

# *The Idiosyncrasy of Patent Examiners: Effects of experience and Attrition*

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## *Abstract*

*This article explores the role of idiosyncrasy among patent examiners. Using a hand-collected dataset of all of the patents examined by a group of about 250 examiners, I first examine the relative importance of variation between examiners and variation within the portfolios of individual examiners; I conclude that the variation between examiners is relatively slight. I then examine the relative roles of experience (work in the office at the date a particular patent was examined) and tenure (total patents examined during the examiner's career). Preliminary results suggest that tenure is considerably more important than experience.*

