



Kirk Ekena, Ph.D.

Senior Patent Agent

+1 919 862 2266 | kirk.ekena@alston.com

Raleigh | 555 Fayetteville Street, Suite 600 | Raleigh, NC 27601-3034

Related Services

Intellectual Property ■ Patent Prosecution, Counseling & Review ■ Biotechnology, Chemical & Pharmaceutical

Kirk Ekena is a registered patent agent and experienced patent prosecutor with Alston & Bird's Intellectual Property – Biotechnology, Chemical & Pharmaceutical Patents Group. Before joining the firm, Kirk obtained nearly two decades of experience honing his patent procurement skills at multiple biotech companies and a multinational pharmaceutical company. As a director of intellectual property, he was responsible for the management of a global portfolio of more than 600 patents and patent applications. Kirk also supervised associates in more than 30 countries in the prosecution of foreign applications, filed multiple appeals with the USPTO, and examined new developments to identify potential inventions and evaluate patentability. He has an established record of preparing and prosecuting domestic and international patent applications in the fields of small molecule pharmaceuticals, molecular biology, polymer systems, protein and nucleic acid, and drug development.

Kirk received a B.S. in biology from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Oregon. After receiving his Ph.D., Kirk was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Illinois.

Representative Experience

- Representing an oncology biotech company in development IP strategy, identifying and protecting their therapeutic compounds, methods of treatment and companion diagnostics, and building their IP portfolio in over 12 countries.
- Provided IP counsel to a large pharmaceutical company entering the nucleic acid-based therapeutics space, including FTO analysis, development of patent strategy, and patent preparation and prosecution.
- Representing a medical diagnostic company, including preparation of nucleic acid-based diagnostic patent applications, and U.S. and foreign patent prosecution.
- Representing major research universities in providing patentability analyses, and preparation and prosecution of patents over a range of therapeutic, plant, research tool, and molecular biological subjects.
- Prepared patent applications related to COVID-19 therapies and diagnostics for various companies and a research university.
- Conducted IP due diligence and FTO reviews for several companies.

Education

- University of Oregon (Ph.D., 1994)
- University of Illinois (B.S., 1989)

Admitted to Practice

- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office