

Patent Agent Law School Tuition Program (PALS)

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati is the premier legal advisor to technology, life sciences, and growth enterprises worldwide, as well as the venture firms, private equity firms, and investment banks that finance them. The firm's patents and innovations practice handles complex IP matters for clients both nationally and internationally. Our attorneys and patent professionals have extensive experience working side-by-side with mature companies valued at billions of dollars, innovative start-up enterprises, and individual inventors as their trusted IP advisors.

To help foster career advancement among our patent professionals, the firm created the Patent Agent Law School Tuition Program (PALS), a work-study program offered to current employees with strong technical backgrounds who plan to attend law school.

"The PALS program at Wilson Sonsini is the best patent attorney training program I've seen. Participants get extremely valuable, on-the-job experience to supplement their classroom learning. This experience makes participants far more useful out of the gate than those simply going through law school. Managing attorneys also are quite flexible when needed with respect to conflicts between schoolwork and workloads. This has been a fantastic opportunity for me – I was a bit nervous about it all before diving in, but now that I'm through it all, I do not regret participating one bit!"

— Adam Cole
Associate and Former PALS participant

Quick facts about our patents and innovations practice:

- The patents and innovations practice is composed of IP professionals covering a wide range of technical backgrounds.
- Our team spans across 11 offices and is the largest life sciences patent practice in the world.
- The team has more than 140 experienced attorneys and patent agents, most of whom have Ph.D.s or advanced degrees in areas such as biology, chemistry, physics, various engineering disciplines, and other technical fields.
- More than 970 U.S. patents were issued on behalf of clients in 2021, with an average of 90 U.S. patent applications filed each week.
- There are over 20 participants in the PALS program at any given time.

We are continually seeking talented patent agents with strong scientific and engineering backgrounds to join our PALS program. These positions are highly valuable to the firm, and we are excited to offer a program to encourage career growth and development within Wilson Sonsini.

Below we've outlined several frequently asked questions about the PALS program.

How does PALS work?

- PALS offers tuition assistance to help cover law school costs for qualified patent agents who express interest in a career with Wilson Sonsini as a patent attorney.

Who is eligible for the program?

- Candidates must be current patent agents or have an offer to join the firm as a patent agent. Eligible candidates may apply to the program immediately upon hire.

When can I apply to PALS?

- Applications are accepted in May for the fall semester.

Will I receive an offer to join the firm as an attorney?

- PALS participants are highly motivated patent agents who maintain a record of excellent performance at the firm. While an offer cannot be guaranteed, we are confident that our accepted participants have the potential to become patent attorneys.

What does the firm expect from me while in the PALS program?

- The firm believes that PALS participants should primarily focus on their studies. As such, billable-hour requirements will be reduced while the participant attends law school. PALS participants are invited to attend relevant in-house training and participate in social activities in the firm's Summer Associate Program prior to their final year of law school. The goal is to establish a strong network within the firm, both inside and outside the patents and innovations practice.

"The PALS program allowed me to gain valuable 'real-world' experience interacting with clients and practicing patent law with the United States Patent and Trademark Office as a patent agent while in law school. These experiences provided me a solid foundation for transitioning to a patent attorney position after law school."

— Jeff Seidel
Associate and former PALS participant

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