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Quality Management Manual for Design Examination

(Quality Manual)

July 2022
Japan Patent Office

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History of Revision

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December 10, 2014	Publication of the first edition
June 30, 2015	Publication of the revised edition
July 27 , 2016	Publication of the revised second edition
July 1 , 2022	Publication of the revised third edition

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Introduction

The Basic Policy on Intellectual Property Policy decided by the Cabinet on June 7, 2013 has set a goal that “Japan will build up the most advanced intellectual property system in the world, which will attract companies and people from Japan and overseas.” In the Japan Revitalization Strategy decided by the Cabinet on June 14, 2013, strengthening intellectual property strategies are deemed as one of the major pillars to sustain the growth strategy. The Japan Revitalization Strategy (2014 revision) was decided by the Cabinet on June 24, 2014, stating that “we will continuously try to make Japan the world’s most excellent intellectual property-based nation.”

To this end, we need to sustainably provide “the utmost quality patent examination in the world.” Especially, it is important to grant robust design rights that will not be invalidated both internationally and nationally after registration, broad design rights that have the appropriate scope of rights corresponding to the level of creativity of the design, and valuable (useful) design rights that are internationally reliable and valid in the world. This can be achieved through sufficiently understanding the design in the application, thoroughly conducting necessary searches for prior designs inside and outside Japan, and making a precise judgment on the requirements for registration.

The JPO publicly announced its Quality Policy on Design Examination in aiming to make clear internally and externally of its commitment to granting "robust, broad and valuable design rights" in August 2014.

The Quality Policy outlines the fundamental principles of the JPO’s Quality Management on Design Examination. The Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions are responsible for managing the quality of examination according to the above-mentioned fundamental principles, intending to maintain and improve the quality of design examination in a steadily manner.

The Quality Management Manual for Design Examination (“Quality Manual”) is a document that describes the quality management itself and its implementation system in line with the fundamental principles stipulated in the Quality Policy. The Quality Manual will be revised if any change is made on the quality management itself or its implementation system.

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Scope

This manual shall apply to the Design Division, the Design Examination Divisions, and examination operations conducted by the personnel who belong to them.

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Ref. 1: Quality Policy on Design Examination

Ref. 2: Corresponding List between Quality Policy and Measures of Quality Manual

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I. Outline of the Quality Management System (QMS)

1. Relationship between QMS and Quality policy

(1) General Statement

The Quality Policy on Design Examination¹ (hereinafter referred to simply as “the Quality Policy”) outlines the fundamental principles of the JPO’s Quality Management on Design Examination (hereinafter referred to simply as “Quality Management”) for granting internationally reliable, high-quality design rights, and making efforts toward achieving the goal of realizing the utmost quality patent examination in the world.

To this end, the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions conduct design examination precisely through implementing the Quality Management according to the Quality Policy, while planning and making proposals for initiatives to achieve design examination that can meet wide-ranging needs and expectations of users, implementing them, and improving them continuously.

The JPO’s Quality Management on Design Examination is a comprehensive body of measures for design examination, based on the Quality Policy and a PDCA cycle method², where activities are interactively connected to each other, from the perspective of maintaining and improving the quality of design examination. To steadily carry it out, it is necessary to establish an implementation system where the role of each division and its personnel is made clear.

The Quality Management System for Design Examination (hereinafter referred to simply as “Quality Management System”) consists of the above-mentioned Quality Management and its Implementation System.

The Quality Management Manual for Design Examination³ (hereinafter referred to simply as “Quality Manual”) is a document that outlines the above-mentioned Quality Management System, aiming to contribute to implementing the standardized quality management according to the fundamental principles prescribed in the Quality Policy.

¹ For the Quality Policy, see Ref.1 at the end of this manual.

² This is a management method for the continuous improvement of the business process by repeating the four steps of plan-do-check-act.

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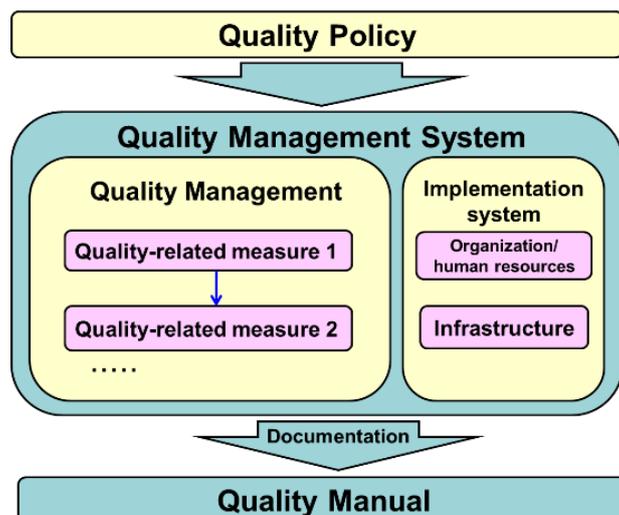


Figure 1: Relational Diagram of Quality Policy, Quality Management System and Quality Manual

(2) Directions of Measures Required based on Quality Policy

Since the Quality Policy outlines the fundamental principles of the Quality Management, measures conducted in the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions, which constitute the Quality Management, should be closely associated with what is prescribed in the Quality Policy.

This section will explain that the direction of measures which are required based on the Quality Policy⁴.

1) *We grant robust, broad and valuable design rights*

High-quality design rights need to be (i) robust (stable) so as not to be invalidated after registration, (ii) broad to the extent that they have appropriate scope of rights corresponding to the level of creativity of the design, and (iii) valuable (useful) to be valid around the world. Granting such design rights are indispensable in supporting global business development and promoting innovation. The examination of design applications that leads to granting registration of such design rights is deemed as high-quality design examination.

(i) Robust design rights

⁴ Also please see Ref.2 at the end of this manual that explains the correlation between the items in the Quality Policy and the measures described in the Quality Manual.

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In order to ensure the stability of rights under the substantive examination principle, “examination without any defects,” that is, making a right decision on whether or not applications satisfy the legal requirements is the most important prerequisite. To this end, it is required to conduct adequate prior design searches so that the design registered in Japan may not be invalid after an identical or similar design has been found in foreign countries.

(ii) Broad design rights

In order to ensure that design rights are broad enough to have appropriate scope of rights corresponding to the level of creativity of the designs, examiners need to properly understand current status of product development in the field which the design in the application belongs to. Based on this, it is required to appropriately understand the form that can draw attention from users through comparative observation with a group of prior designs, and to evaluate commonalities and differences between the filed design and the prior designs.

(iii) Valuable design rights

In order to register valuable design rights, applicants need to file appropriate applications at an appropriate timing on the basis of their own business strategies and IP strategies.

In the meantime, in order to conduct examination acknowledging the level of the importance of applicants’ strategies, examiners need to understand applicants’ business strategies and IP strategies, and it is required for the JPO to plan measures for design examination taking into account such needs.

Furthermore, under the circumstances where global business is rapidly expanding, it is desirable that designs examined and granted in Japan would enhance the predictability of obtaining the same design rights in foreign countries, including non-substantive examination countries, and that business enterprises could depend on it as a tool for the solution of disputes over right infringement.

It is expected that examiners would contribute to businesses registering internationally reliable designs rights.

2) We satisfy wide-ranging needs and expectations

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Needless to say, high-quality design examination must satisfy users. Moreover, since the design system is for the entire society in general, it is necessary to take into account the interest of our society and the needs of users who are involved in the design system except for end-users. Therefore, it is necessary that the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions try to understand the wide-ranging needs of users who are involved in the design system, and utilize them for their planning and making proposals for initiatives for design examination, placing an emphasis on complying with the laws and regulations.

Furthermore, examiners are required to conduct design examination that meets wide-ranging needs and expectations of users through fair, transparent and consistent examination, by complying with treaties, laws and the Examination Guidelines for Design, etc., while making efforts to promote close communication with applicants and attorneys, etc.

3) We all dedicate ourselves to improving the quality, cooperating with parties concerned

In order to maintain and improve the quality of design examination, it is important that the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions not only make organizational efforts for improving the operations, but also make efforts for cooperating with parties concerned, including applicants, attorneys, etc. to improve the quality of applications and attached drawings.

4) We contribute to the global improvement of the quality of design examination

From the viewpoint of supporting global business development, it is important to conduct high-quality design examination and to grant registration of high-quality design rights inside and outside Japan. To this end, the JPO needs to actively promote efforts for globally improving the quality of design examination, including through the meetings of experts in the field of design, meetings of industrial design harmonization and classification harmonization.

Furthermore, if examination information of the JPO becomes utilized more in design examination at foreign IP offices, it would enhance predictability of obtaining rights overseas, which could support Japanese companies with their global business development. Therefore, while the JPO

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actively promotes the above-mentioned measures, examiners need to conduct examinations with a full awareness that their examination information could be utilized by foreign IP offices, so that the JPO can provide foreign IP offices, whenever necessary, with high-quality examination information which is useful for their design examination.

5) We continually improve operations

In order to improve the quality of design examination, it is necessary to continuously monitor the implementation status of the Quality Management and the quality of design examination. While accurately assessing the current status, we need to consider necessary initiatives.

Moreover, the situations surrounding design examination have been constantly changing. For example, the scope of search has been expanded due to the advancement of technology. Therefore, the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions provide various pieces of information on changing situations surrounding design examination and on the quality of design examination for all staff members who engage in design examination. They are expected to continuously improve their practices by utilizing the information provided.

6) We increase knowledge and capabilities of our staff

In order to improve the quality of design examination, it is essential to increase the knowledge and capabilities of all the staff members who engage in design examination. They are required to make voluntary self-improvement efforts on a daily basis, and actively participate in trainings and seminars to enhance their expertise. On the other hand, it is also important that the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions provide organizational support, such as furnishing sufficient opportunities for training.

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2. Outline of the Cycle for Maintaining and Improving the Quality of Design Examination (PDCA Cycle)

As mentioned above in Section 1. (1), measures that constitute the Quality Management should be closely associated with each other according to a PDCA cycle from the perspective of maintaining and improving the quality of design examination. We established two levels of PDCA cycle; one is at the level of the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions, and the other is at the level of each Examination Office. The relational diagram between these two levels of PDCA cycle is shown in Figure 2.

(1) The PDCA Cycle of the Design Division and Design Examination Divisions

The PDCA cycle of the Design Division and Design Examination Divisions (the larger PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT cycle in upper part of Figure 2) functions as below.

The yearly policies for the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions are formulated at the beginning of the fiscal year (PLAN: please see II. 4), based on which design examination and its relevant operations (hereinafter referred to as “design examination operations”) are conducted (DO: please see II. 1). The design examination operations are evaluated by various measures (CHECK: please see II. 2) including quality audit and design examination operations or initiatives, etc. of the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions are amended where necessary (ACT: please see II. 3), which will be reflected on the next fiscal year’s policies (PLAN: please see II. 4). This cycle helps maintain and improve the quality of design examination.

(2) The PDCA Cycle of the Examination Offices

In addition to the above-mentioned the PDCA cycle, each Examination Office where design examination is actually conducted makes efforts to maintain and improve the quality of examination according to the PDCA cycle (smaller plan-do-check-act cycle shown in the lower-right corner in Figure 2).⁵

⁵ Each element of the PDCA cycle of the entire Design Examination Divisions is written beginning with a uppercase letter such as “Plan,” and each element of the PDCA cycle of the Examination Office is written in lowercase letters such as “plan”.

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The yearly policy for design examination is formulated at the beginning of the fiscal year on the basis of the policies of the Design Division, the Design Examination Divisions, and each Examination Office (plan: please see II. 1. (4)). Examiners conduct design examination according to the above-mentioned policies, utilizing consultations, interview examinations, etc. (do: please see II. 1. (1)). Each examination (including dispositions, etc.) is evaluated in terms of the quality by checking notices drafted by examiners (check: please see II. 1. (2) (i)), and feedbacks are given to the examiners, where necessary, so that approvers may give guidance about judgments and drafted notices in order to facilitate to continuously make adequate dispositions in a steadily manner (act: please see II. 1. (3) (i)), which would result in ensuring the quality of examination.

Receiving various QM-related information, etc. (Check: please see II. 2.(1)), the Examination Offices and examiners also improve design examination operations (act: please see II. 1. (3)(iv)), share information among examiners, make voluntary self-improvement efforts, acquire knowledge and enhance capabilities through taking trainings and seminars, etc. (act: please see II. 1. (3) (iii)).

Knowledge and information obtained through the above-mentioned measures will contribute to maintaining and improving the quality of design examination by being reflected on the subsequent planning of measures for design examination (plan: please see II. 1. (4)). The improvements of examination operation in each Examination Office is made in the everyday operation where necessary.

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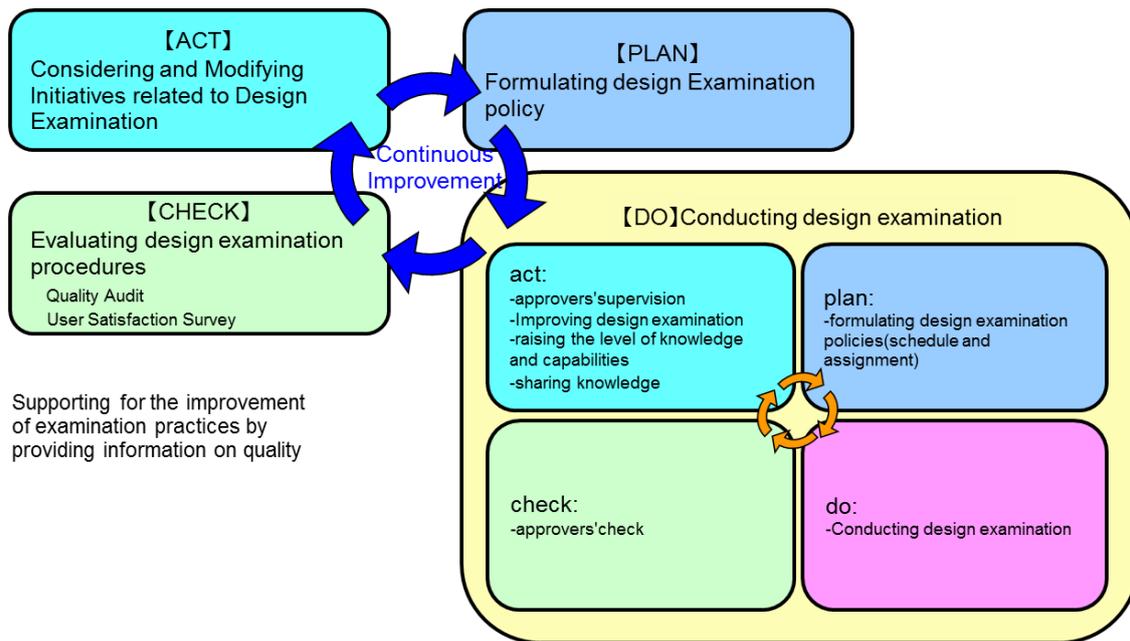


Figure 2: Conceptual Diagram of the PDCA Cycle for Maintaining and Improving the Quality of Design Examination

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3. Outline of Implementation System of the Quality Management

As for the Quality Management System described in this Quality Manual, JPO Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner who has been appointed by the Commissioner and Director-General of the Patent and Design Examination Department are responsible for organizing and implementing it.

Under the leadership of JPO Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Director-General of the Patent and Design Examination Department, the Examination Divisions and their staff engage in the duties assigned to them⁶.

Examiners conduct examination for applications of industrial design of products assigned to them under the management of Director-General of the Patent and Design Examination Department and Director of the Examination Office. Each Examination Office not only implements the initiatives for the Quality Management planned by the Design Division, but also it takes its own measures suitable for the industrial field assigned to it, for the sake of improving the quality of examination.

The Design Division is responsible for coordinating administrative affairs concerning design examination, including planning and making proposals for design examination.

That includes administrative works for the Quality Management. For example, they plan and make proposals for initiatives related to design examination that should be conducted by the Examination Divisions, including consultations, approvals, and the utilization of trial/appeal information. They also plan and make proposals for initiatives related to the Quality Management, including Quality Audit and User Satisfaction Surveys. Moreover, they support the Internal Committee, which is responsible for the Quality Management mentioned below, to analyze and evaluate the quality of design examination, including collecting various data on the quality of design examination.

The Internal Committee on Quality Management for Design Examination (hereinafter referred to as “Internal Committee on Quality Management”),

⁶ For the assignments of each division, please see “Order for the Organization of the METI” and “Rules for the Organization of the METI.”

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which consists of Directors and Managing Examiners of the Examination Offices, is responsible for the Quality Management on Design Examination through the analysis and evaluation of the quality of design examination. Specifically, the Internal Committee on Quality Management analyzes and evaluates the collected data on the quality of design examination, including the results of Quality Audit, trial/appeal information, the results of User Satisfaction Surveys, etc., and reveals the current status of the quality of design examination and issues to be solved to each Examination Office from an objective standpoint. Subsequently, the Internal Committee reports the results to Deputy Commissioner, Director-General of the Patent and Design Department, and the Design Division, and give feedback to Director of the Examination Office on the data and the analysis results of Quality Audit (e.g. quality check method). In addition, the Internal Committee gives advice on various initiatives which the Design Division plans for.

Quality Management Officers, who are responsible for the Quality Management on Design Examination, are selected from examiners who have experiences of administrative judges, and conduct the analysis of the results of Quality Audit, etc. The analysis results are reviewed and consolidated in the Internal Committee on Quality Management and given as feedback to the Design Examination Divisions.

The committee consisting of external experts, including former practitioners and academic experts (Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management under the Intellectual Property Committee under the Industrial Structure Council, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) confirms whether the Quality Management System outlined in this Manual has been properly functioning for maintaining and improving the examination quality of design from the standpoint of third parties, and make an objective evaluation of the implementation system and the implementation status of the Quality Management. This Committee sets evaluation items and standards and objectively evaluates on the basis of them as well as makes recommendations on the implementation system of examination quality management and its current status at the JPO. Based on the results of the recommendations proposed by the Committee, the JPO reviews and publishes the issues to be

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addressed concerning examination quality management, and modifies design examination-related initiatives [ACT], formulating policies for design examination [PLAN].

Users of the design system, including applicants and attorneys can provide information that could contribute to maintaining and improving of design examination through responding to User Satisfaction Surveys or taking advantage of various opportunities for exchanging views.

As for the relationship with foreign IP offices, the JPO provides examination information, etc., exchanges information on examination operations and measures for the Quality Management, etc. intending to benefit from them for maintaining and improving the quality of design examination.

Figure 3 shows an overview of the entire Quality Management System at the JPO, including its Quality Management, its Implementations System, and the relationship among them. Figure 4 shows the organizational structure of the divisions that are involved in the Quality Management.

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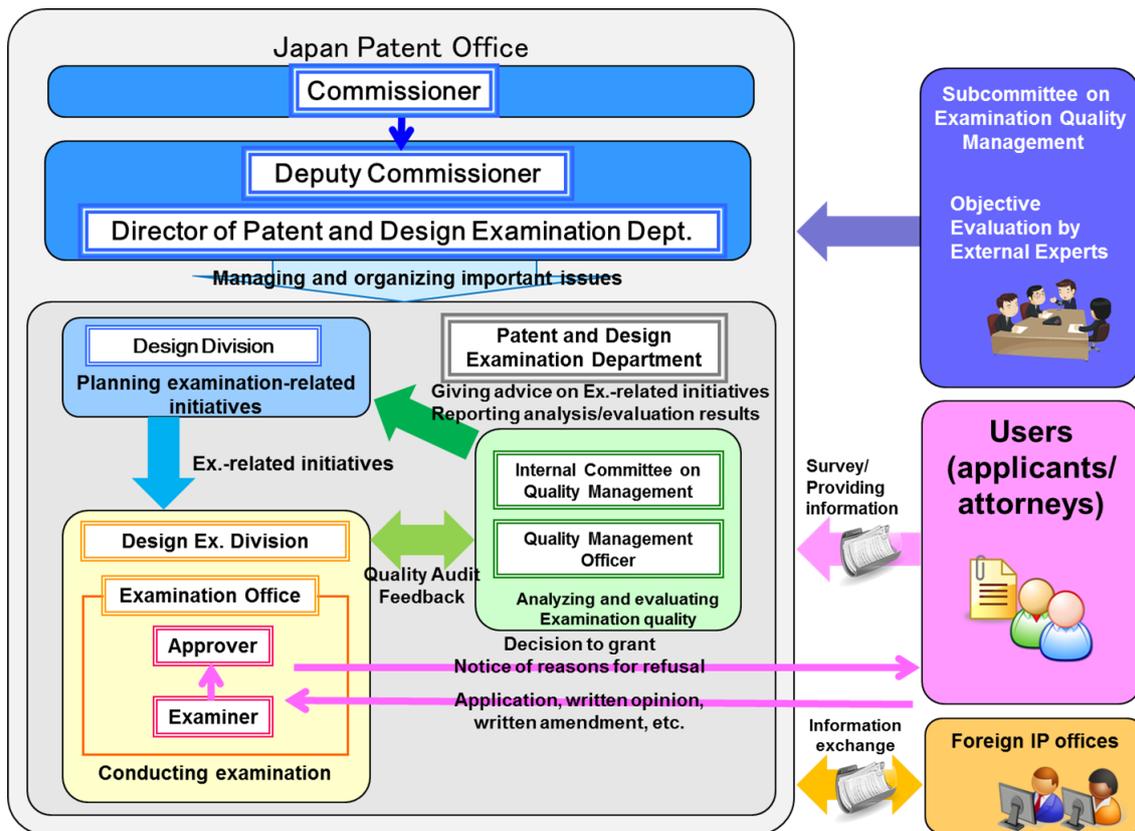


Figure 3: Overview of the Quality Management System

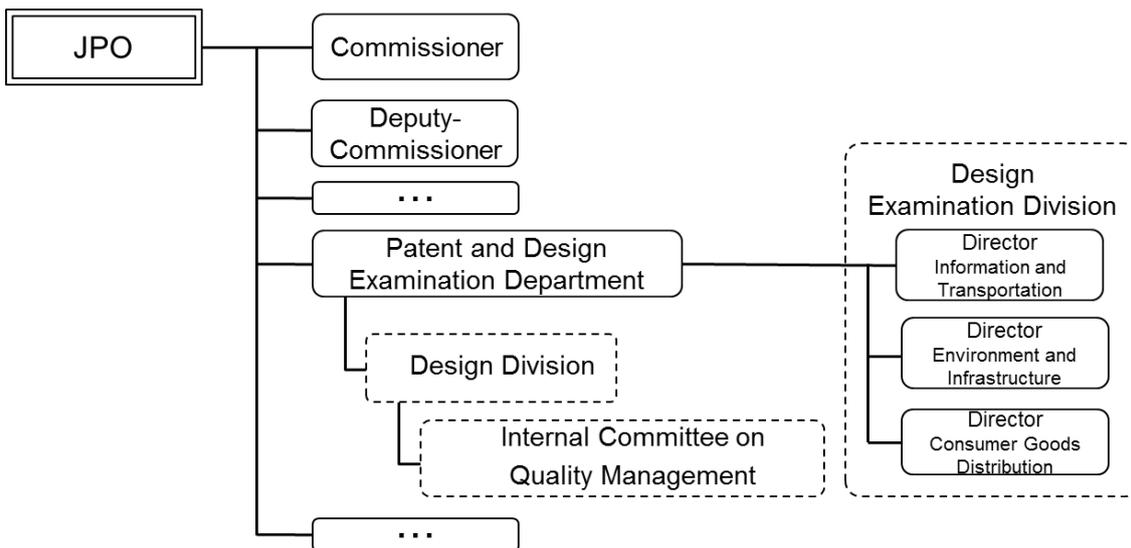


Figure 4: Organization Structure of the Quality Management

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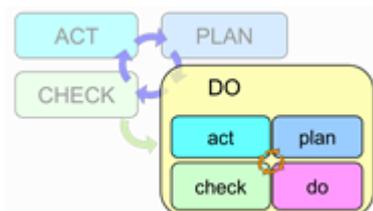
II. Measures in Design Division and Design Examination Divisions

In this chapter, measures included in the larger PDCA cycle in the Design Division and the entire Design Examination Divisions, which was mentioned in 2. (1) of Chapter I , will be explained.

The first section describes the conducting of design examination (DO), followed by the evaluating of design examination operations (CHECK), the considering and modifying of initiatives for design examination (ACT), and the formulating of policies for design examination (PLAN) from section 2 to 4⁷.

1. Conducting of Design Examination [DO] - PDCA Cycle in Examination Office

In this section, as the core activities focusing on ensuring the quality of the design examination, the design examination operations conducted in each Examination Office and its own initiatives that could contribute to maintaining and improving the quality, will be explained according to the PDCA (DCAP) cycle.



First, examiners' conducting of the design examination [do], which is the core of the measures, will be explained.

⁷ The JPO has made efforts to improve its examination operations by using the PDCA cycle method. However, to suit its own needs, the JPO conducts its Quality Management in the order of DCAP because "PLAN" is formulated every year by revising the previous fiscal year's plan; the details of "PLAN" is exactly reflected into "DCA" elements; and moreover, it is easier for practitioners to understand their jobs better by starting with "DO" first. In general, the term "PDCA cycle" may be called as "DCAP cycle" with the letter "D" at the beginning.

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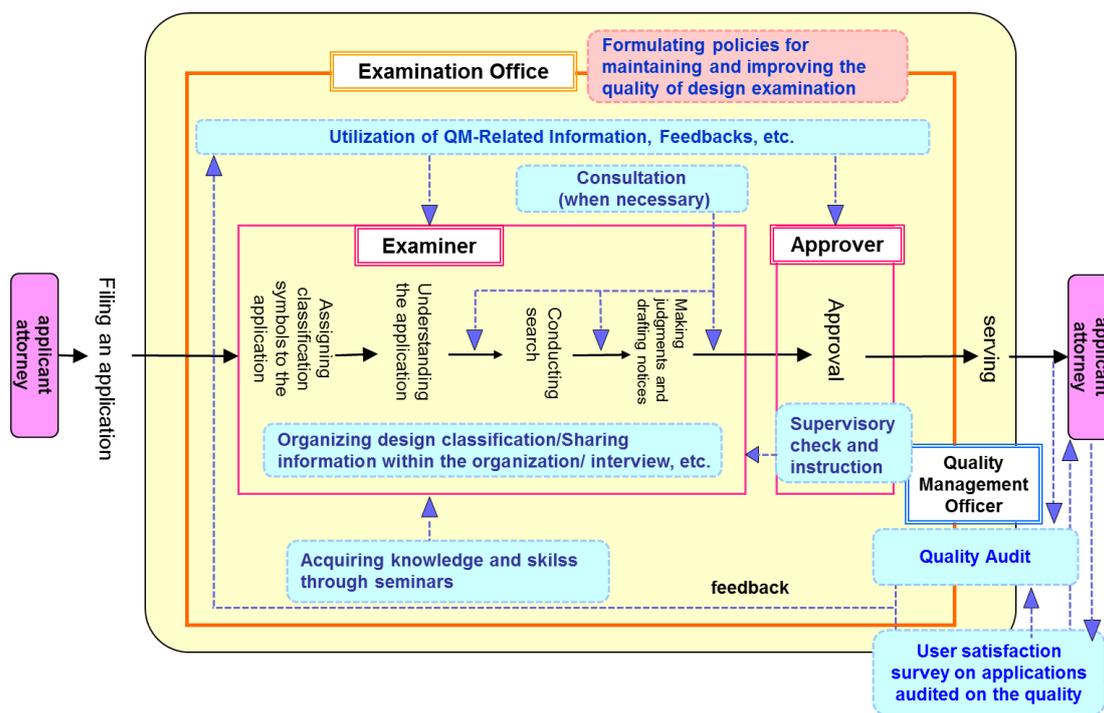


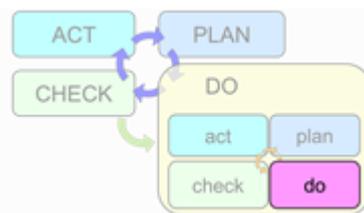
Figure 5: Measures for Improving the Quality of Design Examination Operations in the Examination Office

(1) Examiners' Conducting of Design Examination [do]

(i) Design Examination (understanding the applications, conducting searches, making judgments, and drafting notices)

- Outline

Examiners engage in the following steps of the design examination operations; understanding the application, conducting searches, making judgments and drafting notices. In doing so, they follow various guidelines, including the Examination Guidelines for the Design Act that describe the basic ideas on how to apply the relevant laws and regulations such as the Design Act, making sure that there are no errors in their works.



Specifically, examiners perform each of the following procedures uniformly and accurately in accordance with laws, regulations and guidelines, etc.

- understanding and approving design in the application
- identifying the subject and the scope of search
- conducting searches
- making judgments as to whether registration requirements have been

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met, such as novelty, creativity, etc.

- drafting notices of reasons for refusal, decisions of granting design registration, etc.

Moreover, examiners conduct design examination that accurately satisfies the needs of users through examinations called “collective examination for IP portfolio supporting business activities”, interview examinations and accelerated examination.

Based on this, the JPO can steadily conduct high-quality design examination, which is fair, transparent, and consistent design examination, and consequently can be trusted by users. On the whole, this leads to meeting wide-ranging user needs and expectations; granting robust, broad and valuable design rights.

- Those who are responsible

Examiners are responsible for conducting design examination, and Director or Managing Examiners of the Examination Office are responsible for assigning or re-assigning examiners to applications. In general, Director and Managing Examiners of the Examination Office first assign Japanese classification for industrial designs to each examiner and then assign them to applications based on the Japanese classifications for industrial design assigned to the applications.

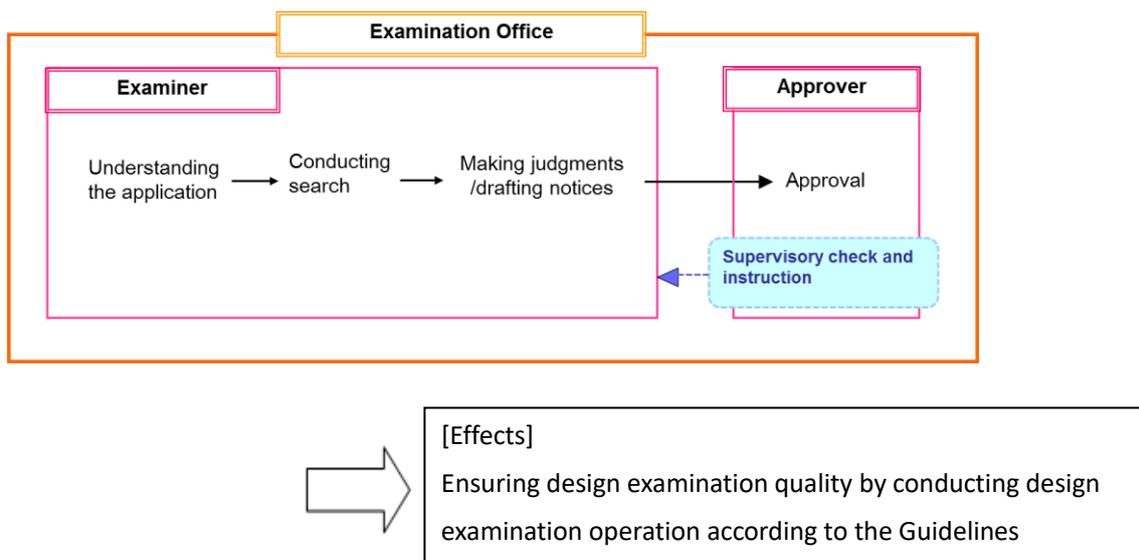
- References

Examination Guidelines for Industrial Design

Design Examination Manual

Japanese Classification for Industrial Design

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<Note>

BATCH Examination

In design examination, we collectively examine applications (from dozens of applications to over a hundred applications) during the designated period of time. The package includes applications that have been filed during a certain period of time and are closely related to a specific design field (this is called “batch examination”). This is a method devised so that a smaller number of staff can conduct examinations efficiently. If we examine applications one by one, it would force us to repeat a great deal of prior design searches over and over again (the examination schedule is up on the JPO’s website). However, if one examiner collectively examines design applications that have been filed during a certain period of time, examiners can understand overall trend of designs during that period of time, which would result in securing consistency of examiners’ decision.

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Figure 6 Image of Batch Examination

Design Examiner is in charge of 6 fields on average depending on the volume of filed materials (e.g. camera, cell phone, PC, PC parts, watch, sound devices)

(ii) Interview Examinations

- Outline

Upon the requests of either examiners or attorneys, etc., interview examinations are conducted according to the Interview Guidelines. Promoting close communications with attorneys etc. on design examinations through interview examinations would contribute to maintaining and improving the quality of design examination. Interviews examinations are also conducted by telephone or e-mail, etc. for the above-mentioned purpose.

By hearing explanations directly from attorneys, etc. about comparison between design in the application and prior designs, or draft amendments, examiners can increase their understanding about the design, which allows both parties to understand each other better. Consequently, examiners could produce highly convincing examination results.

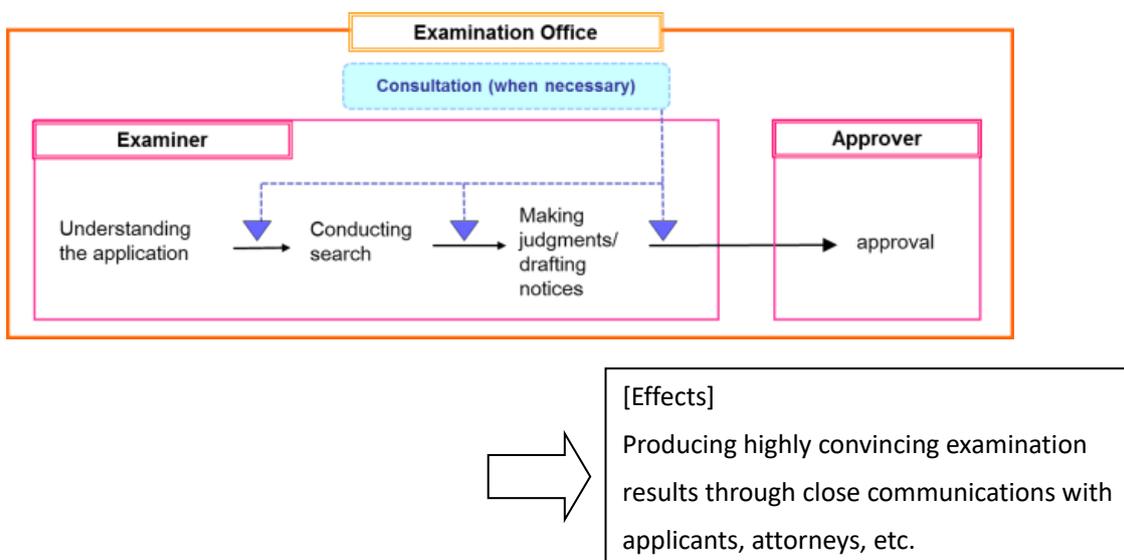
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- Those who are responsible

Examiners in charge of the application conduct interview examinations with the attorneys, etc. for the application.

- References

Interview Examination Guidelines for Design Examination



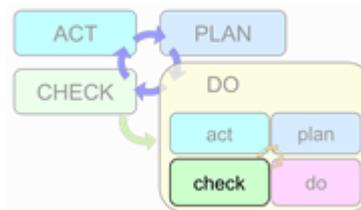
(2) Evaluating of Quality of Design Examination in the Examination Office [check]

(i) Approvals

- Outline

After examiners draft a notice of disposition (“drafting notices” in the design examination operations), Directors or Managing Examiners of the examination office where the examiner belongs conduct substantive and formality checks in all cases by confirming the contents of notices of disposition (“approvals” in the design examination operations).

Approvers confirm whether or not the disposition complies with the laws, regulations, guidelines, etc., and whether or not it was made through following the procedures of the Quality Management, such as consultations (mentioned below). They may give feedbacks to examiners in charge, and ask

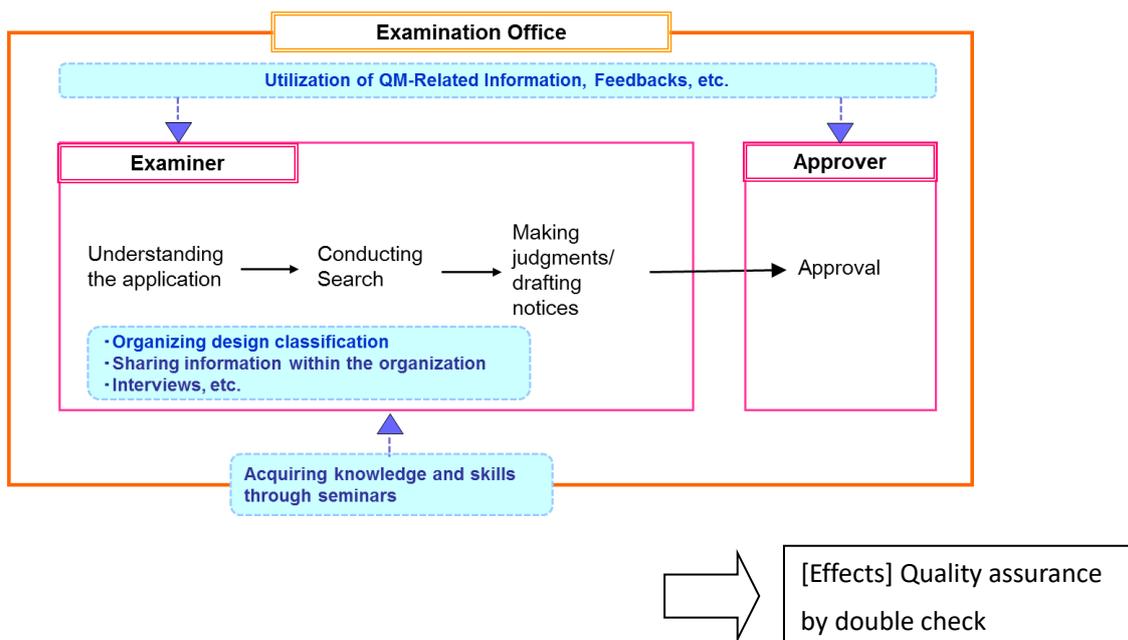


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them to amend the documents, or provide instructional guidance to them.

- Those who are responsible

Director or Managing Examiners of the examination office where the examiner belongs are responsible for making an approval.



<Note>

Preventing careless mistakes

Contrary to patent examination where examiners conduct examination on a claim basis and find reasons of refusal or cited documents for each claim, design examiners make a judgment only one design filed in the application, and therefore, the structure of a notice of reasons for refusal is quite simple. Base on this, computer aided drafting system has been built, which makes it easier for examiners to draft notices by simply typing reasons for refusal. The system also automatically checked the dates (which is earlier and which is later).

When finding reasons for refusal, examiners choose cited documents on the ground of which they reject the application on the design search system of the internal database. Then, the system automatically checks whether or not the dates of the chosen cited documents are appropriate to be used as a basis for refusal, and whether or not the filed material is submitted by the same applicant. Furthermore, the system automatically shows law provisions

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to be used as a basis for refusal corresponding to the chosen cited documents. In this way, the options of reasons of refusal that examiners can choose are narrowed down. The system also automatically identifies a possible combination of provisions, and check whether the current Design Act or old law should be applied. Through these automatic checking functions, errors about the dates do not take place, and mistakes of choosing wrong provisions can be eliminated.

When utilizing the documents stored in the internal database, the biographic data such as the document number is automatically entered, and therefore, there is no need to manually input the data except unless there is some additional information.

In summary, this computer aided drafting system helps examiners to draft notices without making careless mistakes through selecting proper law provisions for proper types of notices, and detecting errors in cited document numbers and attached image data.

(ii) Examiner-Approver Consultation

- Outline

Examiners consult with their supervisors on a regular basis in the everyday operation, whenever they feel necessary, regarding, for example, how to make a disposition. It is assumed that there may be some useful information in such discussions that would contribute to improving the quality of examination if it is shared in the entire Design Examination Divisions. Therefore, certain types of examiner-approval consultation cases are identified as “Consultations,” such as those that help understand what causes a wider range of variability among dispositions, or typical cases where there are some problems in following the procedures. All the information is reported to the Internal Committee on Quality Management, and given as feedbacks to the Design Examination Divisions where necessary.

The followings are deemed as essential consultations, and mandated to be discussed at the examiner-approval consultation without fail: 1) cases where an examiner is considering making a disposition in a different way from the former examiner in charge; this aims to prevent a wider range of variability among dispositions; 2) cases where more than two notices of reasons of refusal on the grounds of the same law provision are served; this aims to reduce the

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

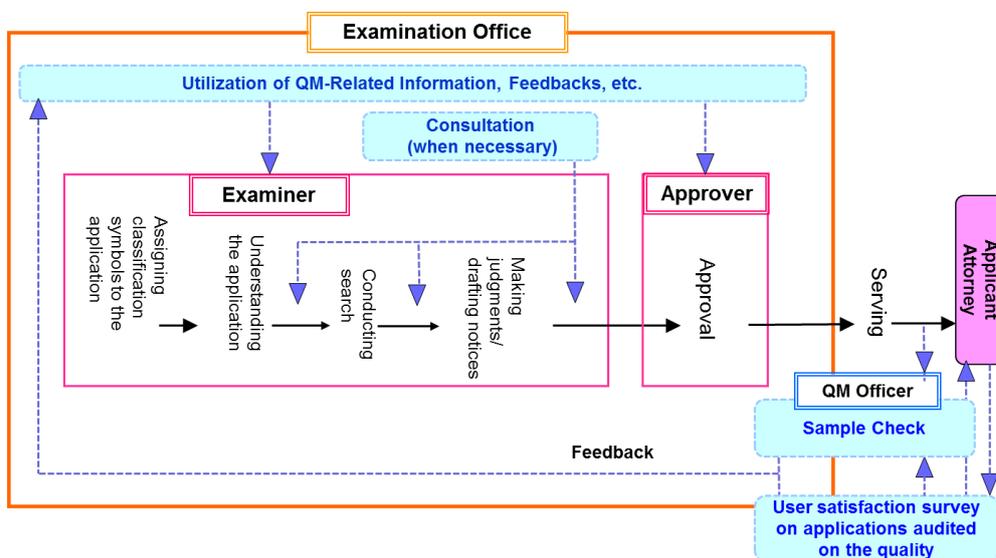
problems in the procedures; 3) cases where there are errors in intermediate actions, etc., and the errors need to be corrected; 4) cases which needs to be subject to accelerated examination for measures against counterfeit goods; and 5) cases regarding the International Design Application under the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement.

Furthermore, in the following cases, a memorandum of the consultation is created and reported to the Internal Committee on Quality Management: a) where the decision has been changed, b) where examiners need to conduct searches again, and c) where approvers judge that it is useful to share the information of the case. The Committee discusses on whether the information needs to be shared in the Design Examination Divisions, and if so, how it should be conducted. The information is given as feedbacks whenever it decides that it is necessary.

When examiners consult with their approvers over the case that is difficult in making a proper judgment, approvers create a memorandum of the consultation, if they think it necessary, and treat it as a consultation.

- Those who are responsible

Consultations are conducted between examiners and their approvers.



⇒ [Effects]
Reducing variability of search results and judgments

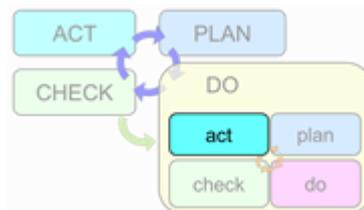
[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

(3) Efforts for Maintaining and Improving Design Examination Quality in Each Examination Office [act]

(i) Improving the Quality based on the Check Results

- Outline

Respectfully receiving feedbacks about the results mentioned in (2) (i) to (ii) above, and understanding the intent of the feedbacks, where necessary, examiners amend the drafted notices returned by their approvers, reconfirming laws, regulations and guidelines, and striving to accurate and precise design examination.



- Those who are responsible

Examiners in charge are responsible for amending dispositions, etc. for the returned application.

(ii) Organizational Information Sharing

- Outline

The Examination Office makes efforts for organizational utilization of knowledge and information obtained in the course of examination operation in order to minimize variability in the quality among examiners. To this end, organizational initiatives for sharing knowledge and information on design examination are important. Specifically, the Design Division makes efforts to share information through definition cards of Japanese Classification for Industrial Designs, and search information of each batch, etc. Examiners update and amend the information, where necessary.

- Those who are responsible

Organizational information sharing is mainly conducted by examiners in each office.

(iii) Acquiring Knowledge and Enhancing Capabilities through Taking Seminars, etc.

- Outline

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

Directors, etc. of the Examination Office provide instructional guidance to examiners, where necessary, to encourage them to take necessary seminars to improve the quality of their examination. Examiners try to acquire necessary knowledge and enhance their capabilities through taking seminars, as well as make voluntary efforts to improve themselves in their assignments.

Through trainings by taking seminars, etc., examiners can enhance their expertise, and consequently the examination results could become more accurate.

- Those who are responsible

Examiners receive trainings including taking seminars under the supervision of Directors, etc. of the Examination Office to acquire necessary knowledge and enhance their capabilities. In addition, examiners need to be actively committed to making voluntary self-improvement efforts.

(iv) Improving the Quality based on the Results of Review, etc.

- Outline

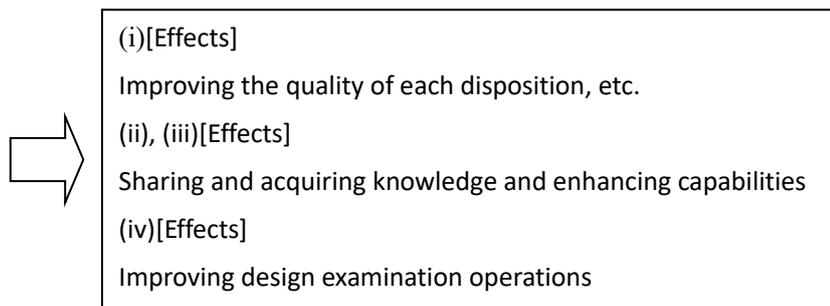
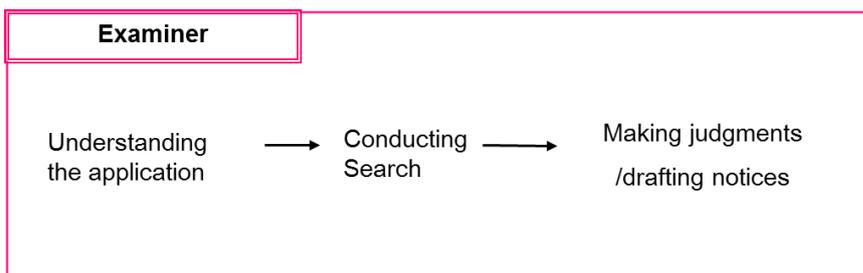
The Examination Offices consider initiatives for maintaining and improving the quality of examination, and plan out how to improve design examination operations on the basis of the results of review (please see 2. (2) (ii) below), and the quality-related information collected through various channels (please see 2. (1) below). Furthermore, they review feedbacks and take measures not to repeat the same errors as shown in the feedbacks.

By improving design examination operations in the Examination Office, examiners can conduct fair, transparent and consistent design examination according to laws, regulations, guidelines, etc.

- Those who are responsible

Director and examiners of each Examination Office are responsible for improving design examination operations under the leadership of Director-General of the Patent and Design Examination Department.

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

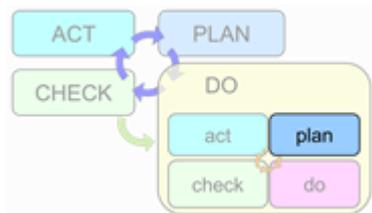


(4) Formulating Policies for Maintaining and Improving Design Examination Quality in Each Examination Office [plan]

- Outline

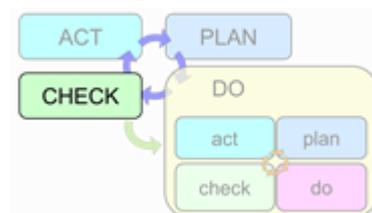
Each Examination Office determines its own measures that are suitable for the circumstances in the field of the products which are assigned to them, following policies of the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions under the leadership of Director-General of the Patent and Design Examination Department.

As a result, each Examination Office understands the current status and sees continuous improvements of examination operations through various measures, which would lead to being able to continuously conduct the utmost quality patent examination in the world..



2. Evaluating of Design Examination Operation [CHECK]

In this section, measures for evaluating design examination operation, which are established for the entire Design Examination Divisions for the purpose of maintaining and improving the quality of design examination, will be explained.



[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

It is essential to analyze and evaluate the current status of the quality of design examination (CHECK), and to understand the fact objectively. To this end, the Design Division and the Internal Committee on Quality Management collect, analyze and evaluate to identify the issues based on understanding the fact.

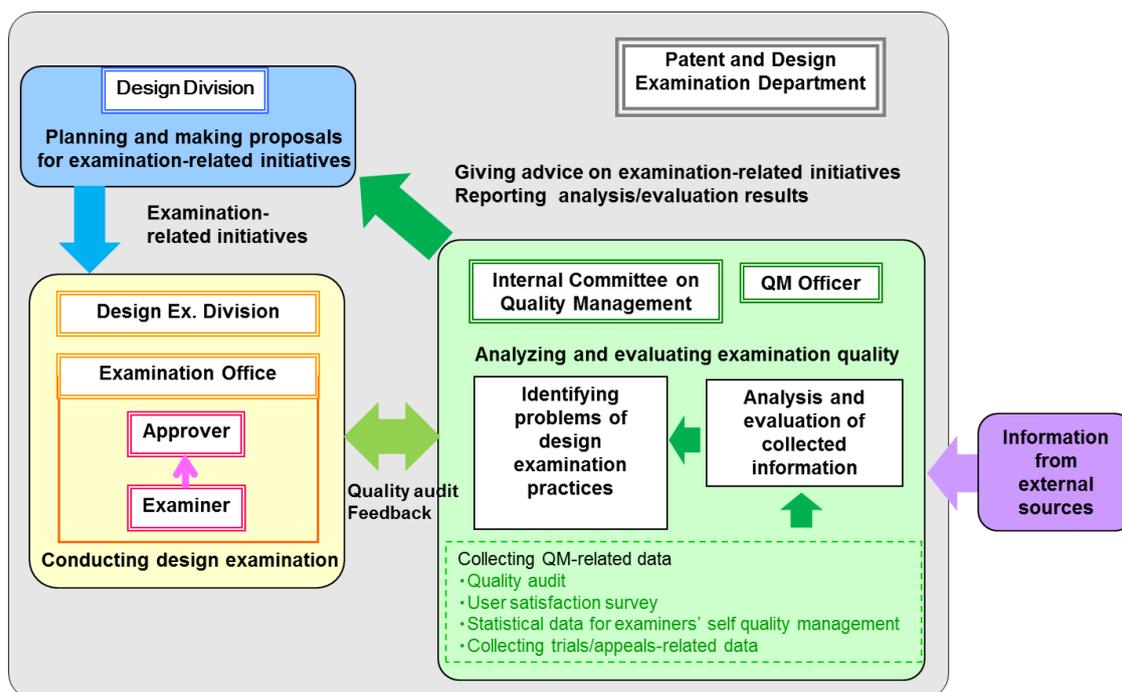


Figure 7: Measures for Evaluating Design Examination Operation
(Design Division and Internal Committee on Quality Management)

(1) Collecting and Analyzing Data

(i) Quality Audit for Approved Cases

- Outline

Quality Management Officers confirm whether or not examiners made appropriate dispositions for sampled applications according to laws, regulations, guidelines, etc., and report the results to the Internal Committee on Quality Management. Then, the Committee analyzes them about the types of problems.

- Those who are responsible

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

The Design Division is responsible for conducting Quality Audit, and Quality Management Officers and Internal Committee on Quality Management are responsible for analyzing the results.

(ii) User Satisfaction Survey and Collecting Information from Users

- Outline

In order to understand user needs, the JPO conducts user satisfaction surveys on the quality of overall design examination procedures and the quality of design examination procedures on individual applications, and analyzes quality evaluations and comments by users, etc. The JPO also analyzes the information about individual cases that have been identified through the survey as having problems. The results of analysis are provided to the Design Examination Divisions for the improvement of operations and consideration on initiatives. The results of analysis on individual cases identified as having problems are to be given as feedbacks to the Examination Office where the application was examined as needed. The results are released to the public.

At the user meetings held by the JPO, we also hear from users about their needs for quality (please see III. 1).

The JPO website is available for users to inquire about the quality management of design examination.

- Those who are responsible

The Design Examination Divisions are responsible for conducting user satisfaction surveys, and gathering opinions sent by users, and the Internal Committee on Quality Management is responsible for analyzing the results of the survey and user opinions in cooperation with Quality Management Officers.

- Document to refer:

JPO Website (Report on a survey of user satisfaction on design examination quality) [Japanese version only]

JPO Website (For submission of opinions on improvement of examination quality)

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

(iii) Understanding the current status of discrepancies in examination results between the JPO and foreign patent offices

- Outline

The Internal Committee on Quality Management analyzes causes for differences (discrepancies) in examination results among the JPO and foreign patent offices. The Committee targets applications that were filed to both the JPO and foreign patent offices and in which discrepancies were found in terms of examination results.

- Those who are responsible

The Quality Management Officers and the Internal Committee on Quality Management conduct an analysis on the above-mentioned applications.

(iv) Statistical Data for Examiners' Self-Quality Management

- Outline

For examiners' self-quality management, the Design Division and the Internal Committee on Quality Management provide statistical data on the breakdown of examination dispositions made by each examiner, including the number of notices of reasons for refusal, etc. so that they can compare their achievements with the average in the Design Examination Divisions (the data is only available for the person and his/her supervisors).

Those who are responsible

The Design Division conducts statistical survey.

(v) Collecting Data related to Trials/Appeals

- Outline

The Design Division collects data related to trials/appeals, including information on decisions in trials and appeals. It also collects statistical data on documents cited in trials for invalidation and trials against examiner's decision of refusal, and provides them to the Design Examination Divisions. In the Examination Office, they analyze newly notified reasons of refusal at the trial/appeal proceedings and the cited documents on the ground of which

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

such decisions were made, trial and appeal decision, etc. in order to understand the current status of examination and issues to be improved.

Furthermore, there may be cases where the Trial and Appeal Department provides the Examination Office with the results of individual trial/appeal cases. Each Examination Office analyzes the provided information and utilizes them for improving the quality of examination.

- Those who are responsible

The Design Division collects the data.

(vi) Collecting the Results of Various Measures related to the Quality Management

- Outline

The Design Division collects information related to the quality management mentioned from (i) to (iv) above. In addition, in order to understand the current status of activities related to maintaining and improving the quality conducted in each Examination Office, the Design Division collects information about the implementation status of the Quality Management-related measures conducted in each Examination Office (e.g. consultations), and their results.

- Those who are responsible

The Design Division collects the results of measures, etc.

(2) Evaluating the Results of Data Analysis

(i) Identifying Problems with Design Examination Operations

- Outline

The Internal Committee on Quality Management identifies the issues to be improved in the design examination operations on the basis of the results of analyzing various data collected through measures mentioned in (1) above, and provide the information to the relevant sections and offices of the Design Division, intending to contribute to planning and making proposals for improving examination operations.

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

(ii) Reviews (Report on Measures and Intermediate Review)

- Outline

The relevant sections and offices of the Design Division and the Design Examination Divisions review the evaluations on the current status of design examination quality and the results of implementing various measures (the results of above-mentioned (1) and (2) (i), etc.) on a regular basis to confirm whether the Quality Management System on Design Examination continues to be appropriate and effective. The results of reviews are shared among the relevant sections and offices of the Design Division and the Examination Offices of the Design Examination Divisions so that they may be contributed to planning and making proposals of improving examination operations.

- Those who are responsible

The relevant sections and offices of the Design Division and each Design Examination Office conduct review under the supervision of Deputy-Commissioner, and Director-General of the Patent and Design Examination Department.

(3) Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management

- Outline

The JPO established the “Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management” under the Intellectual Property Committee of the Industrial Structure Council, in August 2014 for the purpose of obtaining objective evaluations and suggestions from external experts on the ways to implement quality management and to check the current status of implementation at the JPO.

- Those who are responsible

In the Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management, discussion is to be held by a wide-range of external experts from the private-business, legal, and academic fields.

Also, the Quality Management Office under the Administrative Affairs Division is in charge of work involving common quality management of examinations on patents, designs, and trademarks, as well as administrative

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

work. The Design Division is in charge of quality management of design examination.

- Document to refer:

JPO Website (For submission of opinions on improvement of examination quality)

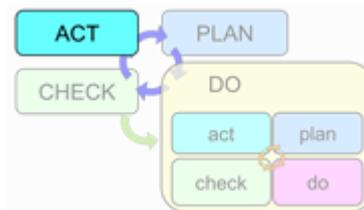
[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

3. Considering and Modifying of Initiatives for Design Examination [ACT])

Based on the understanding of the current status of the design examination quality through measures mentioned in “2. Evaluating of Design Examination Operation [CHECK]” above,

operations are improved where necessary (ACT), and such improvements are reflected precisely and properly for the subsequent planning (PLAN).

For the formulation of policies for the next fiscal year, the relevant sections and offices of the Design Division plans and makes proposals for various initiatives (ACT). Besides, feedbacks may be given to the Examination Offices in the middle of the fiscal year (intermediate reviews, etc.). In such a case, the Examination Offices need to make efforts to improve design examination operations (ACT), where necessary.



[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

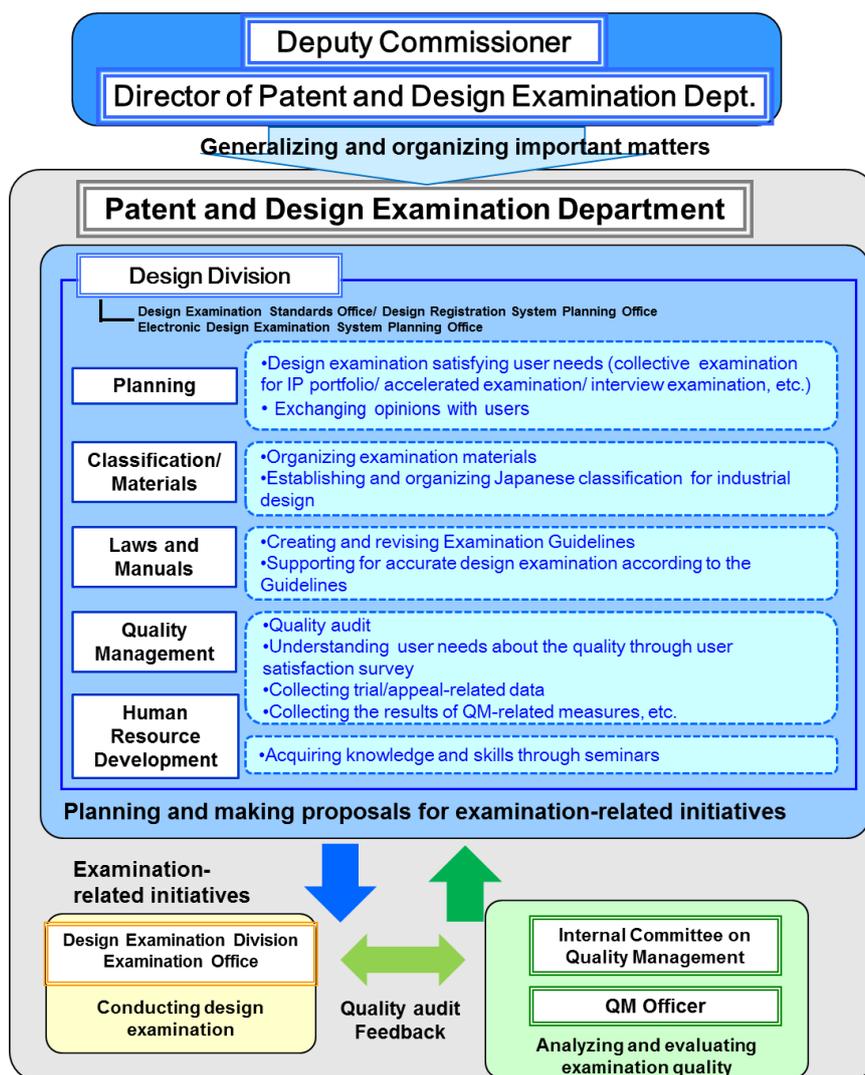


Figure 8: Considering and Modifying of Initiatives for Design Examination, and Initiatives for Formulating Policies for Design Examination

(1) Creating, Revising and Publishing the Examination Guidelines for Design

- Outline

In order to ensure that design examination is conducted fairly according to a certain standard, the Examination Guidelines, which outline the basic idea of how to apply relevant laws and regulations such as the Design Act, have been created. They are revised, where necessary, to respond to law revisions, new court decisions, the current status of design development,

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changing international situations, etc. The change and revision of the Examination Guidelines are conducted based on the opinions from inside and outside, including deliberations of Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management under the Intellectual Property Committee of the Industrial Structure Council, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. The changed and revised Guidelines are made available to the public.

The change and revision of the Examination Guidelines for Design is respectfully based on the Quality Policies that outline the fundamental principles of the Quality Management for Design Examination aiming toward granting high-quality design rights.

- Those who are responsible

The Design Examination Standards Office is responsible for changing and revising the Examination Guidelines for Design.

- References:

The Examination Guidelines for Design

(2) Considering Initiatives for Maintaining and Improving the Quality of Design Examination

- Outline

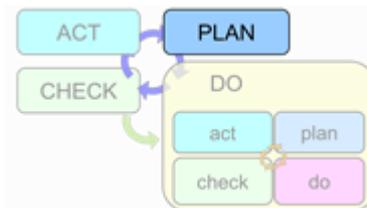
In addition to changing, revising and publishing the Examination Guidelines for Design, the relevant sections and offices of the Design Division plan and make proposals for various initiatives on the basis of information obtained through reviews, information provided by the Design Division and the Internal Committee on Quality Examination for Design Examination, including user needs, and opinions and advices provided by Directors, etc. of the Examination Office and examiners, etc. (please see Figure 8 for examples of specific initiatives).

- Those who are responsible

The relevant sections and offices of the Design Division plan and make proposals for various initiatives for design examination.

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

4. Formulating Design Examination Policy [PLAN]



Deputy Commissioner and Director-General of Patent and Design Examination Department manage and organize the initiatives considered by the relevant sections and offices of the Design Division (See Fig. 8), and formulates the policies for design examination that should be followed in both the

Design Division and the entire Design Examination Divisions, including the followings:

- (a) formulating and revising the Quality Policy;
- (b) formulating new initiatives or revising existing initiatives for maintaining and improving the quality of design examination;
- (c) enhancing human resources for implementing initiatives for maintaining and improving the quality of design examination; and
- (d) conducting periodic reviews on from (a) to (c) above and publishing the results

Moreover, the JPO defines the subjects to be taken in the quality management of examination under the Deputy Commissioner and Director-General of Patent and Design Examination Department, in response to the statement by Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management, and publishes it.

These will result in continuous improvements of operations through understanding the current status, as well as planning and making proposals for various initiatives under the leadership of the management, and consequently lead to providing the world's highest quality design examination in a sustainable manner.

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

III. Cooperation with External Persons Concerned

Needless to say, conducting high-quality design examination is indispensable when it comes to granting high-quality design rights, but it also needs applicants' cooperation such as preparing applications and drawings that properly disclose the features of their designs. That is to say, applicants and attorneys can also contribute to improving the quality of design examination, and consequently can contribute to enhance the quality of registered design rights by improving the quality of applications and drawings and enhancing prior design searches before filing applications.

1. Exchanging Opinions with Users

- Outline

The JPO actively exchanges opinions with users such as companies, industry associations, etc. in an open and frank manner, from the viewpoint of establishing "robust, broad and valuable design rights" together with the users. At the user meetings, the JPO provides information, including its initiatives for maintaining and improving the quality of design examination, the status of design filings, the ratio of design registration, the status of decisions of refusal. In turn, the JPO hears opinions and requests from users about the quality of design examination, and utilizes them for planning and making proposals for various initiatives as well as for improving the quality.

Furthermore, through the opportunities of exchanging opinions with users, etc., the JPO receives information on individual applications that may have problems with the quality of design examination, and utilizes such feedbacks from users when considering further initiatives.

Through these, the JPO understands wide-ranging needs and expectations for design examination, and improves the quality of design examination from the users' point of view.

- Those who are responsible

Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Director-Generals of the Patent and Design Examination Department, Director, etc. of the Examination Office and examiners are responsible for exchanging opinions with users. As for

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

the information provided by users concerning individual applications that may have problems, the Design Division utilizes it for planning and making proposals for various initiatives as well as for improving the quality.

2. Improving the Quality of Applications and Drawings, etc. and Enhancing Prior Design Searches conducted by Applicants and Attorneys

- Outline

As explained above, it is important to improve the quality of applications and drawings and to enhance prior design searches before filing applications for improving the quality of design examination, and consequently, for granting higher quality of design rights. To this end, the JPO not only holds explanatory meetings and training courses for applicants and attorneys, etc. concerning the Examination Guidelines for Design, searches, etc., but also provide them with information that can be useful for prior design searches (including what is conducted and provided by the National Center for Industrial Property Information and Training [INPIT]). Furthermore, the JPO requests applicants and attorneys to make efforts especially for improving the quality of applications and designs at the user meetings mentioned above.

- Those who are responsible

The Examination Standards Office holds explanatory meetings on the Examination Guidelines for Design. The relevant sections and offices of the Design Division provide information for the INPIT to help it to make learning materials for its training courses on the Examination Guidelines or searches, etc., and for the IP ePlat (its e-learning courses). Director-General of the Patent and Design Examination Department, Director, etc. of the Examination Office, and examiners are responsible for requesting applicants and attorneys, etc. to improve the quality of applications, drawings, etc., as well as to enhance prior design searches before filing applications.

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

IV. International Measures on Examination Quality

In order to support the smooth and global business development of Japanese companies, it is important not only for the JPO but also for foreign IP offices to make efforts to maintain and improve the quality of design examination. To this end, the JPO needs to be committed to maintaining and improving its own design examination quality and to publish the examination results quickly in order to contribute to granting internationally reliable and high-quality designs rights. Furthermore, the JPO needs to actively participate in promoting international measures on maintaining and improving the quality of design examination in order to contribute to the global enhancement of the quality of design examination.

This section outlines international measures for maintaining and improving the quality of design examination.

1. Frameworks for Providing Examination Results to Foreign IP Offices

- Outline

In order to support for IP offices in the developing countries to effectively conduct substantive design examination, upon the request of the counterpart countries for examination cooperation, the JPO provides examination results of design applications claiming priority rights which were filed with the JPO as the Office of First Filing, and the rights of which were registered at the JPO.

These measures are intended to support for applicants to obtain rights smoothly overseas, as well as to contribute to the global enhancement of the quality of design examination.

- Those who are responsible

The Design Division is responsible for initiatives for providing information, such as examination results produced by the JPO examiners, to other IP offices.

2. Sharing information on the Quality Management System with Other IP Offices (Global Development of Quality Policy and Initiatives for Quality

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

Improvement)

- Outline

The JPO shares information with other IP offices by actively participating in bilateral and multilateral meetings, and utilizes the obtained information for planning and making proposals for initiatives related to quality management. The JPO also plays a leading role in international discussions through cooperation with other IP offices for the quality management, obtaining information on the quality management for which other IP offices have been working on and contributing to the global improvements of the design system.

At the above-mentioned meetings, the JPO also introduces its Quality Policy and initiatives for improving the quality to other IP offices, intending to contribute to the global enhancement of design examination quality as well as earning the trust in the quality of design examination of the JPO.

These measures would reduce variability of the design examination quality among the IP offices, and consequently enhance the predictability that Japanese companies would obtain rights overseas.

- Those who are responsible

The Design Division is responsible for measures for global cooperation of the quality management through international meetings, etc.

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

Definition of Terms

The definitions of the terms used in this Quality Manual are as follows.

Design Examination Divisions	This indicates an organization, under the Patent and Design Examination Department, which consists of three Design Examination Divisions (Industrial Machinery Design Division, Household Equipment Design Division, and Consumer Goods Design Division) where design applications for registration are examined.
Director, etc. of the Examination Office	This indicates Director, Managing Examiner, and Associate Managing Examiner of the Examination Office.
Internal Committee on Quality Management for Design Examination	This is a committee consisting of Directors and Managing Examiners of the Design Examination Division as committee members with a staff member of the Design Division as secretariat.
Relevant sections and offices of the Design Division	This indicates Offices of the Design Division, and also includes committees that have been established for the special purposes.
Design Examination	This indicates design examination unless otherwise specified. This includes understanding of the application, conducting search, making judgments, and drafting notices.
Design Examination operations	This indicates design examination and its relevant works.
Search	This indicates prior design search.
Dispositions (Decisions), etc.	In addition to decisions of registration, decisions of rejection, and decisions of dismissal of amendments as stipulated in Article 17 <i>bis</i> of the Design Act, intermediate actions such as issuing notices of reasons for refusal etc. are included.
Initiatives	Actions/activities to be implemented which were planned by the relevant sections and offices of the Design Division.
Measures	Including above-mentioned initiatives, these

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

	indicate design examination operations conducted by the Design Division, the Design Examination Divisions, the Design Examination Offices, and examiners. Especially, this term is used when the operations are explained from a specific point of view (e.g. measures for improving the quality).
Laws, regulations and guidelines	These indicate relevant treaties, laws, regulations and various guidelines
Guideline	This indicates a document that should be referred to in design examination operations, including the Examination Guidelines for Design, various guidelines, etc. other than treaties, laws and regulations.
Quality Audit	This is a management tool to be used for assessing the level of the quality of examination, conducted by those other than examiners in charge of examining the application and managing examiners who approved the disposition or decision, to confirm whether or not the judgment of disposition, decision, etc., and the result are appropriate. This excludes audit on the formality which do not assess the appropriateness of disposition, etc. Only selected samples are audited.

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

Ref. 1



Quality Policy on Design Examination

Globally reliable design rights of high quality are important for supporting smooth business expansion worldwide and promoting innovation.

This quality policy outlines the fundamental principles of quality management in design examination in order to grant the aforementioned high-quality design rights. Based on this quality policy, the Japan Patent Office (JPO) is committed to achieving design examination that is the utmost quality in the world. Under the leadership and participation of the top management, all staff involved in design examination perform their work in compliance with the following fundamental principles, demonstrating a strong sense of responsibility and motivation.

We grant robust, broad and valuable design rights:

In order to enhance intellectual property protection worldwide, the JPO grants robust design rights that will not be invalidated afterward; broad design rights that have coverage matching the extent of the creative levels of designs; and valuable design rights that are recognized around the world.

We meet wide-ranging needs and expectations:

The JPO understands and respects broad-ranging needs of and expectations for design examination so that it may contribute to the benefit of Japanese society and the satisfaction of people connected with the design registration system. All staff involved in design examination perform design examination with fairness, transparency, and consistency in accordance with principles such as treaties, laws, regulations and guidelines, communicating with applicants, patent attorneys and other persons concerned in a positive manner.

We all dedicate ourselves to improving quality, cooperating with concerned persons and parties:

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

The JPO raises awareness on improving the quality of design examination in all staff involved in design examination and promotes initiatives that improve quality, in which all staff play an active role. Furthermore, the JPO maintains cooperative relationships with all persons and parties connected with the design registration system, collaborating with them to uphold and improve the quality of design examination.

We contribute to improving the quality of design examination globally:

The JPO contributes to the improvement of quality in terms of design examination globally through actively promoting international initiatives on design examination and providing foreign intellectual property offices with useful information on design examination conducted at the JPO.

We continually improve operations:

In order to continually provide design examination of the utmost quality in the world, the JPO improves operations by staying aware of current situations and taking a flexible approach to planning and proposing various measures.

We raise the knowledge and capabilities of our staff:

The JPO raises the level of knowledge and capabilities of all staff involved in design examination not only through cultivating human resources, by having all staff conduct their daily work and participate in training, but also through encouraging them to learn on their own.

The JPO periodically reviews this policy on quality, so as to always maintain and even further improve its rationale and effectiveness.

August 2014
Japan Patent Office

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

Ref. 2: Corresponding List between Quality Policy and Measures of Quality Manual

Quality Policy		Measures of Quality Manual	
		Location	Related Measures
Preamble	- Supporting global business development	Introduction I.1. Relationship between QMS and Quality Policy	/
	- Promoting innovation		
	- Fundamental principles		
	- Under the leadership and participation of the management, all staff members perform their duties, demonstrating a strong sense of responsibility and motivation.		
Grant of Design	- Robust (stability), broad (having the scope of right that corresponds to the level of creativity) and useful (valid around the world) design rights	II.1. Conducting of Design Examination [DO]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Design examination (Understanding the application, conducting searches, making judgments, and drafting notices) (II.1.(1)(i)) -Interview examinations, etc. (II.1.(1)(ii)) -Approvals (II.2.(2)(i)) -Consultations (II.1.(2)(ii)) -Quality audit (II.2.(1)(i)) -User satisfaction survey (II. 2. (1)(ii)) -Statistical data on dispositions for examiners' self-quality management (II.2.(1)(iv)) -Collecting trials/appeals-related data (II.2.(1)(v))
Needs and	-Contributing to the interest of Japanese society	II.2.(1)(ii) User Satisfaction Survey and	-Understanding user needs about the quality

[Note: When any ambiguity of interpretation is found in this translation, the Japanese text shall prevail.]

Expectations	and the interest and the satisfaction of people involved in the design system -Understanding and respecting broad-ranging needs of and expectations for design examination	Collecting Information from Users III.1. Exchanging Opinions with Users	through user satisfaction survey (II.2.(1)(ii)) -Exchanging opinions with users (III.1.)
	-Communicating with applicants, attorneys, etc.	II.1. Conducting Design Examination [DO]	-Interview examinations (II.1.(1)(ii))
	-Conducting design examination with fairness, transparency and consistency in accordance with principles such as treaties, laws, regulations and the Examination Guidelines	II.1. Conducting Design Examination [DO] II.3. Considering and Modifying of Initiatives for Design Examination [ACT]	- Conducting design examination [DO] (II.1.) -Creating, Revising, and Publishing the Examination Guidelines (II.3.(1))
Measures taken by staff and cooperation with those who are concerned	-Raising awareness of improving the quality and promoting measures for improving the quality of design examination that staff engages in the everyday operations.	II.1. Conducting Design examination [DO] II.1.(3) Efforts for Maintaining and Improving Design Examination Quality in Each Examination Office [act] II.1.(4) Formulating Policies for Maintaining and Improving Design Examination Quality in Each Examination Office[plan]	-Conducting design examination [do] (II.1.(1)) - Improving the quality based on check results (II.1.(3)(i)) - Organizational Information sharing (II.1.(3)(ii)) - Acquiring knowledge and enhancing capabilities through taking seminars, etc. (II.1.(3)(iii)) - Improving the Quality based on the Results of Review, etc. (II.1.(3)(iv)) - Formulating policies for maintaining and

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			improving design examination quality in each office [plan] (II.1.(4))
	-Ensuring the cooperative relationships and collaborating with those who are involved in the design system	III. Cooperation with External Persons Concerned	- Exchanging opinions with users (III.1) - Improving the quality of applications and drawings, etc. and enhancing prior design searches conducted by applicants, attorneys (III.2.)
Global Improvement of Quality	- Actively promoting international initiatives - Providing foreign IP offices with useful information on examination	IV. International Measures on Examination Quality	- Frameworks for providing examination results to foreign IP offices (IV.1) - Sharing information on the Quality Management System with other IP Offices (Global Development of Quality Policy and Initiatives for Quality Improvement) (IV.2.)
Continuous Improvements of Design Examination Operations	- Continually providing the world's highest design examination - Planning and making proposals for improving the operations while understanding the current status	II.2. Evaluating of Design Examination Operation [CHECK] II.3. Considering and Modifying of Initiatives for Design Examination [ACT] II.4. Formulating Design Examination policy [PLAN]	- Collecting and analyzing data (II.2.(1)) - Evaluating the results of data analysis (II.2.(2)) - Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management (II.2.(3)) - Creating, revising, and publishing the Examination Guidelines (II.3.(1)) - Considering initiatives for maintaining and improving the quality of design examination (II.3.(2))

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			- Formulating design examination policy [PLAN] (II.4.)
Improvement of knowledge and capabilities of all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing human resources through the OJT trainings or outside seminars - Encouraging all staff to make voluntary self-improvement efforts 	<p>II.1. Conducting Design Examination [Do]</p> <p>II.1.(3) Efforts for Maintaining and Improving Design Examination Quality in Each Examination Office[act]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design examination (Understanding the application, conducting searches, making judgments, and drafting notices) (II.1.(1)(i)) -Approvals (II.1.(2)(i)) -Consultations (II.1.(2)(ii)) -Quality audit (II. 2. (1)(i)) -User satisfaction survey (II. 2. (1)(ii)) -Statistical data on dispositions for examiners' self-quality management (II.2.(1)(iv)) -Collecting trials/appeals-related data (II.2.(1)(v)) -Acquiring knowledge and enhancing capabilities through taking seminars, etc. (II. 1. (3)(iii))
Review of the Quality Policy	- Periodically reviewing the Quality Policy, so as to always maintain and improve its rationale and effectiveness	II.3. Considering and Modifying of Initiatives for Design Examination [ACT]	- Considering initiatives for maintaining and improving the quality of design examination (II.3.(2))