

1	Trademark search		We strongly recommend conducting a search before filing an application.
2	Subject of protection	Registrable trademark	Any characters, figures, signs or three-dimensional shapes, or any combination thereof, or any combination thereof with colors.
		Color	Color itself (including a combination of colors without being combined with characters, figures or the like): sounds and smells cannot be registered as trademarks.
		Standard character mark	A word mark consisting only of English alphabet, Arabic numerals, and Japanese characters in standard style can be designated a "standard character mark".
		Non-registrable trademark	Non-conventional trademarks such as sounds, smells and color trademarks are not registrable.
		Goods and service	Not all Class Headings of the Nice Agreement are accepted, but certain designations unique to Japan including retailing and wholesaling are allowed.
3	Claiming priority		The application claiming priority can be filed 6 months from the priority date under the Paris Convention. The priority certificate has to be submitted within 3 months from the filing date.
4	Multi-class		Multi-class applications are accepted.
5	Distinctiveness		One of the unique points is that a trademark consisting of the combination of just alphabet and numerals is often regarded as descriptive. The trademark may be interpreted as a serial number.
		Secondary meaning	When a descriptive trademark acquires distinctiveness through a secondary meaning, the trademark may be registrable.
6	Similarity of trademark		Appearance, sound and concept are the main factors for judging similarity. In addition to these three factors, the actual state of transaction is often taken into consideration.
7	Similarity of goods and services		Goods and services are categorized into some groups and each group has a certain code . The goods or services which have same code are deemed to be similar on another on the examination stage.
8	Substantive examination	Examination term	The average examination term is about 6 month from the filing date (2009). Expedited examination is available when the application meets specific requirements e.g. the application has a corresponding foreign application, etc.
9	Amendment	Amendment	Amendments to the designated goods and services in the international application can be made only within the specific time limit designated by the examiner (i.e., 3 months from the date of pronouncement indicated by the notification of office action, etc.).
10	Divisional application		A divisional application derived from an international application under the Madrid Protocol is not allowed.
11	Trademark right	Duration	Trademark rights shall expire 10 years from the date of registration.
		Registration of renewal	The term of a trademark right may be renewed any number of times by application for registration of renewal.