



Intellectual
Property
Office

UK IPO: Quality management of patents

Sarah Whitehead



Our vision of quality

"Quality must be at the heart of everything we do - making sure everything we do (internally and externally) is to the right standard and at the right time and also that we ensure we continuously improve."

Tim Moss CEO


April 2018



Overview of the IPO Patent Examining Division (PED)

- Examiner headcount (August 2018):
 - Senior examiners 95
 - Examiners 76
 - Associate (trainee) examiners 150
- 23 Examining groups
- Demand (2016/2017)
 - Approx.: 21000 Applications, 17000 Searches, 12600 Examinations

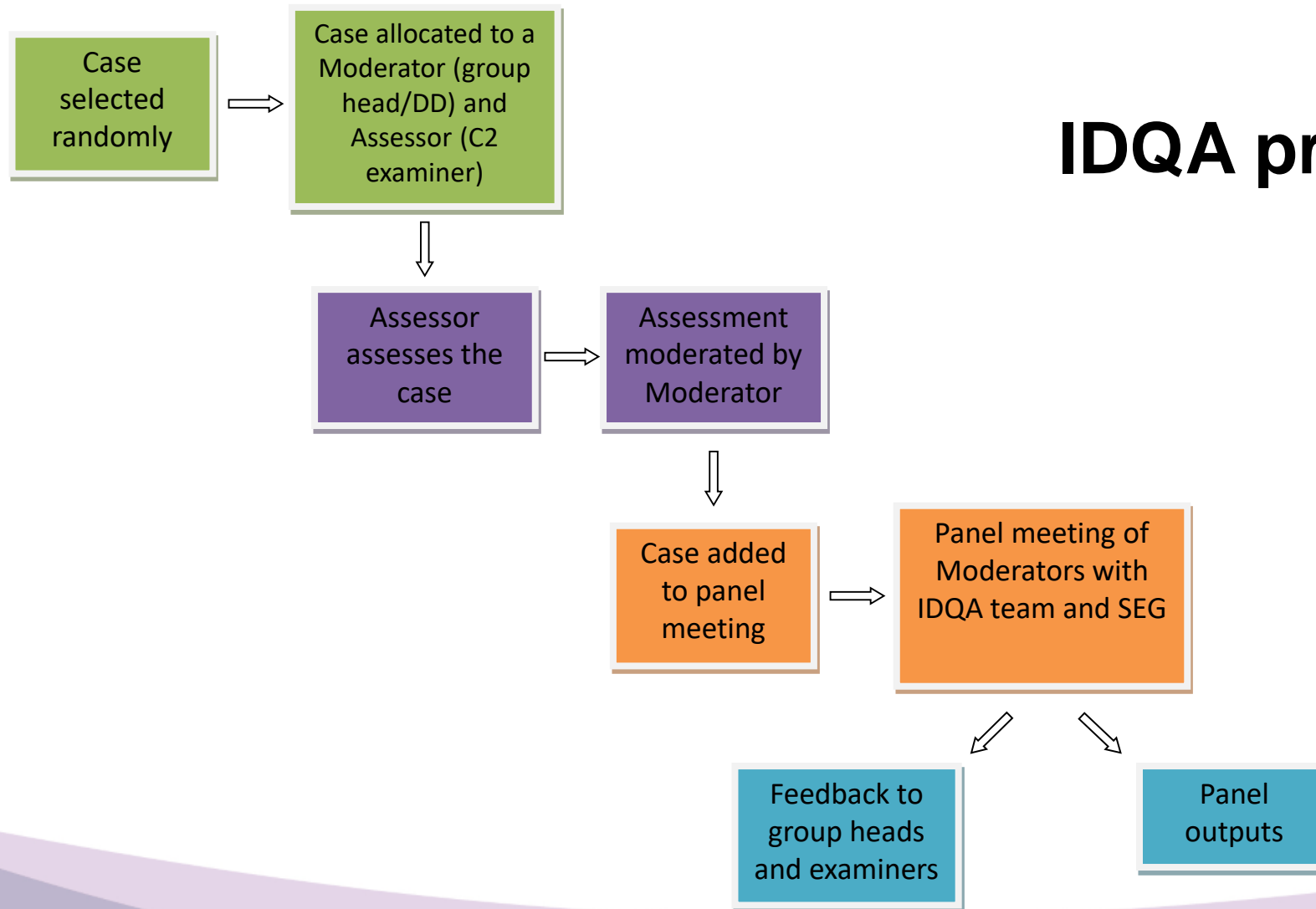
A Definition of quality:

- The quality of the patent itself
 - The quality of the internal patent grant process within IP Offices
 - The quality of the customer service/journey
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Quality processes at the UK IPO

- Quality Assurance Process (IDQA)
 - Sample of actions carried out
 - Detailed assessed against fixed criteria for each case action
 - Provides our primary metric of quality
- Second pair of eyes:- new process since August 2018
 - All applications being sent to Grant
 - Intention to expand to a sample of other actions 2019
 - (Resource dependent)

IDQA process



Quality processes at the UK IPO

- Trainee examiners all work revised by Senior Examiner
 - Head of group sampling for examiner assessment
 - Quality circles and peer review.
 - Extensive ongoing training provisions for all grades of examiner
 - Practice forums
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Outcomes of quality interventions

- Opportunities to rectify issues
- Identify:
 - Trends in issues
 - Training needs
 - Best practice
 - Opportunities for continuous improvement




Improved customer service

Sharing/Learning from other IPOs

- We constantly work with other IPOs to share and learn best practice
 - E.g. DPMA, EPO, PRV, Vancouver Group, etc


The quality of the internal patent grant process within IPO

- Patents pre grant process Certified to ISO9001:2015
 - Trade Marks and Design process Certified to ISO9001:2015
 - From early 2019 a single certificate for all of our rights granting processes Patents, Trademarks and Designs.
 - LEAN approach to continuous improvement embedded in all examination groups by 2021
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The quality of the customer service/journey

- Dedicated IPO customer feedback unit
 - Testing of new digital services and tools
 - Gathering feedback
- Customer Visit Programme (CVP)
 - Visits at least two customers per month

What's next

- In the UK:
 - Developing a new customer 'perception' metric for 2019/2020
 - Benchmarking with other offices
 - At the SCP:
 - Second part of the proposal in [SCP/28/8](#) - Proposal by the Delegations of the Czech Republic, Kenya, Mexico, Singapore and the United Kingdom
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Any Questions?

The UKIPO Welcomes any opportunities to share best practice with other IPOs – we are keen to learn from others!

- Contacts

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