

Guidance Note

Reviewing a Draft Patent Specification

Please review the enclosed draft patent specification carefully and let us know if there is anything which you would like to see added or changed. It is important that any changes are made before the application is filed at the UK Intellectual Property Office since, depending on the circumstances, it is generally difficult or even impossible to add information later.

The specification normally comprises a descriptive part ("Description") that describes the various features of the invention, and the "Claims" which define in words what the invention is. The claims are not essential for an initial application, but we normally include them. Where appropriate, the specification also includes drawings or other illustrations.

Description

A patent specification normally begins with a brief description of the background to the invention. It may describe the problem which the invention sets out to solve, and previous attempts which have been made to solve that problem.

There then follows the broadest definition of the invention. This is usually in a paragraph beginning "According to the invention". It is important that this paragraph should specify only those features of the invention which are absolutely essential. If you feel that any of the specified features could be omitted, then please let us know. Similarly, if you feel that some vital feature is not specified, then please let us know also. There may be one or more similar paragraphs later in the application, relating to different aspects of the invention.

Usually, the application then describes the advantages of the invention. If there are advantages which are not mentioned then please let us have details.

The specification may then describe in greater detail the more significant features of the invention.

Finally, the specification includes a detailed description of the version(s) of the invention illustrated in the Examples or drawings. The purpose of this part of the application is to enable a reader to put at least those versions of the invention into practice. It is therefore important that the description is sufficiently detailed for this to be done. Please bear this in mind when reviewing the application, and let us know if you feel any additional information needs to be added.

Claims

Where the specification includes "claims", the first of these normally corresponds to the broadest definition of the invention referred to above. This claim should therefore also specify only those features of the invention that are absolutely essential. Most of the other claims refer back to that claim and introduce further preferred or supplementary features.

We look forward to your comments on the draft application. Once you are happy with it, we shall arrange for the application to be filed at the UK Intellectual Property Office.



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