



Intellectual
Property
Office

Patent Examiner Exchange : UK-China

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Background

- Relationship between UK and China on IP
- Set of agreements with China IP offices.



Patent grants : China & UK

- Patent grants in China:

420,000
2017

432,000
2018

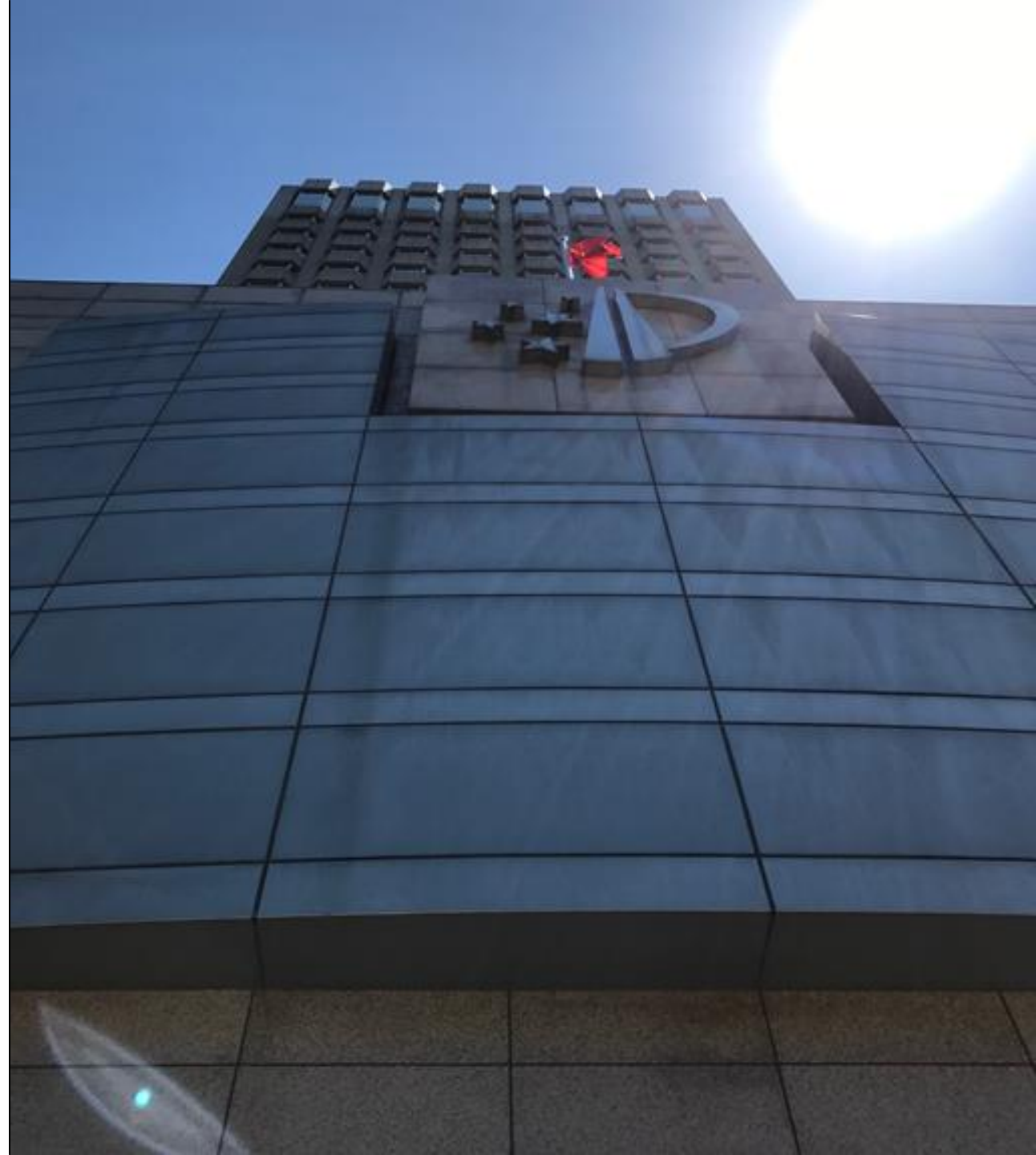
- Patent grants in the UK:

6,300
2017

6,000
2018

Patent Examiner Exchange

- Exchanges occur annually
- Most recent exchange: May 2019
- Hosted by CNIPA



Identifying examining area and topics: 2019

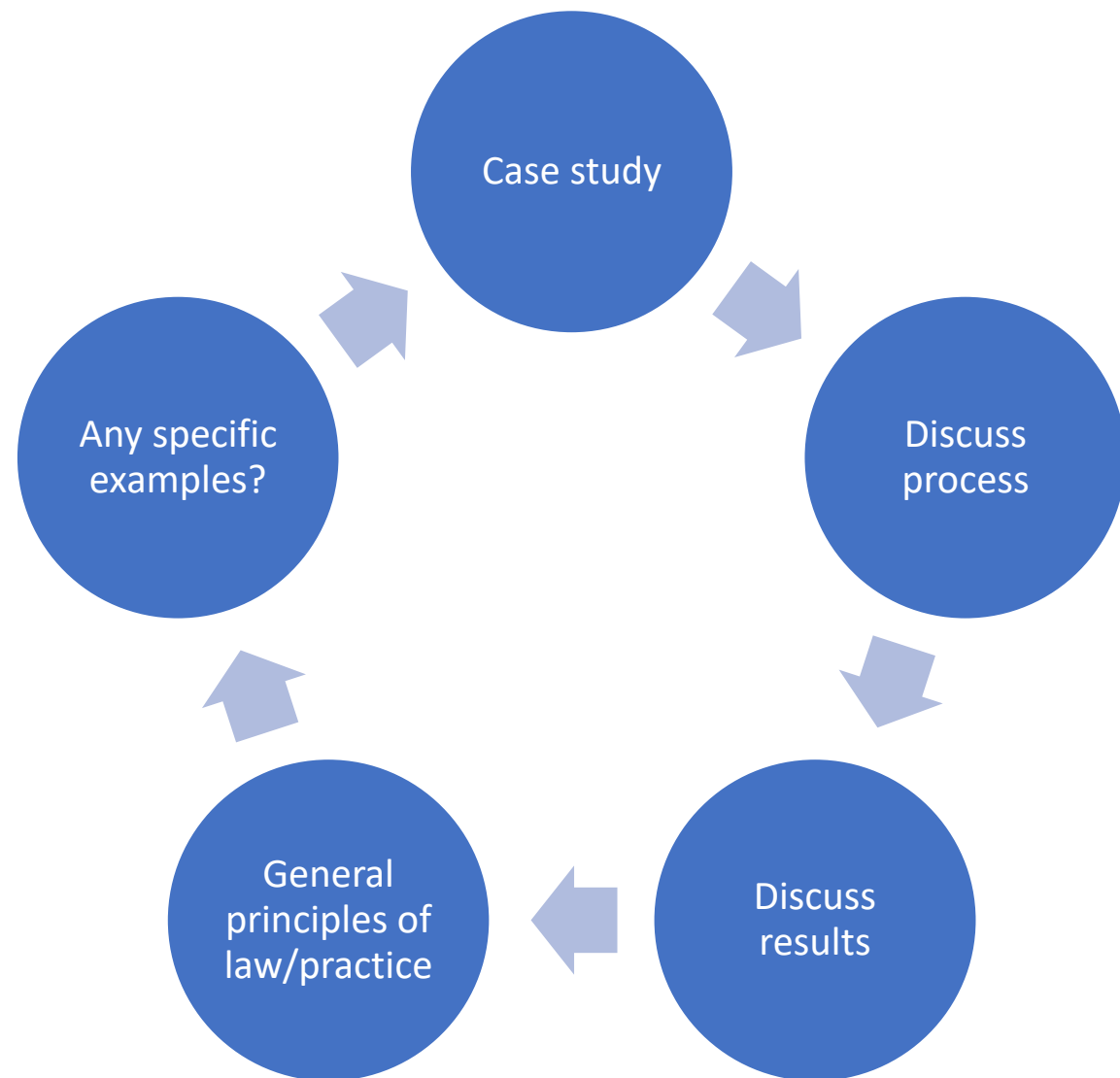
- IPC C08L, C22B and C07B-J
- Patent Examination Guidance of China
- UKIPO updates on patent examination policy, law and guidance amendments



Case Study Sessions

Findings

- Different approaches usually gave the same result
- Inventive step - potential for occasionally giving different results
- Examiners in both offices faced, mostly, the same difficulties
- Examiners in both offices, mostly, use the same strategies for search



Seminars

- Focused on practice and guidance development at the UK IPO
- Explained training process for examiners
- Discussion held on quality assurance processes



Outcomes

- Why are these exchanges important?
- Develops better understanding of differences in practice
- Builds good reputation for competence and quality when using reports from another office
- Knowledge is broadened, reinforcing confidence in ability





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Measuring Customer Satisfaction - Update

A New Method

Current method

- Telephone survey carried out twice a year
- Responses from 200 customers
- Very few questions asked

The telephone channel is **limiting** in two key ways:

- Resource intensive – it takes a long time to gather 200 responses (per annum)
- High level – it avoids asking detailed questions

Why change the approach?

- The IPO Board wanted the customer satisfaction survey to gather more useful information.
- The current measure of customer satisfaction is not a catalyst for change.
- Currently, the Office's target is consistently exceeded but the information gathered is limited in its ability to inform areas for improvement.

Proposed method

- Digital survey emailed to all customers on a quarterly basis
- Survey link also embedded in correspondence, email signatures and digital services
- Substantial increase expected in response volumes
- Includes detailed questions which are service-specific

However, the proposed method introduces a risk that responses will be more candid and critical because element of “politeness” in person-to-person telephone interviews has been removed.

Pilot

- A pilot was carried out in March 2019
- Survey sent to **6596** email addresses
- 485 responses were received, giving a response rate of **7.4%**
- 56 responses received via this link, taking total response volume to **541**.

If each quarterly survey achieves a similar response rate, can expect over 1000 responses over the 12-month period (accounting for likely attrition). This exceeds the 200 telephone interviews five-fold.

Survey findings

“What is your OVERALL level of satisfaction with the UKIPO?” (on 0-10 scale)

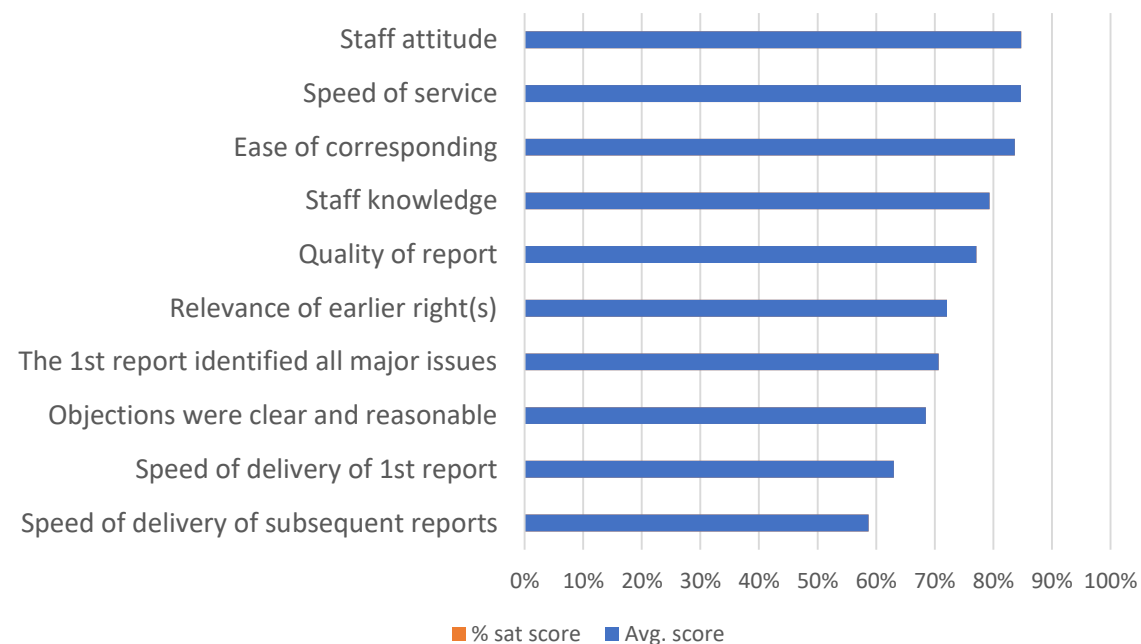
- The satisfaction score achieved in the digital survey was 8.52 (**85.2%**)
 - Higher than the Office target for 2018/19 i.e. that at least 85% of our customers will rate us 8/10 or higher.
- Slightly lower compared to score achieved in telephone survey over same period (8.75 or **87.5%**)
- As expected, it is possible that lower levels of customer satisfaction have been exposed due to reduced interviewer bias, more timely engagement and a wider target population of the digital study

Exposed areas of poorer satisfaction

The digital survey asked respondents to rate their satisfaction levels, out of 5, with specific areas of each service they selected. This can help us improve patent quality:

- Overall satisfaction with examination reports, including Patent, Trade Marks and Designs, averaged 83.1%
- However, when asked to focus on specific aspects of examination, satisfaction scores were significantly lower
- Indicates specific areas to focus improvements on
- Comments provided shed light on reasons for the lower levels of satisfaction in certain areas

Examination - satisfaction by service area



Next steps

- New method will be adopted as the measure for customer satisfaction
- 85 customers started but did not complete the survey, 127 opted out and 5800 ignored the email invitation – **how do we improve engagement?**

Thank you