

**Bocconi**



# Teaching of Intellectual Property Through Certificates of Competence: Balancing Theoretical Learning, Practical Exercises and Curricular Incentives

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# The Use of IP Certificates of Competence for the Teaching of IP - I

## - Where?

- MSc Course on Intellectual Property and Competition Law at Bocconi University, Milan (Italy);
- A course on IP and competition law for economists, lawyers ...and engineers!

## - When?

- For the first time in 2015;
- After a first introduction on IP in general and the completion of the patent module of the MSc course - during the trademark module of the MSc course (i.e. after a brief introduction on trademarks at the national, regional and international level).

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# The Use of IP Certificates of Competence for the Teaching of IP - II

- What?
  - Completion of the on-line course prepared by the former Office for the Harmonization of the Internal Market (OHIM) of the European Union, now the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO);
  - The on-line course chosen for this 'experiment' focused on 'Community Trademark in a Nutshell';
  - The course featured theoretical lessons, audio files, practical exercises and final exams for each sub-module;
- How?
  - As a non-compulsory activity, students were invited to take the HIM/EUIPO on-line course which led to the award of the '*OHIM Certificate of Competence on Community Trademark in a Nutshell*';
  - Beyond the Certificate, students concurrently obtained 2 extra points to be added to the final grade of the course.

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# The Use of IP Certificates of Competence for the Teaching of IP - III

- Why?
  - To make students acquire a sufficient knowledge of trademarks;
  - To make students familiar with the work of the former OHIM, now EUIPO, and the role of IP in the economic integration of the single market;
  - To make students acquire a sufficient knowledge of community trademark regulation;
  - To make students familiar with the OHIM/EUIPO on-line courses and different learning tools.

# Advantages of Teaching with IP Certificates of Competence

## Advantages:

- The on-line course couples theoretical learning and connected practical exercises in a seamless way;
- Students speeded up their learning on trademarks and acquired a better knowledge of the institutional role of OHIM/EUIPO;
- Students improved their ability to identify and easily distinguish between IP rights at different level (i.e. IP rights at the national, regional and international level in connection with related laws, EU treaties, regulations and directives, and international conventions);
- Beyond earning two extra points for the final exam, students were able to obtain an official certificate to enrich their CV - excellent incentive/reward balance;
- Students improved their chances to secure internship positions at OHIM/EUIPO and EPO;
- Students attendance and participation at class seemed improved;
- Students' awareness of other IP rights was raised, as well their interest for other IP-related topics - some students decided to take other available on-line courses!

# Disadvantages of Teaching with IP Certificates of Competence

## Disadvantages:

- Students needed specific guidance on the steps to take to register to the OHIM/EUIPO website and to access to the on-line course;
- The assignment of the on-line course required a specific MSc course module... and students' time-management
  - trademark at national, regional and international level had to be addressed beforehand in order to improve students' understanding of the on-line course contents;
- Limited interaction on the on-line platform if compared to face-to-face lessons active interaction;
- Limited attention to IP policy considerations;
- Limited attention to the competition law aspects of IP rights.

# Teaching with IP Certificates of Competence: Reflections for the Future

- On-line courses and face-to-face lessons: complementary or alternative?
- Time-management: addressing students' doubts and questions at class...
- Mixing methods and using on-line courses only for specific IP rights or also for specific IP-related topics (e.g. filing an IP right registration application, IP rights opposition procedures, etc.)?

Q & A?

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