

The Intellectual Property Office can help you get the right type of protection for your creation or invention.

Intellectual Property (IP) results from the expression of an idea. So IP might be a brand, an invention, a design, a song or another intellectual creation. IP can be owned, bought and sold. This grid outlines the types of protection available. Also see the IPO website www.IPO.gov.uk

	Patents	Trade marks	Registered design right	Copyright
Term	Up to 20 years (subject to annual renewal)	Rights can last forever 9renewals every 10 years)	Up to 25 years	Life plus 70 years (Broadcast and sound recording copyright lasts for 50 years, typographical arrangement for 25 years)
Protection	Throughout the UK	Throughout the UK. (To get protection outside of the UK you could apply for a community Trade mark at OHIM)	Throughout the UK	Throughout the UK and much of the world
Protects against	Your idea being used, sold or manufactured	The use of your trademark by others without your permission	Your product being manufactured, sold or imported	Your work being copied or reproduced in communication or performance
What is protected	Inventions, new innovative processes or products	Brand identity, including words, logos and other signs	What the product looks like	Music, art, film, literary works and broadcasts
Info	Patents apply to the country in which they are granted. ie UK, European Patenet Convention, or Patent co operstion Treaty.	To be registerable your trademark must be distinctive for your goods/dervices & not the same or similar to any earlier marks in the same class. An unregistered trade mark carried the TM symbol. The registered trade mark carried the R symbol.	Design rights apply only to how something appears, not how something works.	Copyrights relate to the expression of an idea not the idea itself. You do not need to formally apply or pay for. Use the © symbol followed by your name and the date to indicate when the work was created and by whom. A dated copy of the work can be deposited with a solicitor or bank to establish beyond doubt when the work was created.
Warnings	You must not have publicly revealed your invention before you apply for your patent. It can take three to four years from filing to grant.	A search will be carried out to check existing registrations which may be similar. You will be told if any similarities exist before you proceed. The owners of the earlier registration are then informed so that when the application is published in the Trade Marks Journal they can oppose. Two marks can co exist if it is deemed that there are sufficient differences. Registering a name at company's house or an internet domain name does not mean that you will also be accepted as a trade mark. It normally takes about 6 months for a trade mark to become registered.	You cant register your design if its more than 12 months since the design was first publicly disclosed, the design is dictated only by how the product works. It normally takes three months to complete the registration process if its straightforward.	
Costs	Fees for processing a UK patent are £230- £280. This does not include any patent attorney costs which can be significant.	Fees for registering a trade mark are £170 for one class and a further £50 for additional classes.	The current fee is £60.	There is no charge for copyright as it is an automatic right.