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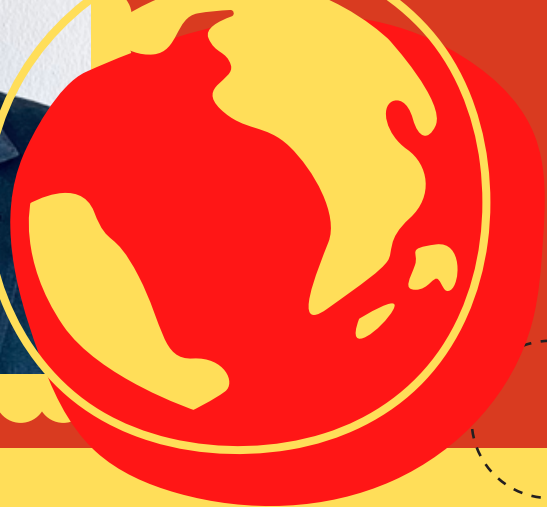
LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE LAW

# TO AUS, WITH LAW

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**Taking the Harder Route:  
Triumphs and Tribulations**  
*interview with French FQL  
Quentin Dequiret*





# Q U E N T I N D E Q U I R E T

[LinkedIn profile link](#)

By Reshma Mathew Augustine and Mei Gong

Quentin Dequiret is a thriving and energetic individual who is always up for new enriching challenges. With a European academic background, he graduated from the University Panthéon-Assas in Paris in 2015 and received two LL.M. from the prestigious Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Registered as a French qualified lawyer and EU Trade Marks Attorney since 2017, Quentin lived and worked internationally with a strong curiosity for international legal matters before settling in Sydney with his Australian partner in 2021. His professional experiences include working in international law firms in Munich and Paris and in specialised intellectual property (IP) law firms in Berlin and Sydney. He is currently completing further studies in Sydney towards his requalification as an Australian solicitor.

Outside of work, Quentin also participates in a variety of extracurricular, including being a community leader of French Tech Australia (a group facilitating the exchange of information and networks between entrepreneurs and investors in Australia and France) and a committee member of the French Australian Lawyers Society. He likes to stay physically and mentally active, spending most of his free time running around Sydney harbour, playing squash with friends, and developing his chess skills. He has a solid appetite for languages, including English, French, German, and Spanish.

**Interviewers' note:** When we interviewed Quentin in a humble Sydney café over coffee one afternoon, our lasting impression of Quentin throughout the interview was someone that perpetually strives to improve (and chooses to deliberately take the harder, more challenging route) to become the best version of himself. This is a story about the importance of preparation (Quentin actively cooperated in answering all of our interview questions in advance), thriving through adversity and why taking the harder route can test the limits of your comfort zone and lead you to triumphs in exceeding the possibilities in your imagination.

We hope you will be left as inspired by Quentin's journey and relentless curiosity as we have been in curating this snapshot of his career journey.



### a) Discoveries along the road less travelled

Quentin's introduction to the law came from an unlikely source. After all, none of his family members were lawyers, and he did not have any substantive exposure to the law (there being no legal studies subjects) in high school. Rather than only joining Law university after high school, Quentin decided to enrol with a 2 year preparatory course in Law, Economy and Management (which was in fact a more difficult, challenging route for Quentin to take). Quentin admitted that "***it was a tough start for a 17 year old***".

When asked about the most valuable thing that the preparatory course taught him, Quentin candidly reflected that he learnt how to efficiently study and work, stating that:

***"Each week there was an enormous amount of information to digest. You will fail, but you also learnt to read quicker and pay attention to what really matters, which helps you to become more efficient."***

The comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach of this program put Quentin in good stead when he discovered an interest in the law in his preparatory course and continued his Bachelor Degree in European law (noting that there was an almost 80% failure rate for university students studying law[1]). Quentin decided to join the BerMuPa university program[2] that would allow him to study for a year in Paris, followed by two years in Munich, as part of his quest to gain as much international exposure in his legal studies as possible.

Part of Quentin's passion for intellectual property law (and particularly trade marks) was as a result of his professional experiences in various law firms in France and Germany. Although being trained in international business law, Quentin realised that he always tended to select subjects related to intellectual property. Quentin's decision to practice in intellectual property law was therefore a convergence of his academic interest and practical experience.

1] Only 22% of the 799 students enrolled in the first year of the Bachelor of Law in 2015/2016 obtained their degree in 3 years. Source: University of Montpellier in France.

[2] A French German program from the university of Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas and Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich: <https://bermupa.u-paris2.fr/fr>.

Quentin excitedly remarked:

***"The field of trade marks is a fascinating world where innovation, business, reputation, and identity meet with the most diverse client base, from big corporations to sole traders, from big corporations to sole traders, from non-profit organisations to governmental and public entities. I like this diversity, allowing me to stay connected to the realities of society in general."***

## **b) Enrichment through immersion - differences in studying and working in France, Germany and Australia**

Reflecting on his privilege of having studied in different systems in Europe (France and Germany; civil law) and Australia (common law), Quentin considered the three educational systems very different from each other in terms of the way the courses and knowledge were delivered and the way the examinations were conducted.

Quentin stated that French universities tended to focus more on long compositions, organised thinking, and critical thinking, while German university courses are almost entirely based on case analysis and problem solving, with assessments often based on one final written or oral examination at the end of the course. In contrast, Quentin has found that in Australia, university courses tend to include regular assignments throughout the course instead of having a single determinative exam at the end.

Expressing gratitude for having had such diverse educational experiences, Quentin further remarked:

***"These particularities make the studies even more interesting because on top of the language skills and legal knowledge you inevitably acquire, you gain a specific mindset/reference frame that helps you to better understand the legal practice in each jurisdiction."***

When we asked about his work experiences in the abovementioned countries and how they differ, Quentin was careful to preface that his observations were based on his personal experiences. Quentin started and finished work later in the day (with longer lunch breaks) in France whereas in Germany the work day started earlier with a less hierarchical work culture. By contrast, in Australia, Quentin was genuinely impressed by the "**culture of happiness**" he encountered, through the kindness of his Aussie colleagues, the friendships that he formed along the way and the strong focus on work-life balance that formed part of the Australian working culture.

## c) Career highlights in taking the path less travelled

When we asked Quentin about his career highlights, Quentin indicated that while there was no particular event that was formative in his unusual career, there were some important decisions (both personal and professional) that he has made along the way which has led to where he is.

Quentin reflected closely on three important milestones and decisions he had made in his career so far:

1. Taking the oath in the First Chamber of the Paris Court of Appeal in 2017 - Quentin reflected that "**when I was wearing the official black lawyer's robe, it was quite a special moment, and I had a great feeling of achievement**".

2. Moving to Germany in 2018 - Quentin regarded this move as a significant turn in his career because he got to renew his ties with Germany where he had previously studied, articulating that "**this period in Germany allowed me to develop a strong legal network in Europe and confirmed my passion to work in different languages in the field of intellectual property law**".

3. Moving to Australia in 2021 - Quentin stated that the move to Australia was a "**great change in his professional life**", and that he is grateful for the opportunity to continue to expand his legal knowledge and experience "**like never before**". Quentin also adds that he considers it a "**great sign of courage and dedication**" to practice as a foreign qualified lawyer in Australia with a European background.



## d) Advice for aspiring Foreign Qualified Lawyers (FQLs)

Quentin admits that it is often very challenging for FQLs to pursue a legal career internationally, including in Australia, due to differences between legal systems and that it is "**difficult to get recognition of foreign legal skills**" by Australian employers.

We asked Quentin what career tips he had found helpful in his career and which he would like to impart on other aspiring FQLs.



Quentin recalled a motto that he has applied throughout his career, which has helped him to reconcile his self-perception and the external perception of himself:

***“The best approach to professional and personal life is being self-aware. This means a permanent reconsideration your own actions, words and behaviour and their consequences on others, whether you are in a managing position or working as a subordinate.”***



Quentin also emphasised the importance of preparation, strongly advising those interested in starting their legal journey in Australia to start researching for a job position in their relevant field of practice before moving to Australia or as soon as practically possible after arrival.

Lastly, but not least, Quentin remarked that it was important for aspiring FQLs to have a strong and broad network. Quentin is always eager to connect with professionals in his field of practice through LinkedIn or over a coffee:

***“Getting in contact with your peers is one of the best ways to find a suitable position and pursue your career. This is key to get an idea of the local market, the current trends, and one’s potential value in the market.”***

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