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Research on the Linkage between the Professional Degree of Master of Intellectual Property and Professional Qualifications

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Abstract: ***With the vigorous development of the intellectual property (IP) industry, the national IP talent pool has exceeded 700,000 individuals, posing higher demands on the cultivation of specialized talents. In 2022, the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and the Ministry of Education introduced a new professional degree category for IP, but in its initial stages, it confronted challenges such as imbalanced curriculum systems, inadequate teaching resources, and restricted enrollment in professional qualifications. Simultaneously, the connections between the IP professional degree and national unified legal professional qualifications, patent attorney qualifications, IP professionals, and other professional certifications point to a high degree of consistency and mutual relevance in talent cultivation objectives. The professional degree education must reference the content of professional qualification certifications to ensure that talents meet industry demands. Additionally, the professional degree education exerts a positive influence on the professional entry qualification certification, elevating the overall standards within the professional field.***

Keywords: Intellectual Property Professional Degree, Professional Qualification, Education System, Talent Cultivation.

1. Introduction

In recent years, China's intellectual property undertakings have continued to develop, taking a path of intellectual property development with Chinese characteristics, and the national intellectual property talent team has rapidly expanded, with more than 700,000 people at present. To adapt to the new requirements raised by the development of China's intellectual property undertakings on the social demand, training levels, types, and models of intellectual property talents, in September 2022, the Degree Committee of the State Council and the Ministry of Education issued the "Academic Discipline Catalog for Graduate Education (2022)", and newly established the category of intellectual property professional degree [1]. As the latest achievement of intellectual property education, how to effectively link the professional degree of intellectual property with various vocational qualifications has become the focus of current academic and industrial circles. There are strict vocational qualification certification systems in intellectual property and related fields, such as the National Unified Legal Profession Qualification Examination, the Patent Agent Qualification Examination, and the Intellectual Property Professional Qualification Examination. These exams are not only the evaluation criteria for the competence of professionals with professional degrees but also the stepping stones for them to enter the industry. The linkage between professional degrees and vocational qualifications is not only related to the employment quality and development potential of higher education talents but also to the practicability and professionalism of education. Therefore, the importance and necessity of achieving a high degree of matching between the educational content of intellectual property professional degrees and these vocational qualification examinations are self-evident. At the same time, we cannot ignore the difficulties that exist in the early stages of establishing the intellectual property professional degree, such as uneven curriculum system settings, underdeveloped faculty resources, and unrecognized vocational qualification enrollment restrictions [2].

2. Theoretical Relationships

2.1 Connection between Intellectual Property Professional Degrees and Professional Qualifications

The specific types of professional qualifications linked to intellectual property (IP) professional degrees primarily encompass three categories: national unified legal professional qualifications, patent attorney qualifications, and intellectual property practitioners [3]. These categories represent professional certifications in the fields of law and IP, providing graduates of IP master's degrees with diversified career opportunities and professional development paths. Furthermore, professional qualifications such as technology broker qualification exams, trade finance compliance expert exams, and Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exams are also closely related to IP professional degrees. As a certification and symbol of higher education, professional degrees are essentially credentials issued by institutions of higher learning to indicate the educational level and achievements of recipients. Conversely, professional qualification certificates are credentials issued by the state to individuals who meet the criteria for professional recognition, serving as qualifications for job-seeking, appointment, and entrepreneurship, and serving as primary references for employers in hiring [4]. Although their characteristics are distinct, there are significant commonalities between the two.

2.1.1 The Necessity of Integration

Both IP professional master's degrees and national professional qualification exams aim to cultivate professional talent. Given the current talent shortage in the field, effective integration between the two serves as a solution. Professional degree education and professional qualification admissions complement each other, ensuring the cultivation of talent that meets industry demands. Additionally, obtaining professional

qualification certificates is crucial for professionals entering the workforce.

(a) Consistent Talent Cultivation Objectives

The objectives of IP professional master's degrees and national professional qualification exams both focus on cultivating or selecting IP professionals, with an inseparable professional focus. As the world undergoes a new round of technological and industrial revolutions, IP's role as a national strategic resource and core element of international competitiveness has become increasingly important. The "Outline for Building an Intellectual Property Powerhouse (2021-2035)" issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council emphasizes comprehensively enhancing IP creation, utilization, protection, management, and service levels, giving full play to the important role of the IP system in socialist modernization. The 20th CPC National Congress Report emphasizes deepening the reform of the science and technology system, enhancing scientific and technological evaluation, increasing diversified scientific and technological investment, strengthening the legal protection of IP rights, and forming a fundamental system to support comprehensive innovation. As China's economic transformation and national strategic adjustments proceed, there is a significant shortage of IP professionals, particularly in areas such as IP management, digital governance, and data compliance. Effective integration between IP professional master's degrees and national professional qualification exams is crucial to alleviate the aforementioned shortage, promote the healthy and long-term development of China's IP profession, and give full play to the important role of the IP system in socialist modernization.

(b) Mutual Interconnection between Professional Degree Education and Professional Qualification Admissions

Professional qualification admissions play an important guiding role in professional degree education [5]. Professional degree education must plan its curriculum and courses in reference to the content and requirements of professional qualification certifications, ensuring that the talent cultivated meets industry demands and standards.

Professional degree education also has a direct impact on professional qualification admissions. The core and key of professional qualification certifications is to verify whether the professional services provided by applicants meet the basic requirements for executing specialized tasks in the field. The content and quality of professional degree education directly affect the professional service levels and quality of professionals, thereby facilitating the selection of more excellent professionals in professional qualification certifications and enhancing the professionalization of the field.

(c) Professional Admissions

Whether the professionals cultivated by professional degree education can ultimately enter the field to independently carry out professional practice largely depends on whether they can successfully pass the relevant assessments and certifications to obtain professional qualification certificates. The "Implementation Measures for the National Unified Legal Professional Qualification Examination" stipulates that individuals applying for initial appointments as judges, prosecutors, lawyers, notaries, and legal arbitrators, as well as civil servants initially involved in reviewing administrative penalties, administrative reconsiderations, administrative rulings, and legal counseling in administrative agencies, must pass the national unified legal professional qualification examination and obtain legal professional qualifications. Article 11 of the "Regulations on Patent Agency" stipulates that patent attorneys must obtain patent attorney qualifications before practicing. These regulations emphasize the necessity of participating in and passing national professional qualification examinations when engaging in legal-related professions and patent agency work.

2.2 Feasibility of the Linkage

As a professionally-oriented degree aimed at cultivating high-quality professionals, professional degrees have strong, extensive, and wide-ranging correlations with vocational qualifications. Linking intellectual property (IP) professional degrees with vocational qualifications not only aligns with the training requirements for professional degree holders, facilitating targeted vocational skills training, but also meets the admission requirements for vocational qualifications, improving the efficiency of vocational qualification assessments [6]. This article analyzes the feasibility of linking IP professional degrees with vocational qualifications from the perspectives of policy, economics, technology, and other factors.

2.2.1 Policy Support: National Advancement and Inevitable Trend

To address the issue of linking IP professional degrees with vocational qualifications, China's Ministry of Education, National Intellectual Property Administration, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, and other departments have collaboratively issued multiple policy documents to promote this linkage. In 2004, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's "Opinions on Improving the Skilled Talent Evaluation System and Promoting Vocational Skill Assessment and the Construction of the Vocational Qualification Certificate System" mentioned reforms to vocational qualifications, including the issue of vocational qualification certification for professional degrees in the IP field. In 2010, the Ministry of Education's "Several Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Doing a Good Job in the Cultivation of Full-time Master's Professional Degree Graduate Students" stipulated relevant policies for professional degree graduate education, including the linkage with vocational qualifications. Additionally, the Ministry of Education's "Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of 'Double First-Class' Universities and Colleges" issued in 2018 also covered the development of high-level applied and distinctive professional programs, including requirements related to the linkage of IP professional degrees with vocational qualification certification.

2.2.2 Economic Drives: External Market Demands and Internal Cost-Benefit Analysis

Economic development is the primary driving force behind IP-related industries and research. The feasibility of linking IP professional degrees with vocational qualifications largely depends on the extent of external job market demand and internal cost-benefit considerations.

Firstly, market demand. The feasibility assessment requires examining the demand for IP professionals in the job market. IP, as an "umbrella" for science and technology, covers multiple areas such as patents, trademarks, copyrights, and plays a crucial "guardian" role in the modern economy. Therefore, professionals capable of handling IP disputes and safeguarding IP have significant market value. Aligning IP professional degrees with national unified legal professional qualification exams, professional agent exams, and other vocational qualifications can enable higher education talents to more efficiently provide legal consulting, IP protection, and compliance services to enterprises. The relatively stable demand for IP professionals in the job market provides a solid external foundation for the linkage between professional degrees and vocational qualifications.

Secondly, cost-benefit analysis. The feasibility assessment must also consider the inherent cost-benefits of linking IP professional degrees with vocational qualifications. From an economic perspective, establishing such a linkage often requires significant investments from individuals, society, and the country. Consequently, it is necessary to evaluate whether these investments yield sufficient economic benefits. For higher education talents, acquiring professional degrees related to vocational qualifications can enhance their professional capabilities, enabling them to provide more specialized services for the country's science and technology, copyrights, trademarks, and other IP matters, thereby achieving their own career development and aspirations. Meanwhile, for enterprises and society, having more professionally trained IP talents can improve the quality and efficiency of IP protection, contributing to technological innovation and economic growth. Thus, a cost-benefit analysis indicates that investing in the linkage between IP professional degrees and vocational qualifications aligns with economic principles.

2.2.3 Technological Integration: Advancements in the Digital Age

From a technological perspective, the feasibility of linking IP professional degrees with vocational qualifications can be explored in three aspects: technological innovation, organic integration of technology and law, and application of information technology.

Firstly, technological innovation. In modern society, IP plays a vital role in protecting and encouraging innovation. Cultivating specialized IP professionals can strengthen IP management and protection, encouraging enterprises, research institutions, and individuals to engage in more active innovation activities. This, in turn, raises technological standards, promotes technological advancements, and drives social and economic development. Additionally, technological innovations can bring new IP issues requiring specialized professionals to address. Therefore, linking IP professional degrees with vocational qualifications can satisfy this demand. Thus, the linkage of IP professional degrees and vocational qualifications complements technological innovation, fostering mutual promotion and development.

Secondly, organic integration of technology and law. The IP field encompasses both technological and legal aspects, requiring an organic integration of these two domains. Linking IP professional degrees with vocational qualifications can nurture composite talents possessing both technological expertise and legal knowledge. This integrated knowledge and ability are crucial for handling complex IP cases and issues.

3. The Current Situation

Regarding the main issues that arise during the process of linking professional degrees and vocational qualifications in various universities, the first is the lack of advanced courses in the curriculum for law graduate students, and the incomplete makeup of missing core courses in the curriculum for non-law graduate students. The second is a systemic issue, where vocational qualification education and professional degree education have not achieved organic integration. Based on the thresholds set for relevant work experience years, graduate students in intellectual property (IP) professional degrees, after completing costly professional degree education, still need to spend a significant amount of time and money to obtain corresponding vocational qualification certificates in order to qualify for employment in related industries.

3.1 Unreasonable Curriculum Settings for Law and Non-Law Students

For non-law undergraduates, universities have not provided sufficient basic legal courses. For example, the University of Science and Technology of China only offers basic legal courses such as Civil Procedure Law, Criminal Practice, Jurisprudence, and Company Law, while Xiamen University only offers a general introduction to law, both of which fall short of the 14 core legal courses required, unable to fully introduce basic concepts and legal frameworks to ensure that students understand the fundamentals of the field. Due to some omissions or inadequacies in the curriculum settings and content arrangements of universities, the missing core courses cannot be fully compensated for.

For law undergraduates, courses such as Civil Procedure Law, Criminal Law, Jurisprudence, and Company Law have already been studied at the undergraduate level, and continuing to study these courses at the graduate level may seem repetitive. However, the current training programs of universities do not reflect advanced or optional courses to meet the different learning needs of students.

3.2 Neglect of Compensatory Courses for Liberal Arts and Science Law Students

The field of intellectual property typically involves intersections of law, technology, and business. For science, technology, and medicine undergraduates, it is important to strengthen their learning of IP practical courses related to technology and engineering, emphasizing legal issues related to patents and technological innovations. However, for gaps

in relevant legal knowledge such as administrative law and civil law, universities do not provide corresponding courses to compensate for these deficiencies.

Law undergraduates typically already possess a legal background, so more in-depth legal courses covering the details of IP law can be provided. This includes professional legal knowledge such as patent law, trademark law, and copyright law in the Patent Agent Qualification Examination. However, for law undergraduates and non-law students from humanities and social sciences backgrounds, they may need to overcome challenges in science and engineering. According to research, no universities offer science and engineering courses, let alone meeting the requirement of over 10 science and engineering courses. Courses and supplementary learning are not provided to fill their knowledge gaps in technology and engineering. Furthermore, after analyzing the survey questionnaires, we found that only 56% and 35% of respondents, respectively, believe that elective and core science and engineering courses should be offered in IP professional master's programs, indicating that current universities lack emphasis on science and engineering courses and related faculty resources.

3.3 Lack of Practical Courses

According to the current training programs, universities have all set up practical courses during graduate studies. For example, the University of Science and Technology of China has conducted selection and signing activities among high-end talents engaged in IP affairs in courts, law firms, technology enterprises, and public service institutions, and signed agreements with their respective units to become practical teaching bases for IP professional master's programs. Similarly, Nanjing University of Science and Technology has also actively developed relevant practical platforms to provide more opportunities for students to gain practical experience. Students can gain certain practical experience through practical courses, but they still need certain work experience to meet the requirements for intermediate or above-level IP professional qualifications. Universities still need to pay attention to balancing academic and practical experience when establishing their training programs.

4. Extraterritorial Experiences

4.1 German Experience- The Munich Intellectual Property Law Center as an Example

The curriculum of the Master's program at the Munich Intellectual Property Law Center features a significant number of practical courses. These include Patent Law in Practice (3 credits), Copyright Law in Practice (1.5 credits), Trademark Law in Practice (3 credits), Competition Law in Practice (1.5 credits), IP and Alternative Dispute Resolution (3 credits), Oral Advocacy (1.5 credits), and Specialized IP Courts (1.5 credits). These courses provide excellent avenues for enhancing the practical abilities of intellectual property talents.

Moreover, the Master's program at the Munich Intellectual Property Law Center also offers a series of intellectual property courses tailored for innovation and entrepreneurship practices. Some of these courses are IP and Global Entrepreneurship (1.5 credits), The Theoretical and Economic Foundations of IP (1.5 credits), Innovation Policy (1.5 credits), Introduction to Technology and Innovation Management (1.5 credits), Intangible Assets Valuation (1.5 credits), and Managerial Finance (1.5 credits). This series of innovation and entrepreneurship-related courses provides professional support for the entrepreneurial development of intellectual property talents.

Additionally, the program includes courses related to intellectual property licensing and transactions, such as Patent Licensing (1.5 credits), Copyright Licensing (1.5 credits), IP and the Creative Industries (1.5 credits), International IP Exhaustion (1.5 credits), IP and Alternative Dispute Resolution (3 credits), Law of Software Contracts (1.5 credits), Privacy, Publicity and Personality (1.5 credits), and Introduction to Technology and Innovation Management (1.5 credits). This series of courses plays a vital role in enhancing the technical trading and entrepreneurial capabilities of intellectual property talents.

4.2 Japanese Experience - The Exemption System for the Patent Attorney Examination as an Example

In Japan, there is an exemption system for the patent attorney examination, which allows candidates to exempt from certain examination subjects, thereby reducing the examination burden. From 2017 to 2020, the pass rate gradually increased (2017: 6.5%, 2018: 7.2%, 2019: 8.1%, 2020: 9.7%). One of the reasons for this increase is the introduction of the exemption system for the patent attorney examination starting from 2017. In terms of pass rates, the patent attorney examination is considered a more challenging exam compared to other qualifications (also known as the "science lawyer" national qualification). The exemption system applies to short-answer exams, essay exams (compulsory subjects), and essay exams (elective subjects).

5. Countermeasures and Suggestions

5.1 Faculty Development and Curriculum Design

5.1.1 Faculty Development

To cultivate high-quality talents who can adapt to industry development and market demands, the connection between professional degree education and vocational qualification certification becomes particularly important. The faculty development for the connection between professional degrees and vocational qualifications is a complex and crucial task, involving education, training, practice, and other aspects.

Firstly, clarify the goals and requirements of faculty development: The development of the faculty should aim to improve teachers' professional competence, practical experience, and teaching ability to meet the needs of the connection between professional degree education and vocational qualifications. At the same time, it is necessary to clarify the responsibilities and requirements of teachers to ensure that they have the corresponding educational background and vocational qualifications to be competent for the teaching tasks of professional degree courses [7].

Secondly, improve the teacher recruitment and training mechanism: In the current educational development environment, universities often consider academic qualifications as the primary factor in talent introduction, with a tendency to prioritize academic qualifications and ignore the consideration of teachers' practical professional qualities. At the same time, schools lack effective incentives for teachers to participate in corporate practices, and the channels for teachers to actively participate in corporate practices are not smooth enough. Over time, this will lead to a situation where the faculty construction of local colleges and universities has high academic qualifications and theoretical levels but low technical and professional practical abilities, and even a mismatch between the theoretical background and professional abilities of talents and the development needs of schools [8]. When recruiting teachers, focus on their industry background and practical experience, giving priority to teachers with vocational qualification certificates or industry experience. Actively introduce enterprise personnel and industry experts with rich practical experience and professional knowledge as part-time teachers or guest professors to participate in the teaching of professional degree courses. At the same time, encourage and support in-school teachers to participate in vocational qualification examinations and obtain relevant vocational qualification certificates to improve their professional level and teaching ability.

Thirdly, encourage teachers to participate in vocational qualification training and examinations. Strengthen the guidance and training of the school's teachers in obtaining non-teaching series vocational qualification certificates [9]. Specifically, the school can strengthen business contacts with relevant vocational skill appraisal centers to find more suitable channels for the training and examination of vocational qualification certificates for teachers of various majors in the school. At the same time, the school should regard whether teachers have vocational qualification certificates as an important condition for professional and technical position promotion, job appointment, etc., and encourage teachers to actively participate in various training and examinations [10].

5.1.2 Curriculum Design

(a) Add basic law courses for students with a science and engineering background.

As a refined sub-discipline under the broad category of law, the Master's degree in Intellectual Property aims to provide comprehensive and systematic academic training for students who are interested in delving into the field of intellectual property. For students with a science and engineering background, in addition to in-depth study of professional knowledge, it is particularly important to add core law courses (Jurisprudence, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Civil Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Civil Procedure Law, Administrative Law and Administrative Litigation Law, General Theory of Intellectual Property, Copyright Law, Patent Law, Trademark Law, Competition Law, Intellectual Property Management, Intellectual Property Literature Retrieval and Application) to ensure the comprehensiveness and systematicness of their academic research. Adding basic law courses for students with a science and engineering background can not only help them master basic legal knowledge and establish legal thinking, but also provide strong support for their future legal professional qualification examinations and career development. Therefore, in curriculum design, we should fully consider the actual needs and development directions of students and provide them with a more comprehensive and systematic Master's degree education in intellectual property.

(b) Increase science and engineering courses for students without a science and engineering background. The cultivation of master's degree in intellectual property requires students not only to have a solid foundation in legal knowledge but also to actively broaden their horizons and cover disciplines in various fields, including science and engineering. This comprehensive talent training model makes the master's degree in intellectual property a crucial platform for cultivating high-quality talents with innovative thinking and practical abilities.

Firstly, adding science and engineering courses is of great significance in the training system of the master's degree in intellectual property. Colleges and universities should, according to their own characteristics, add courses in their advantageous science and engineering disciplines to further develop and consolidate their advantages in these fields. For example, University of Science and Technology of Beijing (USTB) has added courses in metallurgy, materials, artificial intelligence, and other science and engineering disciplines, enabling it to more accurately grasp the essence and key points of technological innovation in the process of intellectual property application, protection, and management.

Secondly, the addition of science and engineering courses is also conducive to improving students' comprehensive quality and competitiveness. In modern society, competition in the field of intellectual property is increasingly fierce, and the requirements for talents are also getting higher and higher. By studying science and engineering courses, students can not only acquire more knowledge and skills related to intellectual property but also expand their thinking and problem-solving abilities. Such comprehensive quality will make students more competitive in their future careers and more likely to achieve outstanding results in the field of intellectual property.

In addition, adding science and engineering courses can also help students meet the standards of professional qualification exams such as patent agents. Patent agents are one of the important professions in the field of intellectual property, and they need to have profound legal knowledge and a science and engineering background to be competent for tasks such as patent application, examination, and protection.

5.2 Legal Professional Qualification Examinations

5.2.1 Encouraging Intellectual Property (IP) Professional Masters with STEM Backgrounds to Participate in the Legal Professional Qualification Examination

On the one hand, if IP professional masters are not allowed to

take the Legal Professional Qualification Examination (LPQE), the attractiveness of IP master's degree programs may decrease in reality, and students may opt to pursue a Master of Laws (LL.M.) instead [11]. On the other hand, the curriculum of IP professional masters already includes legal knowledge related to the LPQE. Furthermore, due to their technical backgrounds in STEM fields, composite IP professional masters with technical qualifications can also apply for the Patent Agent Qualification Examination, resulting in a unique combination of "one degree, two certifications."

To promote the reform of IP professional master's education, specific enrollment notices can be adjusted to favor IP professional masters. Therefore, it is recommended that IP professional masters with STEM backgrounds at the undergraduate level be allowed to register for the LPQE in their second and third years, but not in their first year. Lowering the threshold for the examination will help provide more employment opportunities for IP professional masters, fostering the cultivation of high-quality legal talents who are both proficient in IP law and possess a scientific background.

5.2.2 Exemption from Some Sections of the Legal Professional Qualification Examination

Exemptions within the institution are primarily targeted at LL.M. students whose undergraduate degrees are also in law. Law students have received four years of legal education, understand and are familiar with China's legal system, and the LPQE sets a unified access standard for legal professions, providing common legal thinking training for future legal practitioners. By granting exemptions to LL.M. students with law backgrounds and ensuring a smooth connection and transition between the two, we can improve the connection mechanism between legal education and legal professional qualifications, thereby laying a solid foundation for building a "legal professional community."

Firstly, establish an exemption policy. Define clear exemption policies that specify which professional degrees have a high degree of overlap with the content of the professional qualification examination, allowing for the exemption of certain examination subjects. To establish a more effective, reasonable, and direct institutional link between IP master's professional degree education and the judicial examination system, corresponding exemption policies should be formulated [12]. Considering the vast range of disciplines covered by the LPQE and its challenging review, senior IP master's students have already acquired the relevant knowledge required for the judicial examination during their academic journey and have met the examination standards. Perhaps we can draw on the exemption policies for Master of Accounting, exempting certain subjects from the judicial examination. This way, IP master's students can devote more time and energy to deepening their studies in IP, reducing their review burden, and obtaining legal qualifications faster. The implementation of this policy will help them integrate into the construction of a law-based China more quickly, contributing their professional knowledge and abilities to the development of society and the legal profession.

Secondly, increase cross-recognition courses. By cross-recognizing school courses and legal professional qualification examination subjects, students are encouraged to cover some relevant content of the professional qualification examination within their degree programs, thereby achieving the goal of exemption. Adjust the training program for LL.M. students to include relevant subjects for the legal examination, such as civil law, intellectual property law, commercial law, economic law, labor and social security law, private international law, international economic law, and civil procedure law. The purpose of this measure is to enable students, through the study and assessment of these courses, to acquire the necessary abilities and knowledge levels to pass the relevant sections of the legal examination, thereby exempting them from those sections of the examination.

5.3 Intellectual Property Rights Engineers

5.3.1 Shorten the Qualification Years

Both the intermediate and advanced levels of intellectual property rights (IPR) engineer certifications have requirements regarding the years of professional work experience [13]. For master's degree holders applying for the intermediate IPR engineer certification, the current requirement is to have 1 year of professional work experience. Considering that the master's program in intellectual property already covers both theoretical and practical knowledge in this field, certain concessions could be granted to candidates holding a master's degree in intellectual property, exempting them from the requirement of professional work experience [14]. This would mean that upon graduation, students with a master's degree in intellectual property can directly apply for the intermediate IPR engineer certification.

5.3.2 Direct Qualification for Preliminary Certification

The IPR engineer examination, organized by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, is a technical qualification examination that recognizes technical competencies. It is divided into preliminary, intermediate, and advanced levels, with varying requirements for work experience at each level. The eligibility criteria for the preliminary IPR engineer examination state that "anyone engaged in economic-related work and holding a high school diploma (including high school, technical secondary school, vocational high school, or technical school) or above recognized by the national education authorities can register for the preliminary examination [15]."

Obtaining a professional degree in intellectual property can potentially directly qualify applicants to meet the eligibility requirements for the preliminary certification. Such a degree typically encompasses extensive and in-depth knowledge in the field of intellectual property, covering both theoretical and practical aspects related to patents, trademarks, copyrights, and more [16]. Therefore, holding such a degree indicates that the applicant has the necessary academic background and professional skills to engage in effective practice and work in the field of intellectual property. The acquisition of a professional degree can be recognized as meeting the standards for the preliminary certification, thereby exempting applicants from additional examination or training requirements. Such an arrangement not only saves time and

cost but also provides applicants with a faster path to entering the field of intellectual property and acquiring professional qualifications.

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