

Alterations to services – patents



New patent applications and subsequently filed documents

For new patent applications and certain subsequently filed documents, you should use our online systems. Delays should be expected for any other form of filing.

Time periods for reply

We have now reverted to 2 month time periods to respond to first examination reports where the first examination report is issued 3½ years or more after the earliest date of the application. This will apply to reports issued from 9 November 2020 onwards. We will be flexible when it comes to allowing extensions if Covid-19 has caused you difficulties. There is no fee for requesting more time.

Patent applications and national security

All new patent applications where directions under section 22 of the Act (National Security) applies or could apply, are now being processed. While we continue to have limited access to our offices, these will take longer than normal.

We are aware that the process for transmitting applications abroad via the diplomatic bag service is likely to be disrupted. Applicants are encouraged to plan ahead wherever possible.

International applications (PCT)

If you have filed or are thinking of filing a new PCT application, we are doing the following to help:

- waiving the late surcharge fee if you do not pay your fees when filing your PCT application

- using existing PCT regulations to excuse delays in meeting deadlines due to the impact of COVID-19, e.g. rule 82 quater
- corresponding digitally where possible as we know that many of you are working from home. WIPO are also no longer using postal services as a means of communication during this period
- we are speaking to WIPO and other IP Offices about ways we can help customers during this difficult time.

Requests to the IPO

For some services, we have dedicated email accounts to deal with certain requests:

IPO correspondence

Patent related correspondence, both before and after publication of the patent application, continues to be emailed. It also covers correspondence relating to supplementary protection certificates. The only exception is to patent applications made subject to directions under section 22 ('national security') and to applications where we do not have an email address.

We will use the email address provided on the patent forms submitted with the particular application or otherwise communicated to the IPO for the purpose of receiving correspondence by email. Any queries on this should be sent to information@ipo.gov.uk

The following documents cannot be emailed out and will instead be sent out by post:

- Grant Certificates and Late Grant letters
- Some letters and reports, intended for someone other than the registered address for service
- Non-patent literature (NPL) citations, where copyright and commercial agreements allow us to do so.

We are not emailing or posting published patent citations. You can get these from [Espacenet](https://www.espacenet.com/), or directly from the websites of national patent offices.

Journal and publication

Publishing and granting of new patent applications will continue within usual time frames. However, customers are encouraged to view [IPSUM](#) to check the status and access post publication information on their patent applications.

The searchable journal will continue to be updated each week advertising newly filed patent applications, A Publications and Granted applications.

We will continue to update this page with any changes to services, as well as providing more details as they develop.

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Last updated 15 January 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 15 January 2021

A paragraph added on reverting to a 2 month period to reply to a first examination report

2. 30 July 2020

Updated because of the end of interrupted days

3. 4 May 2020

Updated information regarding new patent applications and subsequently filed documents, patent applications under section 22 of the National Security Act, international applications, time periods for reply, requests, correspondence and journal and publication.

4. 30 March 2020

Patent applications and national security paragraph added.

5. 27 March 2020

First published.