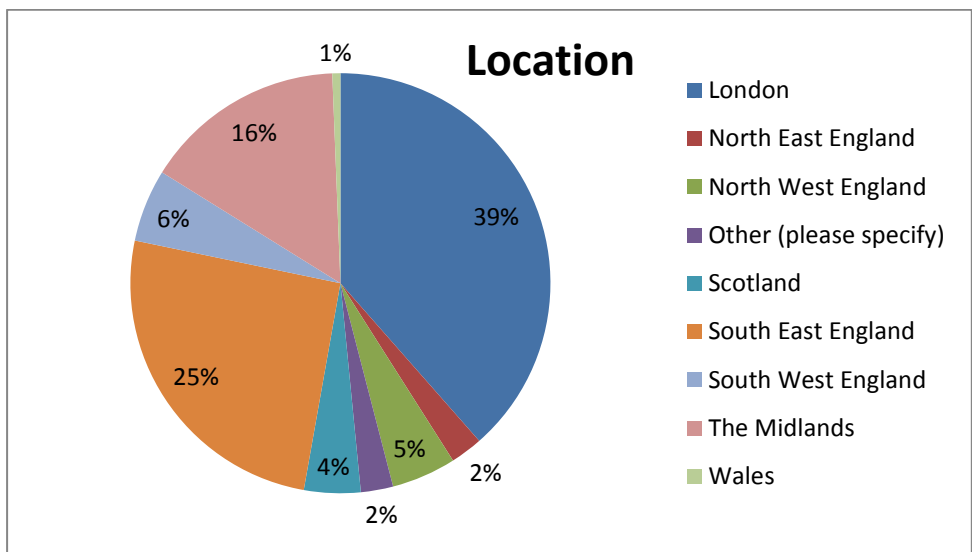
The raw data was cleaned for the purpose of analysis. Those respondents who had skipped the question addressing current salary as well as those who indicated that they are not currently working in the UK were excluded from the sample, bringing the sample count to 240 respondents.

To facilitate meaningful analysis, the following new data categories were extrapolated: year of first qualification; desired increase upon moving jobs or receiving a promotion; and relocation range. The questions addressing current and desired salary presented a number of respondents who had indicated a salary including bonus but no base salary. For both of these questions it was therefore decided to merge the salary figures into the category ‘total package’.

2.2. Descriptive statistics

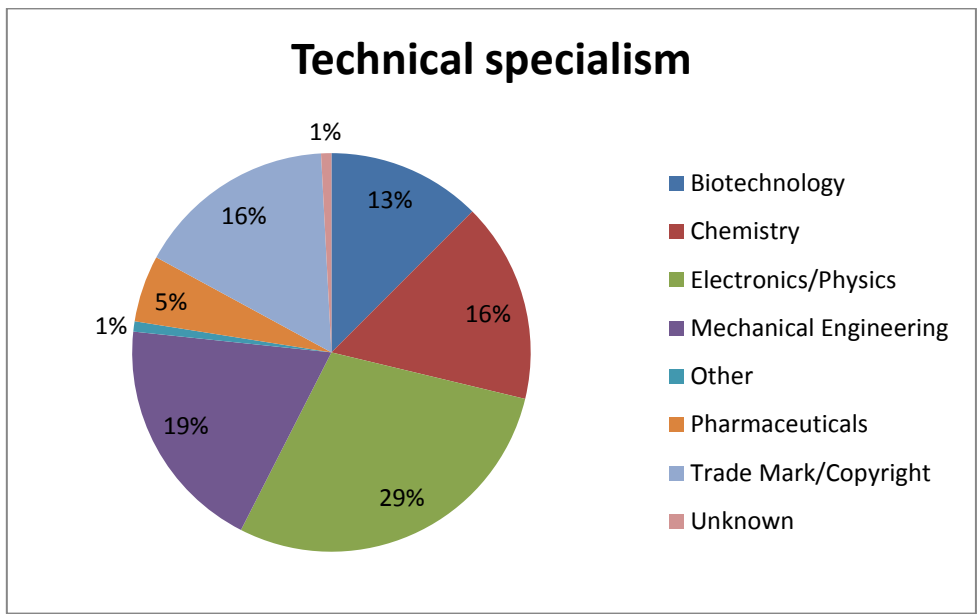
The clean sample displayed the following characteristics:

2.2.1. Location

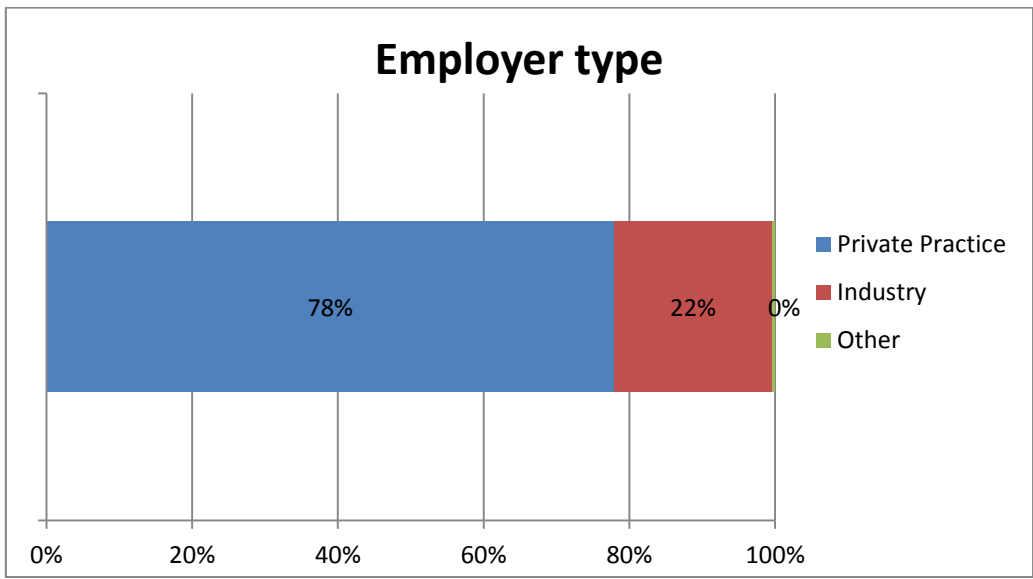


¹ Please note that the question addressing location was inserted into the survey at a later date. This graph is thus based on a subsample.

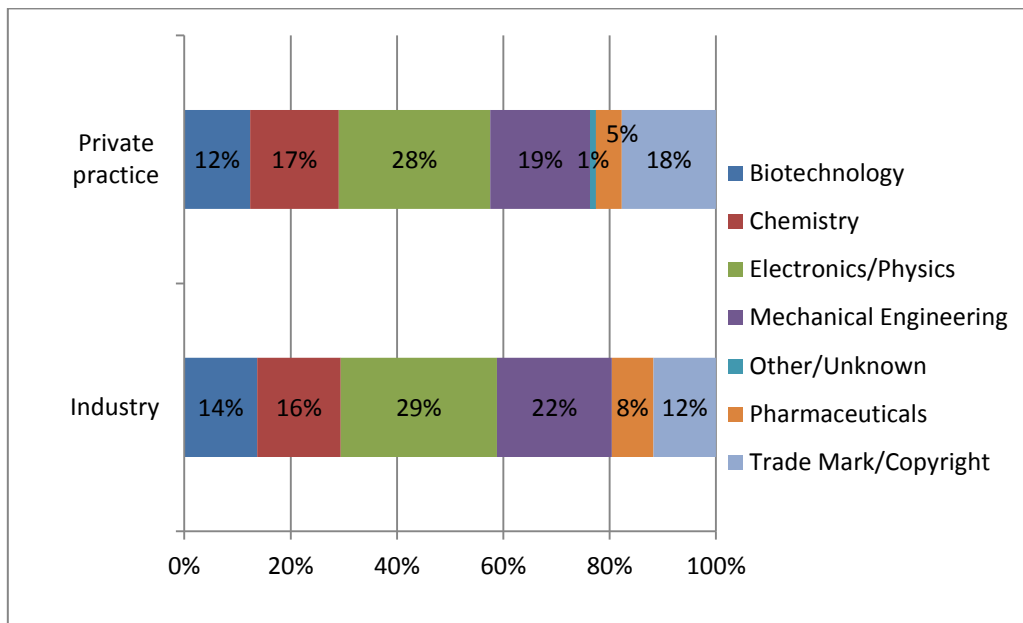
2.2.2. Technical specialism



2.2.3. Employer type

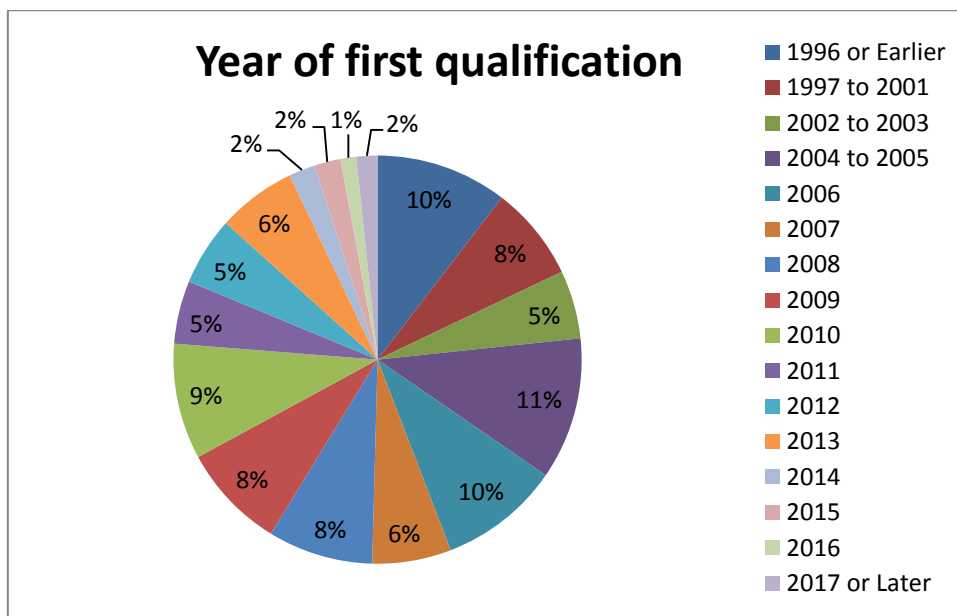


Distribution of respondents' technical specialism in private practice and industry:

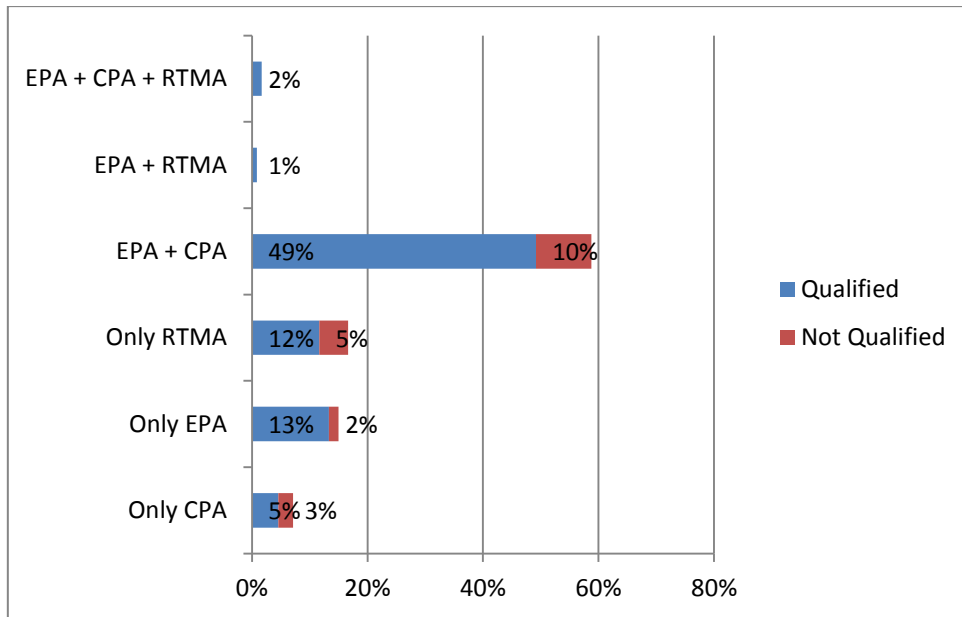


2.2.4. Qualifications

For the purposes of this survey, only the qualifications of Chartered Patent Attorney, European Patent Attorney, and Registered Trade Mark Attorney were taken into consideration. 81% of respondents had obtained their first qualification before 2012 and can therefore be considered qualified. This figure consists of 77% (of the total number of respondents) who had obtained at least one qualification and were not currently planning to obtain more and 4% who had completed at least one and were pursuing further qualifications. 19% of the sample were expecting to obtain their first qualification in the future, and can thus be considered not qualified. As the definition of a part-qualified attorney varies across firms, and the time it takes to qualify differs between individuals, this report will not concern itself with categorising non-qualified attorneys but present the following graph for the reader to deduct what they will.

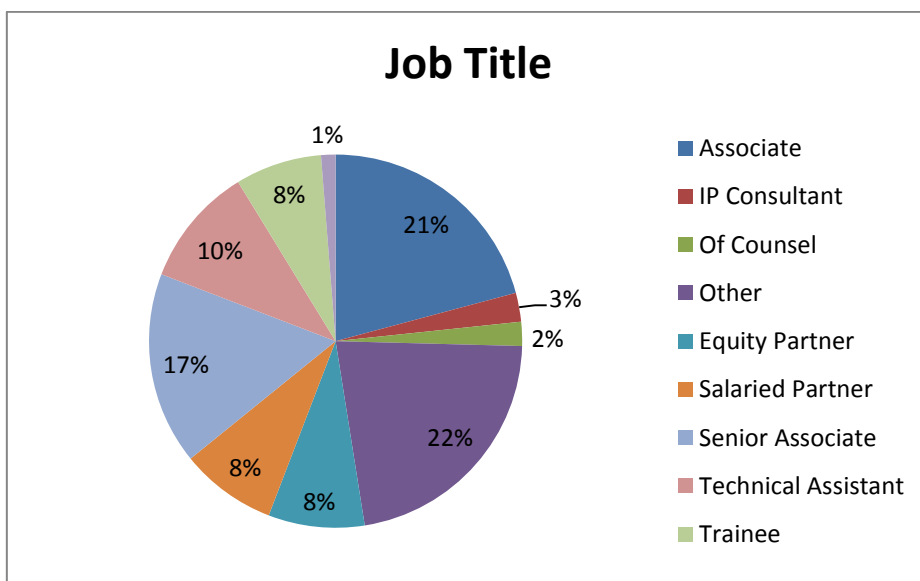


Most respondents had obtained or were pursuing more than one qualification, most notably the combination CPA and EPA:



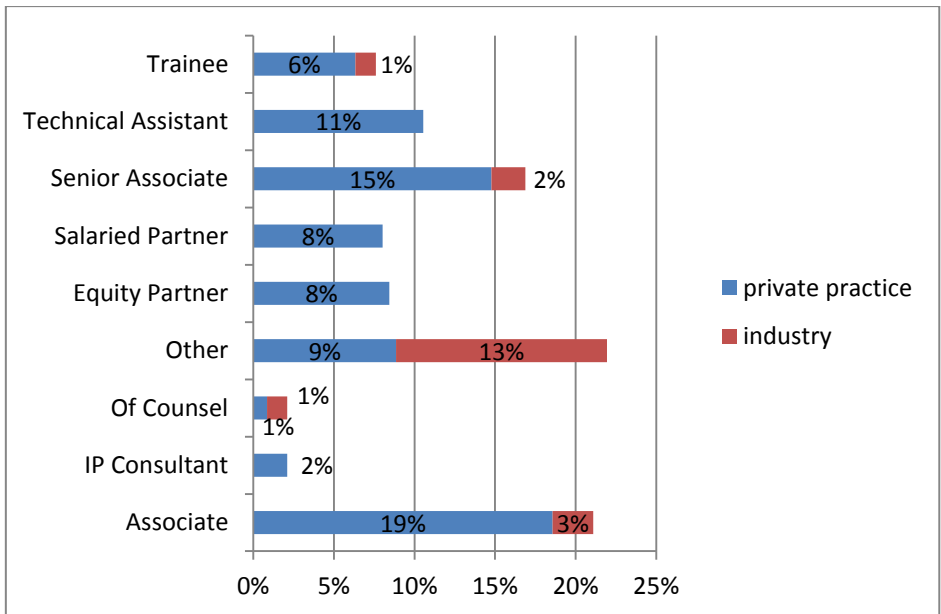
In paragraph 2.2.2, 16% of respondents categorised themselves as specialising in Trade Marks or Copyright whereas this graph indicates that 20% have obtained or are pursuing a Trade Mark qualification. Upon closer examination, 9 individuals make up for the difference, 5 of whom hold additional qualifications. However, 4 of the 9 individuals have obtained only a Trade Mark qualification and have not indicated that they are pursuing others. This discrepancy could be due to the respondents’ interpretation of the question ‘What is your main specialism’, as they may have answered this in relation to their specialisation within the Trade Mark field.

2.2.5. Job title

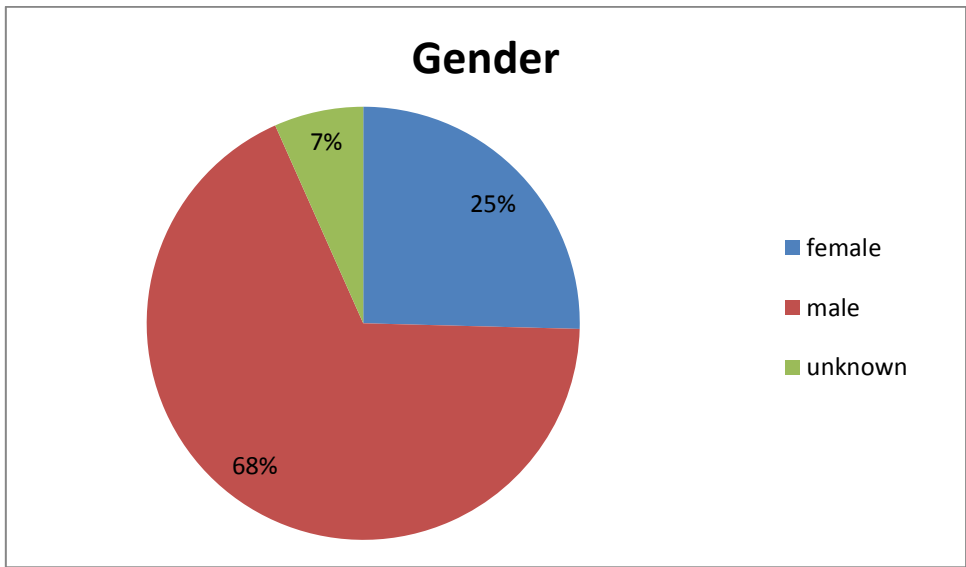


Job title is a problematic factor due to the variety of titles across firms and between private practice and industry. To illustrate this, the chart below outlines the distribution of job titles in industry and private practice. Note the high proportion of industry respondents who chose ‘other’.

assign responses indicating an alternative job title to the existing categories were deemed a threat to reliability and therefore abandoned.



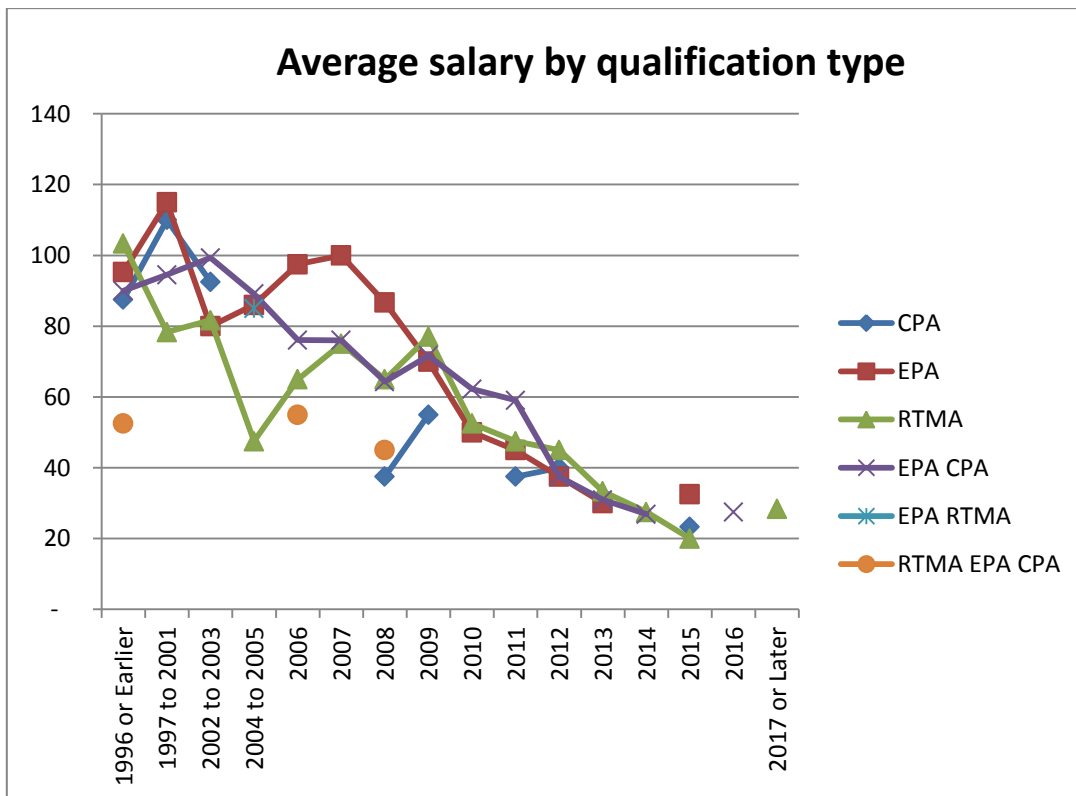
2.2.6. Gender



3. Trends identified

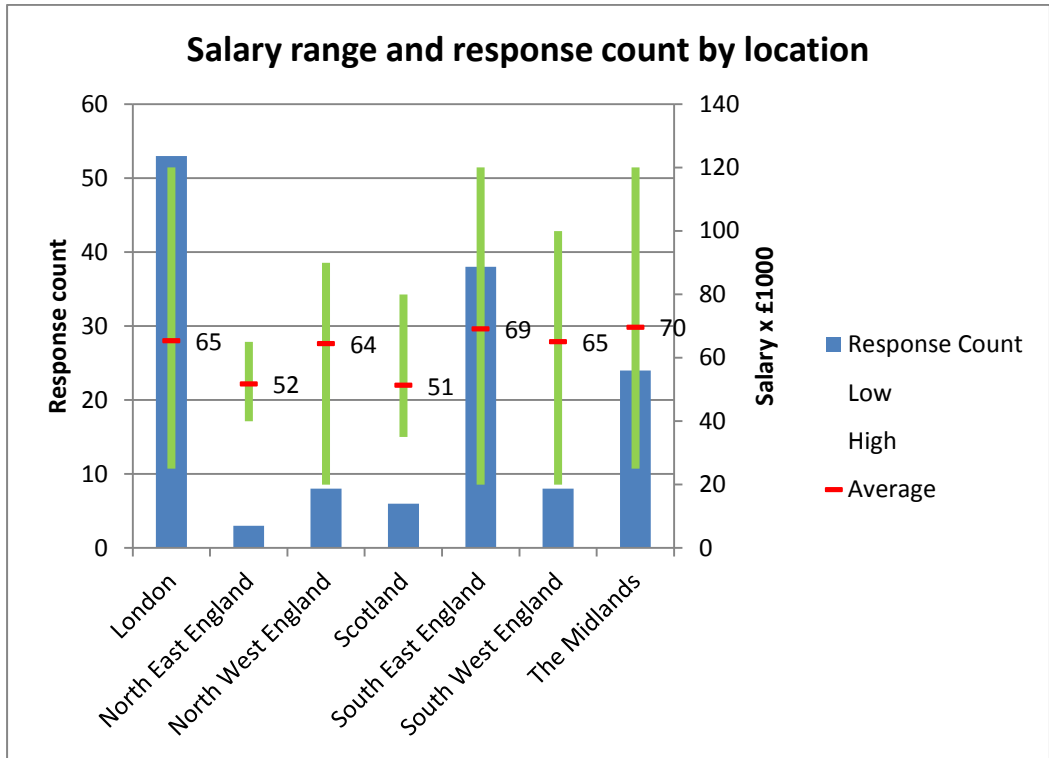
3.1. Qualifications

The data set included two extreme outliers due to qualify in the year 2016, and one in 2017 or later. One of these already had an overseas qualification, and the other two were quite advanced in their career. The categories 1996 or earlier and 1997 to 2001 each included one outlier, both of whom were self-employed. All aforementioned outliers were therefore excluded from these graphs.



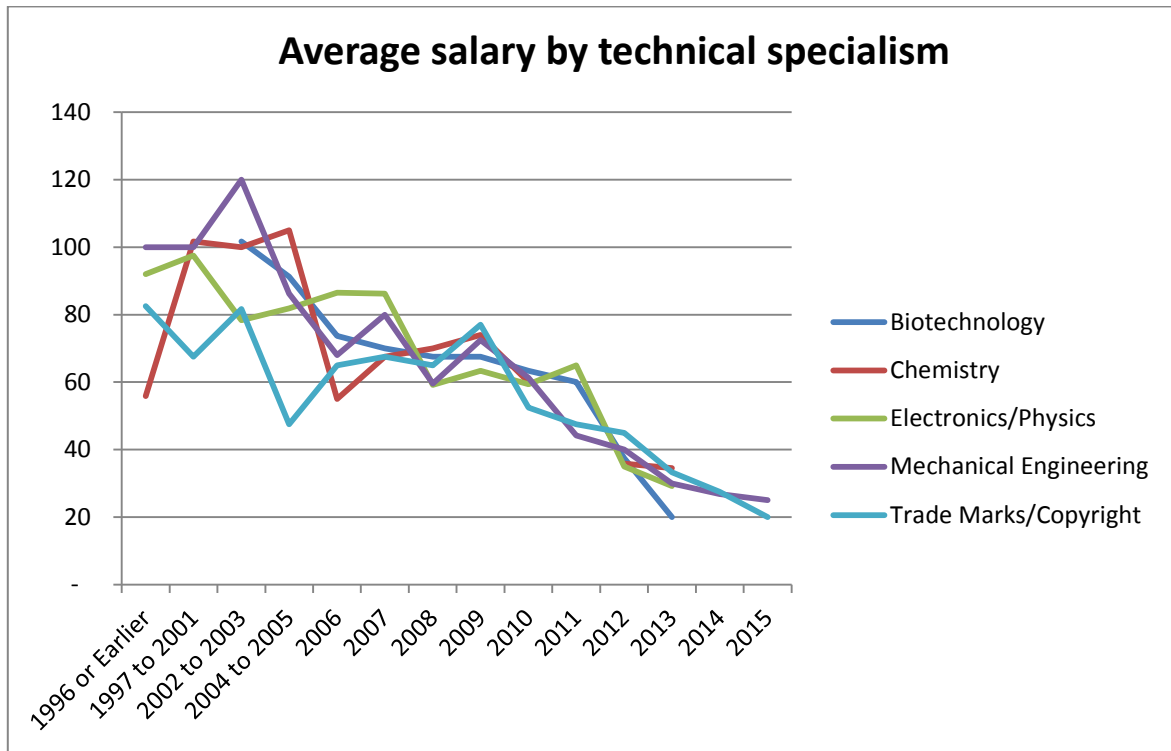
3.2. Location

It was expected that there would be significant differences in salary figures between London and other locations. Although analysis proved inconclusive due to a low response count in certain locations, based on the average salaries and salary ranges of the three locations outside London with the highest response count there seems to be no evidence to support this hypothesis.

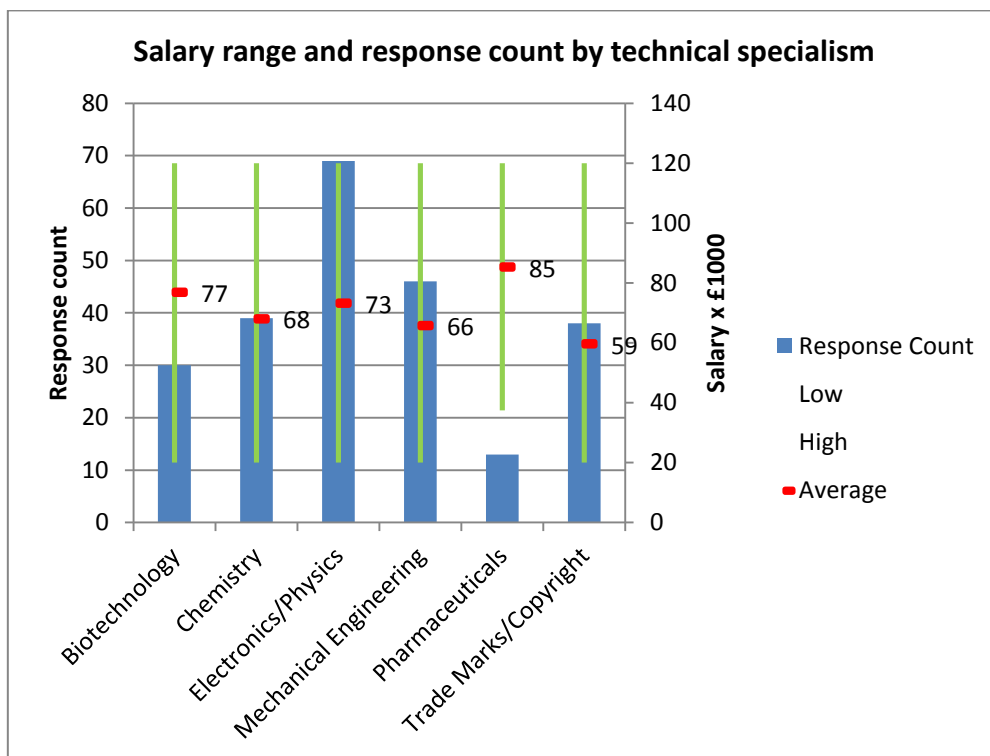


² Please note that the question addressing location was inserted into the survey at a later date. This graph is based on the resulting subsample.

3.3. Technical specialism

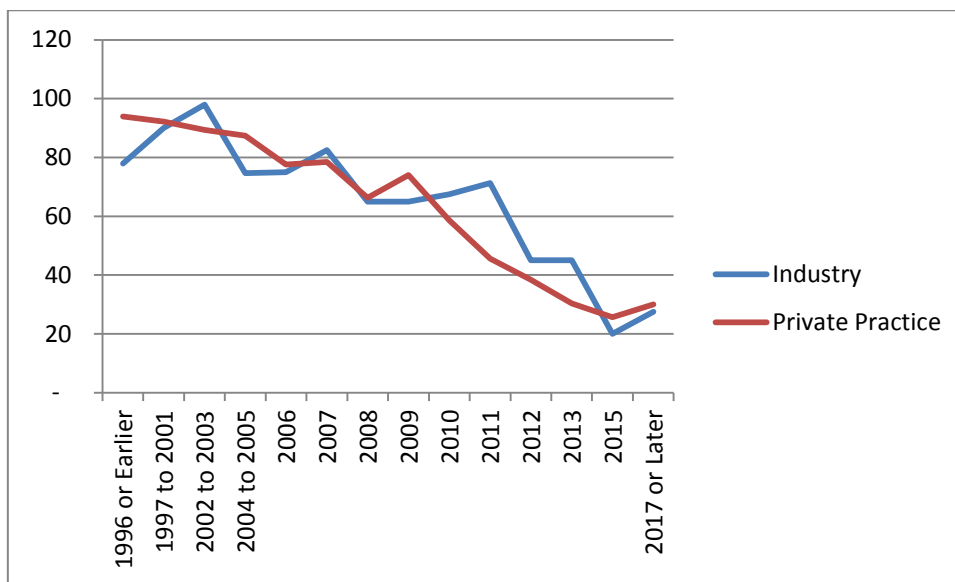


As the sample has some data gaps, this graph excludes the category of Pharmaceuticals in its entirety and shows gaps where other specialisms lacked the data to create a meaningful representation. One extreme outlier in Trade Marks who qualified between 1997 and 2001 has been removed. The peak in Mechanical Engineering for 2002 to 2003 is caused by a single outlier who makes up the entire category.



Salary range was found to be the same across all technical specialisms except Pharmaceuticals, which lacks respondents in the more junior category (the most junior case will qualify in 2012). Average salary did differ between disciplines, with those specialising in Trade Marks and Copyright on the low end of the scale despite a well-balanced set of respondents. The samples for Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals are heavily skewed towards more senior attorneys, which resulted in higher average salary figures.

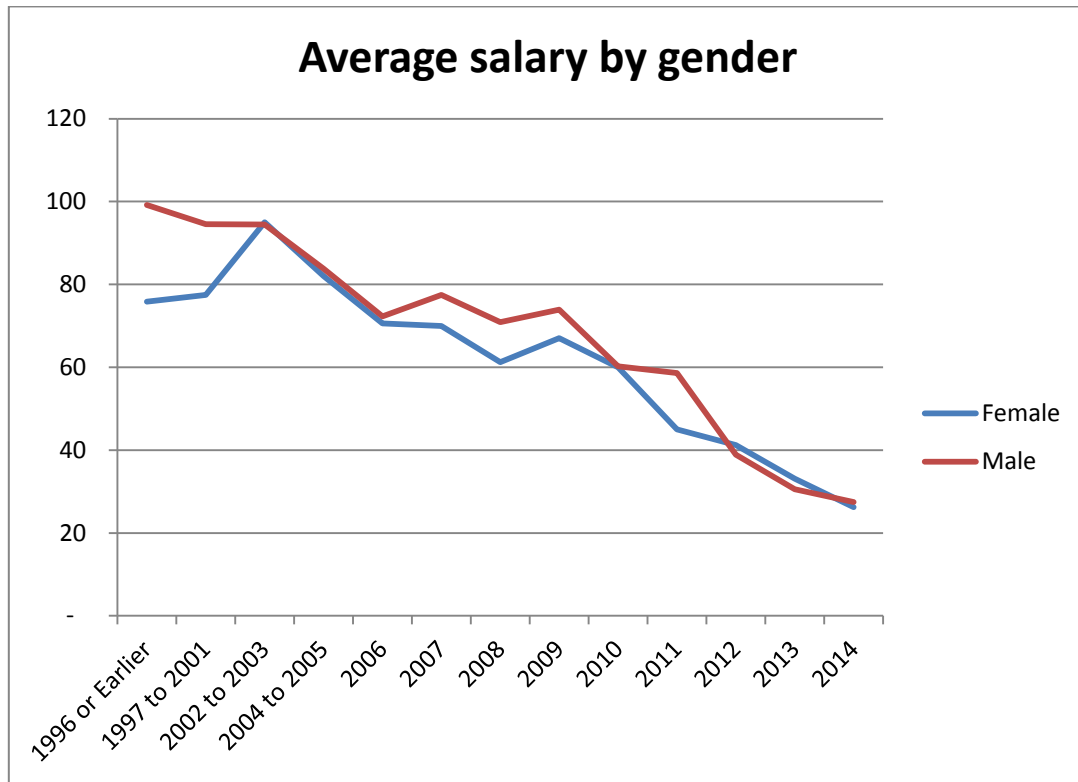
3.4. **Employer type**



It would appear that for part-qualified or recently qualified attorneys, working in industry is generally more lucrative than working in private practice. The industry figure for those who qualified in 1996 or earlier is being pulled down significantly by two individual cases (out of a total of six cases in this bracket), both of whom may well be working on a part-time basis. If we were to disregard these outliers the figure for those who qualified in 1996 or earlier working in industry would be very similar to that of their counterparts in private practice.

Unfortunately, as the survey did not include brackets above £120 000, it is not possible to prove or disprove the general idea that private practice salaries far exceed industry salaries at the top levels of seniority.

3.5. Gender

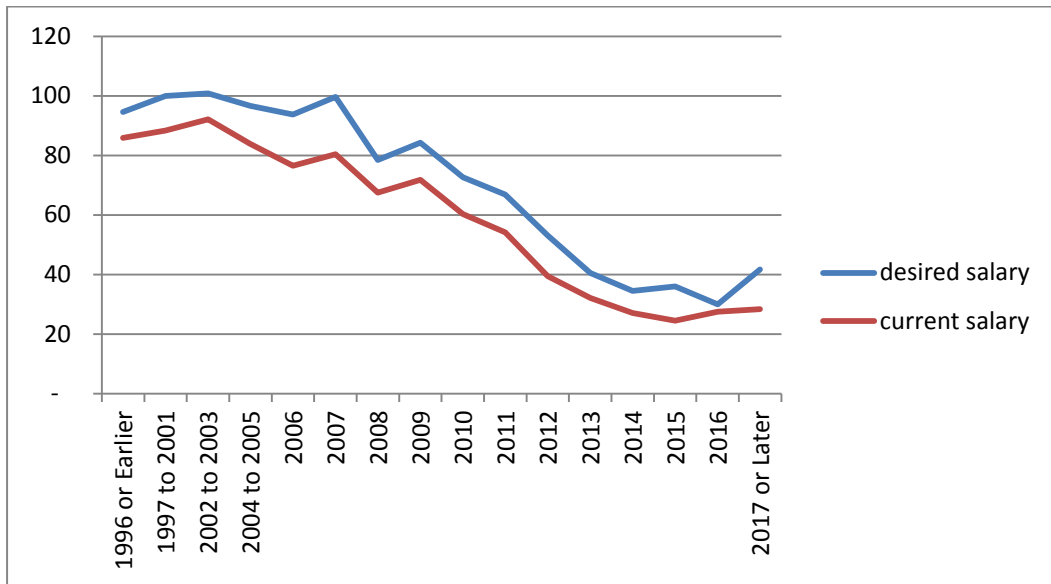


Within the confines of this sample, the total earnings (salary and bonus) of the average male attorney are roughly 14% larger than those of their female counterpart. As this sample was heavily skewed in favour of male respondents, and did not include a question about hours of work, it is difficult to draw far-reaching conclusions about any gender-based remuneration discrepancies in the IP profession.

4. The future

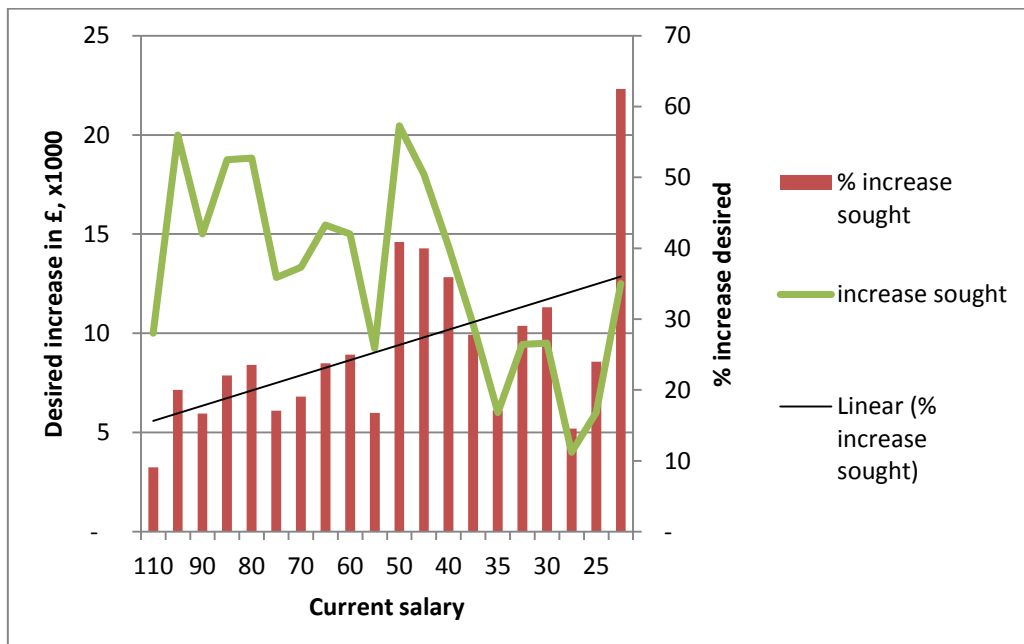
Out of the original cleaned sample of 240 respondents, 223 indicated a desired salary upon moving jobs or obtaining a promotion. All information in this chapter is based on this subsample.

As a general overview, the average salary increase sought is 24.8% of current salary. In order to obtain this figure, those respondents who are already earning a salary in the top bracket and therefore did not have the option to indicate a higher desired salary were excluded.



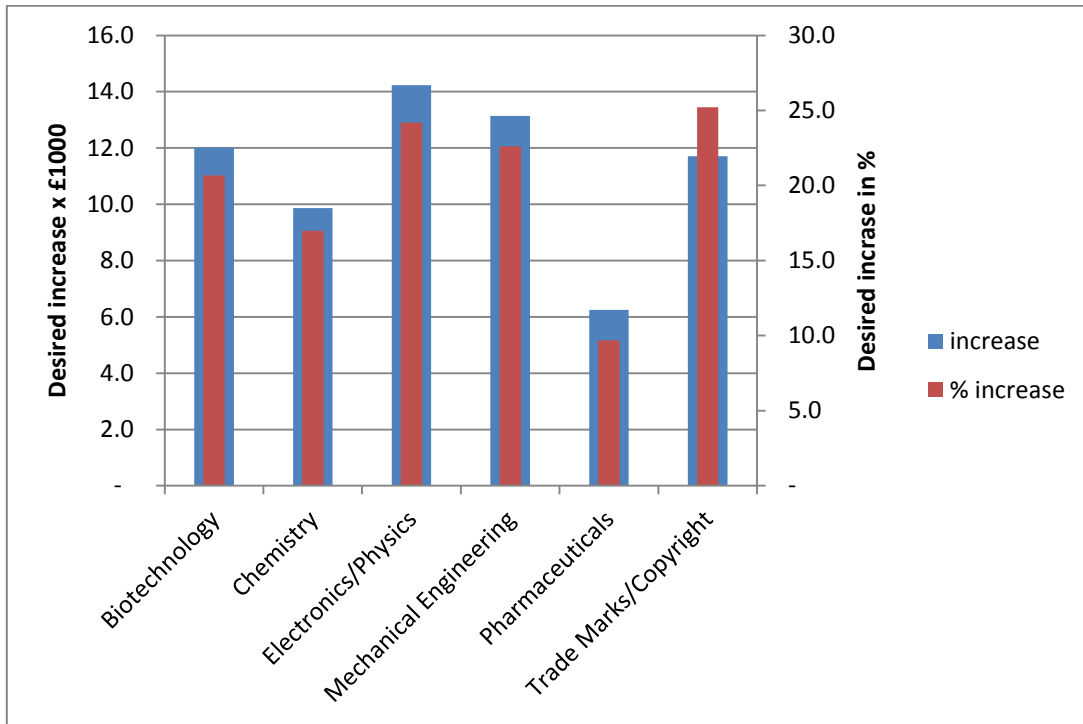
4.1. Desired salary increase

This chart excludes those currently in the top salary bracket. Due to the previously mentioned design flaw, the desired increase figures for those in the second highest bracket are limited to £10 000.



³ As this graph is based on a subsample, the figures for current salary differ slightly from those in paragraph 3.1.

It was expected that the percentage increase sought would roughly follow the indicated linear trend line (a 10% increase on a salary of £20 000 is only £2000, whereas 10% of £100 000 is £10 000), however the lower to middle salary brackets do not adhere to this expectation.

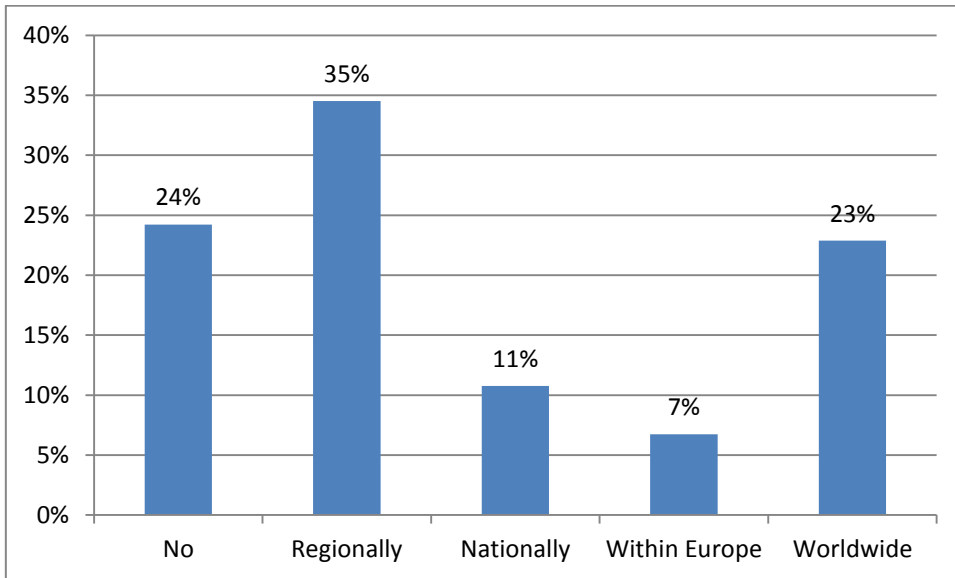


This chart can be interpreted as a reflection of the general perception of current job market conditions. In recent years, technical areas such as chemistry and pharmaceuticals have consistently displayed very low demand for attorneys, whereas electronics attorneys have been in high demand. Consequently, Chemistry and Pharmaceutical attorneys are perhaps more conservative in their salary expectations upon moving jobs or obtaining a promotion.

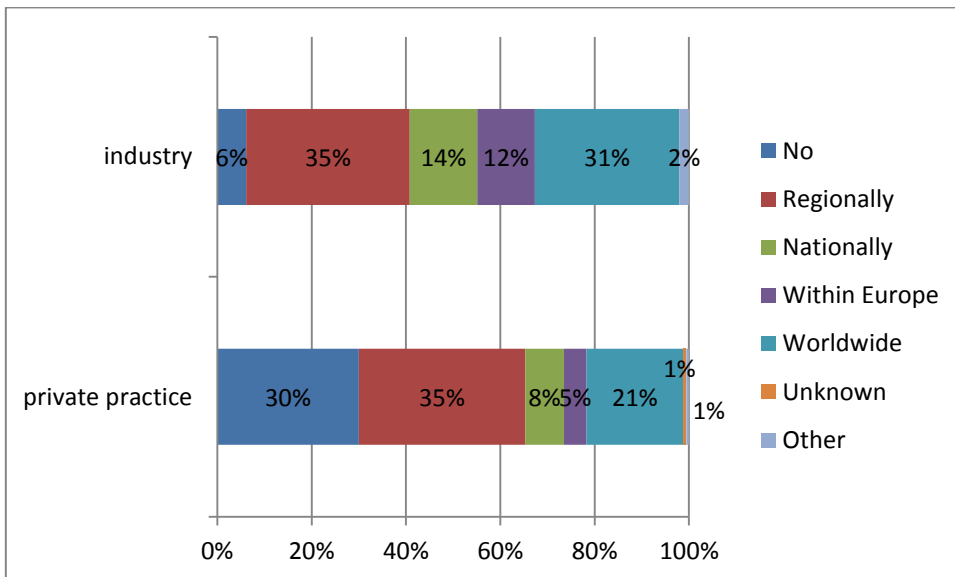
As there have recently been reports of in-house IP departments downsizing, it was suspected that there might also be a difference in average desired salary increase between respondents working in private practice and those in industry, but upon analysis such a difference was not found.

4.2. Willingness to relocate

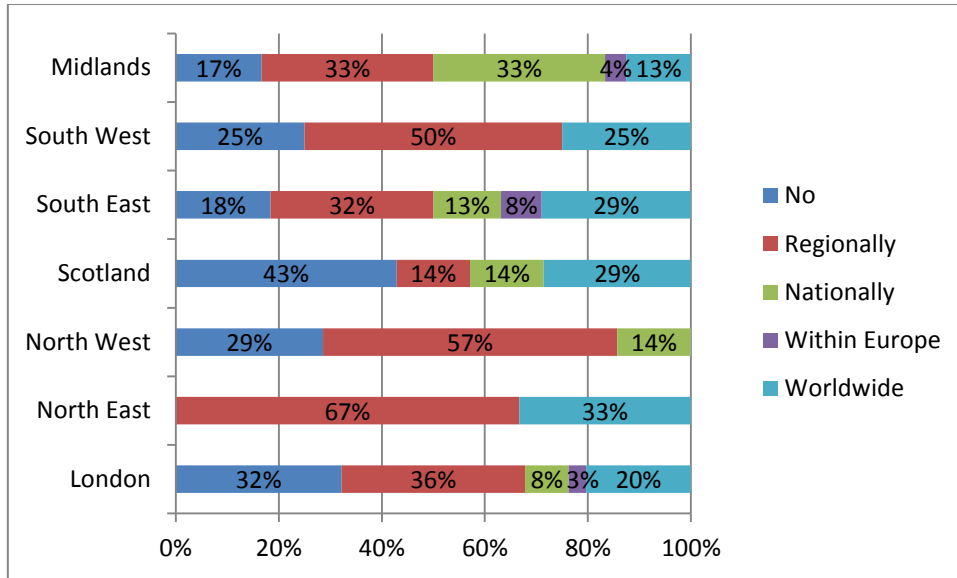
76% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to relocate to obtain their desired salary. Most would relocate in their current region, but surprisingly, 23% indicated they would relocate to a country outside Europe.



Those working in industry are generally more willing to relocate than those in private practice. This could be due to the remote location of many in-house IP departments. Notably, those in industry are also far more willing to relocate internationally. This could once again be due to the nature of in-house work, as it often involves large multinational organisations.



It was expected that those currently working outside London would be more amenable to relocation than those in the capital as there are fewer alternative employers available in the regions; however this does not appear to be the case anywhere except in the North East of England. In fact, those working in Scotland and the North West of England are particularly unwilling to move away.



Other factors such as technical specialism and job title did not appear to have much impact on a respondent’s willingness to relocate, and were therefore not included in this overview.

This report was compiled by Emma van Opstal, consultant at Fellows and Associates.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the survey, as well as those who helped to spread the word – in particular IPKat, SOLO IP and CIPA.

If you should have any questions or comments regarding the salary survey or this report, please do not hesitate to contact Emma at emma.vanopstal@fellowsandassociates.com.

APPENDIX I

1. Survey design

In designing the survey it was decided to focus on several factors believed to be related to salary: qualification type, year of qualification, job title, technical specialism, employer type (i.e. working in private practice vs. industry), and gender. The factor of location was added a week or so into the survey run. Aside from the factors related to current salary and bonus, we also intended to measure perceived market conditions by including a question about desired salary and bonus upon moving jobs or getting a promotion, as well as a question on willingness to relocate in order to obtain this desired salary. The survey consisted mostly of multiple choice questions, some of which left room for comments. All of the survey questions and answer options can be found in Appendix II.

1.1. Weaknesses

The most significant weakness in the survey design was the use of salary brackets, with the highest bracket being '£120 000 or more'. This had a limiting effect on the data, as it created data clusters and made salaries and bonuses over £120 000 invisible. Moreover, when designing the question addressing salary it was assumed that anyone working part-time would indicate their salary on a full-time basis. It is therefore impossible to know whether low outliers are true outliers or simply working part-time.

Another weakness was created by the addition of two questions during the survey running time, namely the screening question 'Are you currently working in the UK?' and 'Where in the UK do you work?'. Upon reviewing initial responses the addition of these questions was deemed crucial as it appeared that people working outside the UK were completing the survey yet there was no straightforward way to exclude them from the data sample afterwards, and discussions with one of our clients indicated that there might be reason to believe that location has an impact on salary.

2. Collection method

Data was collected using an online survey accessible through a web link, which was promoted on the websites of Fellows and Associates, IPKat, and SOLO IP. In addition, this link was posted in relevant LinkedIn groups to attract respondents and a press release was launched promoting the survey.

APPENDIX II

Questions and answer options

1. Are you currently working in the UK?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Where in the UK do you work??
 - a. London
 - b. Scotland
 - c. Northern Ireland
 - d. North East England
 - e. North West England
 - f. The Midlands
 - g. South East England
 - h. South West England
 - i. Wales
 - j. Other (please specify)
3. What is your current job title?
 - a. Trainee
 - b. Technical Assistant
 - c. Associate
 - d. Senior Associate
 - e. Partner (salaried)
 - f. Partner (equity)
 - g. Of Counsel
 - h. IP Consultant
 - i. Other (please specify)
4. What is your main specialism?
 - a. Electronics/Physics
 - b. Mechanical Engineering
 - c. Biotechnology
 - d. Chemistry
 - e. Pharmaceuticals
 - f. Trade Marks/Copyright
 - g. Other (please specify)
5. Do you work in private practice or in industry?
 - a. Private practice
 - b. Industry
 - c. Other (please specify)
6. Please indicate which qualifications you hold, and when you obtained them (or expect to obtain them).

This question was put in the form of a table. Columns were:

- a. Chartered Patent Attorney (UK)
- b. European Patent Attorney
- c. Registered Trade Mark Attorney (UK)

- d. Another Patent or Trade Mark qualification (please specify)

Rows were:

- a. Before 1996
 - b. 1997-2001
 - c. 2002-2003
 - d. 2004-2005
 - e. 2006
 - f. 2007
 - g. 2008
 - h. 2009
 - i. 2010
 - j. 2011
 - k. 2012
 - l. 2013
 - m. 2014
 - n. 2015
 - o. 2016
 - p. After 2016
7. Please indicate your current salary bracket.
8. Please indicate your desired salary bracket upon your next promotion or upon moving to a new role.

Questions 7 and 8 were both put in the form of a table. Columns were:

- a. Yearly base salary excluding bonus
- b. Yearly base salary including bonus

Rows were:

- a. Under £25k
- b. £25-27.5k
- c. £27.5-30k
- d. £32.5-35k
- e. £35-37.5k
- f. £37.5-40k
- g. £40-45k
- h. £45-50k
- i. £50-55k
- j. £55-60k
- k. £60-65k
- l. £65-70k
- m. £70-75k
- n. £75-80k
- o. £80-85k
- p. £85-90k
- q. £90-100k
- r. £100-110k

- s. £110-120k
 - t. Over £120k
9. Would you be willing to relocate to obtain this salary? Please tick all options that apply.
- a. No
 - b. Yes, within my current region
 - c. Yes, within the UK
 - d. Would move to Europe
 - e. Would move to the US or Canada
 - f. Would move to Australia or New Zealand
 - g. Would move to Asia
 - h. Would move to Africa
 - i. Would move to the Middle East
 - j. Would move to South America
 - k. Other (please specify)
10. Please indicate your gender.
- a. Male
 - b. Female
11. What is your age?

The final page of the survey thanked respondents for their participation and gave them the option to leave a name and email address to receive a copy of the report.