



Design Registration in Pakistan

(A Practical Complete Legal Guide)

Under the Registered Designs Ordinance, 2000 and the Design Rules, 2023

At our law firm, we assist clients in protecting the visual appearance of their products through design registration in Pakistan. A registered design gives the owner legal protection against unauthorized copying or imitation of a new and original design applied to an article.

This guide explains, in simple terms, the importance of design registration, what may be protected, and the procedure for obtaining design registration under the Law



Why is Design Registration Important?

When a business creates a new product design, it naturally wants to stop others from copying it, especially if the product becomes commercially successful. Design registration provides legal protection for the appearance of a product and gives the registered owner exclusive rights over that design for the period allowed by law.

In practical terms, registration helps:






- protect the visual identity of a product;
- prevent imitation by competitors;
- strengthen the commercial value of the product; and
- provide legal grounds for enforcement in case of infringement.

What is an Industrial Design?

Under the law, an industrial design generally refers to the features of shape, configuration, pattern, or ornament applied to an article by an industrial process, which in the finished article appeal to and are judged solely by the eye.


In simple words, the law protects the **appearance** of a product, not the way it works.

A design may relate to:

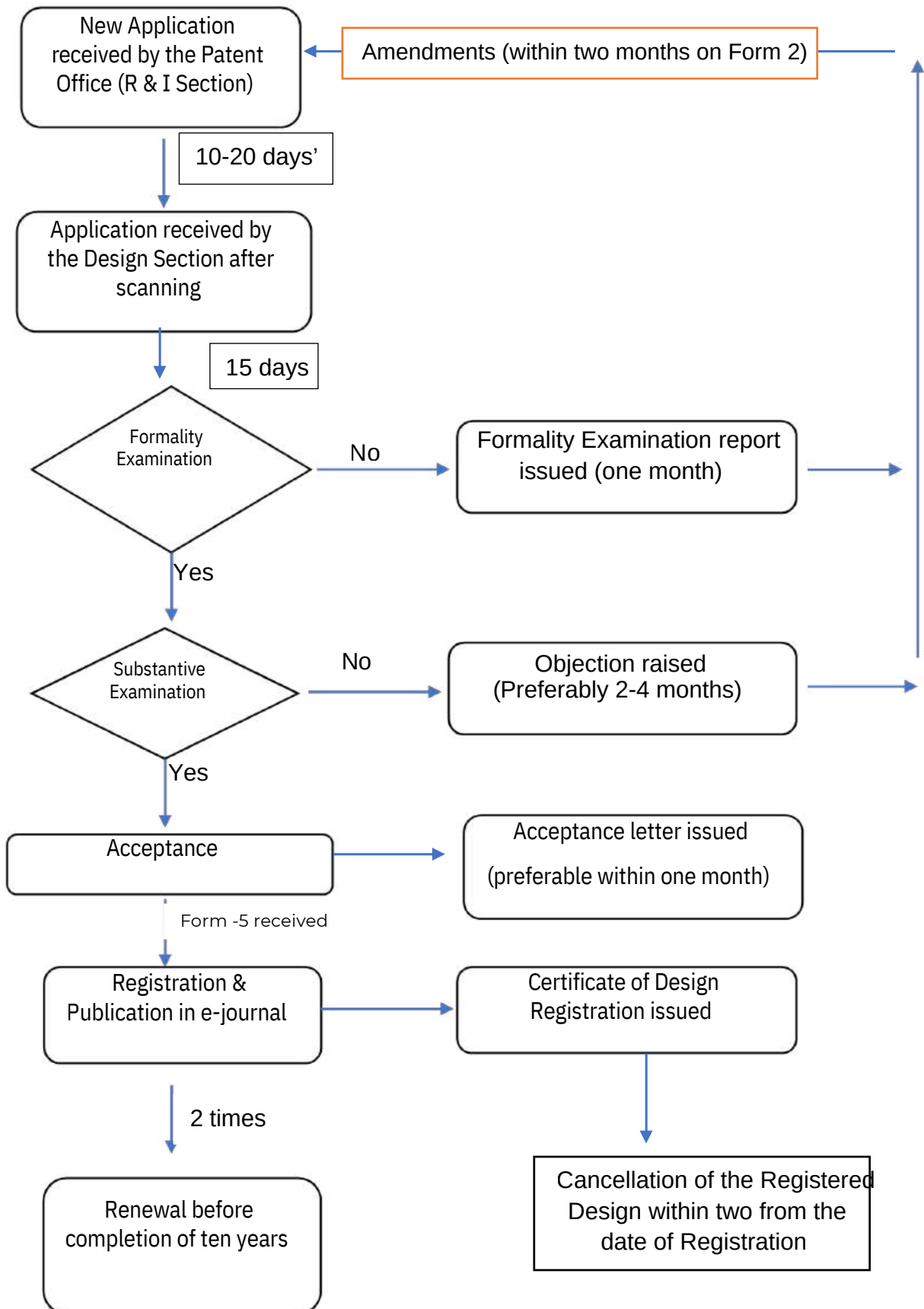
1) the overall shape of a product;	
2) surface patterns or ornamentation;	
3) contours and external appearance;	
4) visible parts of a product; or	
5) decorative features that give the article a distinctive look.	

What is Not Protected?

Not every feature of a product can be registered as a design. The following are generally **not protected** as a registered design:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a method or principle of construction; • features dictated purely by technical or functional requirements; • internal construction details not visible in the finished product; and • designs that are already known or published before filing. 	
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Flowchart of Industrial Design Registration in Pakistan



This means that the law protects **what the eye sees**, not the technical idea behind the product.

Key Requirement:

The Design Must Be New or Original

For a design to be registrable, it must be **new or original**. It should significantly differ from existing known designs. If the same or a similar design has already been disclosed to the public before filing, the novelty may be lost.

A design is usually not considered new if:

- it has already been published before the filing date;
- it does not significantly differ from known designs; or
- it is only a combination of previously known design features without originality.

For this reason, it is always advisable to file the application **before public disclosure** of the design.

Step-by-Step Procedure for Design Registration in Pakistan

Step 1: Initial Review of the Design

The first step is to review the product design and determine whether it qualifies for protection under the law. At this stage, the applicant should confirm that the design is new, visually distinctive, and not purely functional.

Step 2: Preparation of Design Representations

Clear representations or images of the design must be prepared for filing. These should properly show the features of the design for which protection is sought. Accurate and complete representations are important because the registration will only protect the design as shown in the application.

Step 3: Filing of the Application

The design application is filed with the Patent Office along with the prescribed documents, representations, and official fee. Once filed, the matter enters the official processing stage.

Step 4: Issuance of Acknowledgement Receipt

After filing, the Patent Office issues an acknowledgement receipt. This stage generally includes:

- receipt of documents in the
- system; verification of fee
- instruments; and data entry.

Average time: approximately **one week**.



Step 5: Examination of the Application

The application is then examined by the Patent Office. This usually includes:

- formal examination;
- substantive examination; and
- issuance of the first examination report, if any objection is raised.

Average time: approximately **three months**.

Step 6: Reply to Examination Report

If the Patent Office raises any objection or seeks clarification, the applicant must file a reply and, where necessary, make amendments. The Office then reviews the reply.

Average review time after reply: approximately **one month**.

Step 7: Registration, Publication, and Certificate

Once all legal and procedural requirements have been satisfied, the design proceeds toward registration. This stage may include:

- processing of reply or amendments;
- final data entry;
- publication in the relevant official record or journal; and
- issuance of the registration certificate.

Average time: approximately **two months** after compliance.



Once all legal and procedural requirements have been satisfied, the design proceeds toward registration. This stage may include:

- processing of reply or amendments;
- final data entry;
- publication in the relevant official record or journal; and
- issuance of the registration certificate.

Average time: approximately **two months** after compliance.

Step 8: Completion of Registration

Upon successful completion of the above process, the design is registered and the registration certificate is issued to the applicant.

Average total time from filing to registration: approximately **six months**, subject to timely compliance and the absence of unusual objections or delays.

Other Related Design Office Timelines

The Design Office also processes certain related requests, such as:

- design search reports;
- certified copies;
- change of name or address;
- duplicate certificates;
- and assignment or licence recordal.

Such miscellaneous requests are generally processed within about **one month**, while **design cancellation proceedings** may take substantially longer and can extend to around **one year**.

1. Modes of Filing the Application

A design application may be filed with the Patent Office in any of the following ways:

a. In-person filing

The documents may be submitted directly at the Patent Office during official working hours.

b. Filing through postal service

The documents may also be sent through prepaid post.

c. Filing through courier service

Applicants may submit the documents through a courier service as well.

d. Electronic filing

Electronic filing is expected to be introduced by the Patent Office through official notification. Once available, documents may be filed electronically. However, the original documents must be submitted within **15 days** from the date of electronic filing.

Important note:

For physical filing, postal filing, and courier filing, the **date of receipt by the Patent Office** will be treated as the **date of filing**.

2. Payment of Official Fee

All applications and supporting documents must be filed along with the prescribed official fee.

As per the current practice, the fee is payable **by cheque in favour of DG-IPO Pakistan**. The applicable fee schedule and forms may be checked from the official website of IPO Pakistan.

3. Basic Requirements for a Design Application

For filing a design application in Pakistan, the applicant is generally required to submit the following:

- **Form D-1**, duly completed;
- the prescribed official fee;
- a clear representation of the design showing the appearance of the design as applied to the finished article; and
- where priority is claimed, a priority document issued by the competent authority of the country of first filing.

This means that the application should clearly show the design for which legal protection is sought.

4. Information Required in Form D-1

Every design application should contain complete and accurate information, including:

- full name of the applicant;
- complete address of the applicant;
- national identity card number or relevant identification details; name of the article to which the design is applied;
- class in which the design is to be registered; and
- an address for service in Pakistan for official correspondence.

The application must also be **dated and signed** by the applicant or the authorized person.

Practical note:

Any mistake, incomplete information, or inconsistency in the application may lead to objection or delay. Therefore, the filing documents should be prepared carefully.

5. Classification of the Design

The application must specify the proper class of goods/articles in which the design is to be registered, in accordance with the applicable rules and schedule.

If the same design is to be applied to articles falling in more than one class, a separate application must be filed for each class. Each such application will be treated independently.

6. Ownership of the Design

In certain cases, the applicant may not be the original creator of the design but may still be entitled to file the application as owner or co-owner.

Where ownership is claimed on the basis of assignment, agreement, or transfer, the applicant should provide:

- a **certified copy of the assignment or agreement**;
- clear proof showing how ownership has passed to the claimant;
- and any additional supporting documents, if required by the Registrar.

The Registrar may ask for further evidence, such as:

- original assignment documents;
- proof of title; or
- written consent from the relevant parties.

From a legal standpoint, ownership should be documented properly before filing, especially where the design has been created for a company, employer, purchaser, or joint owners.

7. Design Applied to a Set of Articles

Where the design is claimed for a **set of articles**, the applicant must clearly show the entire set in the filed representations.

In other words, if protection is sought for multiple related items forming one set, the drawings or visual representations should properly disclose all arrangements of those articles.

8. Priority Claim for Foreign Applicants

A foreign applicant who has first filed the same design in another convention country may claim **priority** in Pakistan.

For this purpose, the application should mention:

- full name and address of the applicant;
- country of first filing;
- priority date;
- priority application number; and
- a **certified priority document** issued by the relevant Patent/Design Office.

The certified priority document must be submitted within **three months** from the Pakistani filing date.

This is important because, where priority is validly claimed, the design may enjoy protection in Pakistan from the earlier priority date.

9. Filing for the Same Design in Respect of Other Articles Section 6 (1)

Under Section 6(1) of the Registered Designs Ordinance, 2000, it is possible to apply for registration of the same design in relation to other articles as well.

Such an application may be filed by:

- the proprietor of the original registered design; or
- a person duly authorized by the proprietor.

This provision is useful where the same design is intended to be used across different products.

10. Examination Procedure

Once the application is filed, the Patent Office examines it in stages.

a. Formal examination

The Patent Office first checks whether the minimum filing requirements have been fulfilled. At this stage, the Office also considers whether the application is maintainable under the law.

If any deficiency is found, a Formality Examination Report may be issued. The applicant is generally required to reply within two months, usually on the prescribed form.

b. Substantive examination

After the formal review, the assigned Examiner considers whether the design complies with the requirements of the Ordinance and Rules. This includes reviewing novelty, registrability, and other legal requirements.

The Examiner is expected to prepare the examination report preferably within **two months** from receipt of the application.

c. Acceptance

If the application is found to be in order, the Registrar may issue an **acceptance letter**. Thereafter, subject to filing **Form D-5** and payment of the prescribed fee, the registration certificate may be issued.

d. Objections

If objections are raised, the Examiner issues an examination report setting out the objections in writing. The applicant is usually given two months to remove the objections or file a response.

e. Extension of time

If more time is needed to respond, the applicant may request an extension of up to six months by filing Form D-4 along with the prescribed fee.

f. Hearing

Instead of filing a written reply, the applicant may request a hearing by submitting **Form D-14** with the prescribed fee within the required time. The Registrar will then fix a hearing date and give prior notice.

g. Final decision

After considering the reply and/or hearing the applicant, the Registrar may either allow the design to proceed to registration or refuse it. The decision is communicated in writing.

If a detailed decision is required, the applicant may apply for the same through **Form D-6** along with the prescribed fee within the prescribed period.

11. Grace Period and Novelty Exception

As a general rule, a design must be **new or original** at the time of filing. If the design has already been publicly disclosed before filing, its novelty may be lost.

However, the law provides a limited **grace period of 12 months** in certain situations. This means that a disclosure made within 12 months before filing may not necessarily destroy novelty, provided the legal conditions are fulfilled.

This relief may apply where the disclosure was made by:

- the creator of the design;
- the creator's successor in interest; or
- a person acting with the authorization of the creator or successor.

To rely on this provision, the application should clearly state the claim under the relevant section and explain:

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- when the disclosure took place;
 - where it took place;
 - how it took place; and
 - why the grace period should apply.

Supporting documents such as catalogues, photographs, exhibition materials, or witness statements may also be filed, where available.

Even where grace period protection may be available, it is always safer to file the design application **as early as possible** before any public disclosure.

12. Publication of Registered Design

After registration, the design is published in the relevant official journal of the Patent Office.

Publication serves as an official public record of the registered design and confirms that registration has been granted.

13. Duration of Protection

A registered design is initially protected for **ten years**.

Where a valid priority claim has been accepted, the period may run from the **priority date**.

The registration may further be extended for **two additional terms of ten years each**, subject to timely filing of renewal or extension requests in accordance with the law. Accordingly, design protection may continue for a substantial period, provided all renewal requirements are met.

Guidelines for Preparing Representations of an Industrial Design

Under the Registered Designs Ordinance, 2000 and Registered Design Rules, 2023



At our law firm, we advise clients that the representation of an industrial design is one of the most important parts of a design application. In simple terms, the representation is the visual presentation of the design for which legal protection is sought.

The Patent Office examines the design on the basis of the representation submitted by the applicant. For this reason, the representation must be clear, accurate, and sufficiently detailed to enable the Examiner to understand exactly what design is claimed and to assess its novelty and distinctiveness.

A properly prepared representation not only assists in smooth examination but also helps define the legal scope of protection available to the applicant under Pakistani design law.

Why the Representation is Important

In our professional view, the quality of the representation is critical because it enables the Examiner to:

- clearly identify the design for which registration is sought;
- compare the design with existing designs without confusion;
- determine whether the design is new or original; and
- understand the scope of protection claimed by the applicant.

If the representation is unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent, it may lead to objections, delay, or difficulty in securing registration.



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Accepted Forms of Representation

A design may be represented in one or more of the following forms:

- drawings;
- photographs;
- three-dimensional models;
- a combination of the above; or
- any other suitable visual representation.

The form selected should clearly show the appearance of the design as applied to the article.

Key Guidelines for Preparing the Representation

1. Clear and Accurate Representation

The representation should provide a clear and accurate visual depiction of the design. It should properly show the important visual features of the design, including its:

- lines;
- contours; shape;
- texture; and
- ornamentation.

The purpose is to ensure that the design can be understood easily and without ambiguity.

2. The Design Must Be Distinct and Readily Identifiable

The representation should be sufficiently distinct so that the design can be easily distinguished from other designs. This helps the Examiner assess whether the design is new and whether it differs from what is already known.

3. Multiple Views Should Be Provided Where Necessary

In many cases, one image is not enough to show the complete design. Multiple views may therefore be required, such as:

- front view;
- back view;
- side view;
- top view;
- bottom view; and perspective view.

Where relevant, the applicant should also show different positions or states of the article, for example, open and closed positions.

Although there may be no fixed number of views in every case, the representation should be complete enough to give a full understanding of the design. If a certain view is omitted because it is identical to another, that may be explained where appropriate.

4. Use a Neutral Background

The representation should normally be prepared on a plain or neutral background so that attention remains focused on the design itself.

Care should be taken to avoid anything that may distract from the design, including:

- shadows;
- folds or creases;
- unnecessary surrounding matter;
- or visual clutter.

5. No Watermarks

The representation should not contain any watermark. A watermark may interfere with the visibility of the design and may affect the Examiner's ability to properly review the application.

6. Maintain Consistency

All views of the design should be consistent with each other. The same design should appear in a uniform manner throughout the application.

If there are any variations, alternate forms, or different embodiments of the design, these should be clearly indicated so that the scope of the claim remains clear.

Consistency is important because conflicting or mismatched views can create uncertainty and may lead to objection during examination.

7. The Representation Should Define the Scope of Protection Clearly

Applicants should keep in mind that the representation is not merely illustrative; it is the basis on which legal protection is claimed. Accordingly, the visual material should be prepared carefully so that it accurately reflects the design the applicant wishes to protect.

In practical terms, unclear or poor-quality representations may weaken the application or create uncertainty regarding the scope of protection.

Practical Legal Advice

From a legal and filing perspective, applicants should ensure that:

- the design is shown clearly and professionally;
- all relevant visual aspects of the article are disclosed;
- the images are free from unnecessary marks or distractions;
- the views are consistent with one another; and
- the representation leaves no doubt as to what exactly is being claimed as the design.



In our experience, careful preparation of the representation significantly improves the chances of a smooth examination process and successful registration.

Guidelines for Preparing Representations of an Industrial Design

Under the Registered Designs Ordinance, 2000 and Registered Design Rules, 2023

At our law firm, we advise clients that the **representation of a design** is one of the most important parts of a design application. In simple terms, a representation is the visual presentation of the design for which protection is being claimed.

The Patent Office examines the application mainly on the basis of the representation filed by the applicant. Therefore, the representation must be clear, accurate, and complete enough to show the exact features of the design. A properly prepared representation helps the Examiner understand the design, compare it with existing designs, and determine the scope of legal protection.

1. Importance of a Proper Representation

In our professional view, the representation is not merely a picture of the article. It is the basis on which the design is examined and, ultimately, protected. If the representation is unclear, inconsistent, or incomplete, the application may face objections or unnecessary delay.

A good representation helps the Patent Office to:



- clearly identify the design for which registration is sought;
- assess whether the design is new or original;
- compare it with existing designs without confusion; and
- determine the exact scope of protection claimed by the applicant.



2. Acceptable Forms of Representation

A design may be represented in one or more of the following forms:

- drawings;
- photographs;
- three-dimensional models;
- a combination of the above; or
- any other suitable visual representation.



The applicant should choose the form that best and most clearly shows the design as applied to the article.

3. Clear and Accurate Representation

The representation should provide a clear and accurate visual depiction of the design. It must properly show the important visual features of the article, including, where relevant:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shape; • configuration; • lines; • contours; • pattern; texture; • and • ornamentation. 	
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The visual material should be prepared in a way that leaves no doubt as to what exactly is claimed as the design.

4. Multiple Views of the Design

In many cases, one single image is not sufficient. The applicant should provide enough views to fully disclose the design, such as:

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- front view;
 - back view;
 - side view;
 - top view;
 - bottom view; and
 - perspective view.



Where relevant, the design should also be shown in different positions or states, for example, open and closed positions or movable parts in operation.

Although there may not always be a fixed number of required views, the applicant must ensure that the representation gives a full and complete understanding of the design. If a certain view is omitted because it is identical to another, that should be made clear where necessary.

5. Neutral Background and Presentation Standards

The representation should normally appear on a plain or neutral background so that the design itself remains the focus.

Care should be taken to avoid anything that distracts from the design, including:

- shadows that hide details;
- folds or creases;
- unnecessary background objects;
- excessive descriptive matter;
- and watermarks.

A watermark should not appear on the representation, as it may interfere with clarity and examination.

6. Consistency in All Views

All views filed with the application must be consistent with each other. The same design should appear uniformly across all drawings or images.

If there are variations, alternative embodiments, or optional forms, they should be clearly indicated. Any inconsistency between different views may create confusion and may lead to objection during examination.

7. Resolution and Quality of Images

The representation should be of sufficiently high quality and resolution to show the design details clearly. This is particularly important where photographs or digital images are used.

Low-quality, blurred, or poorly scanned images may prevent the Examiner from properly understanding the design and may affect the progress of the application.

8. Details, Annotations, and Reference Views

Where helpful, the applicant may include reference views or explanatory indications to show particular features of the design more clearly.

For example, where an article has movable parts, an exploded or reference view may assist in explaining the arrangement of components. However, any such detail should be used carefully and only to clarify the design, not to create confusion.

The overall objective is to present the design in a way that is legally clear and visually understandable.

9. Use of Color in Design Representations

The clarity of the representation is especially important where color forms part of the design.

Under the applicable rules, the representation may be in:

- black and
- white; or color,

provided that the chosen format ensures clear visibility during examination.

The representation may consist of:

- graphic views;
- photographic reproductions;
- or other clear visual forms.



In practical terms, if color is an important feature of the design, the applicant should ensure that it is shown consistently and clearly in all relevant views.

10. Novelty Statement / Description

A novelty statement is useful for identifying the specific features of the design in which novelty is claimed. This helps explain the basis of protection and may assist during examination.

Depending on the design, the novelty may reside in:

- the shape or configuration of the article;
 - the pattern or ornamentation applied to the article; or
 - a combination of shape, configuration, pattern, and ornamentation.
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Typical examples of novelty statements may include:

- The novelty resides in the shape or configuration of the article as shown in the accompanying representation.
- The novelty resides in the pattern and ornamentation applied to the article as shown in the accompanying representation.
- The novelty resides in the shape, configuration, pattern, and ornamentation of the article as shown in the accompanying representation.
- The novelty resides in that specific part of the article identified in the accompanying representation.

From a legal drafting perspective, the novelty statement should be carefully worded so that it accurately reflects the features for which protection is intended.



11. Visual Disclaimer

A visual disclaimer is used where certain features shown in the representation are **not claimed as part of the protected design**.

This is important where the applicant wishes to protect only a particular part or feature of an article and not the entire article.

Common methods for visual disclaimer include:

- dotted or broken lines;
- contrasting shading;
- blurring of unclaimed parts;
- color differentiation;
- or clear visual boundaries.

The disclaimer must be clear and obvious so that the Examiner can easily distinguish between:

- the features for which protection is claimed; and
- the features that are shown only for context and are not claimed.

This distinction is important for defining the scope of protection and avoiding uncertainty.

Additional Guidance on Design Representations

Under the Registered Designs Ordinance, 2000 and Registered Design Rules, 2023

At our law firm, we advise clients that the preparation of design representations should not be treated as a mere formality. The representation is the foundation of the design application and plays a central role in defining the scope of legal protection.

In addition to conventional product designs, the law and modern practice also recognize that design protection may extend to articles such as jewellery, display screens, and graphical user interfaces, provided that the design is properly represented and clearly described.

1. Designs May Relate to Physical Products as Well as Screen-Based Visual Features

In practice, design registration may cover a wide range of articles, including traditional physical products such as jewellery, furniture, containers, and household items, as well as newer forms of design embodied in display screens or graphical user interfaces.

For example, a design may relate to:

- the external appearance of a necklace or other ornament;
- the visual layout of a display screen;
- a graphical user interface appearing on a screen; or
- transitional icons and animated visual elements, where properly shown and described.

From a legal perspective, the key requirement remains the same: the design must be visually identifiable and clearly represented.

2. Optional Representation View in Video Form

If the applicant wishes to make the claimed design easier to understand, an additional representation may be submitted in the form of a **video file**.

This may be useful where:

- the design includes movement or transition;
 - the article has changing screen displays;
 - the design is better understood through motion; or
 - a static image alone does not fully explain the claimed visual effect.
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However, this should be treated as an optional representation tool only and not as a mandatory filing requirement.

In other words, the primary representation must still be properly filed in the prescribed visual form, while the video may only be used to improve clarity and understanding.

3. Standard Layout and Formatting of Representation

Sheets

The representation sheet should be prepared carefully and in an orderly format. As a matter of good filing practice, the following details should normally appear on the sheet where required:

- address of the applicant;
- design number, where applicable; number of sheets;
- class of the design; and
- sheet number.

The actual representation of the design should appear clearly in the designated space on the sheet.

4. Physical and Presentation Requirements

To avoid objection or filing irregularity, the following practical requirements should be observed:

- The size of the representation should **not be smaller than 5 x 4 inches**;
- staples should not be used;
- a margin of at least one-quarter inch should be left around the representation;
- the representation should appear on one side of the paper only; and
- all views should be presented in an upright position on the sheet.

These technical requirements may appear minor, but they are important for proper filing and examination.

5. Novelty Statement

A novelty statement should be included to identify the particular feature or features in which novelty is claimed. This helps clarify the legal basis of the application and may assist the Examiner in understanding the exact scope of protection sought.

Depending on the design, the novelty may reside in:

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- the shape or configuration of the article;
 - the pattern or ornamentation applied to the article;
 - both shape/configuration and ornamentation together;
 - or a specific identified part of the article.

Examples of legally suitable novelty statements include:

- The novelty resides in the shape or configuration of the article as shown in the accompanying representation.
- The novelty resides in the pattern and ornamentation applied to the article as shown in the accompanying representation.
- The novelty resides in the shape, configuration, pattern, and ornamentation of the article as shown in the accompanying representation.
- The novelty resides in the specific part of the article identified in the accompanying representation.
- The novelty of the design resides in the features shown in solid lines in the representation. The novelty of the design resides in the shape, configuration, and pattern ornamentation applied to the set of articles as shown in the representation.

Only the novelty statement that accurately reflects the new and original features of the design should be selected. From a legal drafting perspective, this statement should be tailored carefully to the actual design being filed.

6. Disclaimer

A disclaimer may also be included where the applicant wishes to make clear that certain elements shown in the representation are not claimed as part of the registered design.

This is especially useful where the article includes words, letters, numerals, trademarks, technical features, or mechanical aspects that are not intended to form part of the design claim.

Common disclaimer wording may include:

- No claim is made by virtue of this registration to any right to the exclusive use of the words, letters, numerals, or similar matter appearing in the design.
- No claim is made by virtue of this registration in respect of any mechanical action, mechanism, or any mode or principle of construction of the article.
- No claim is made by virtue of this registration to any right to use, as a trade mark, any matter shown in the representation.

From a legal point of view, a properly drafted disclaimer helps prevent confusion regarding the actual scope of protection and separates design rights from trademark rights or technical subject matter.

7. Signature and Completion of Representation Sheet

The representation sheet should be properly completed and signed by:

- the applicant; or
- the applicant's authorized agent.

The date should also be inserted in the prescribed manner.

This is a formal but important part of the filing process, and incomplete execution may lead to avoidable procedural issues.

8. Practical Advice from a Filing Perspective

In our professional experience, applicants should keep the following in mind when preparing final representation sheets:

- the design should be shown clearly and prominently;
- the formatting requirements should be followed strictly;
- the novelty statement should match the actual feature claimed;
- the disclaimer should be included where appropriate;
- the views should be neat, upright, and properly arranged; and
- optional materials, such as video representations, should only be used to support clarity and not as a substitute for proper formal representations.

A carefully prepared representation package can substantially improve the chances of smooth examination and successful registration.

Why Design Registration Matters

From a legal and commercial standpoint, design registration is important because it protects the external appearance of an article. If a product becomes successful in the market, competitors often attempt to imitate its shape, configuration, pattern, or ornamentation. Registration helps the proprietor establish formal rights over the design and strengthens enforcement against unauthorized use.

In practical terms, design registration may help a business to protect the identity of its product, preserve exclusivity in the market, add commercial value to the product, and improve the overall intellectual property portfolio of the business. The Pakistani framework for design protection is

recognized under the Registered Designs Ordinance, 2000, and public-facing filing and publication mechanisms are maintained by IPO Pakistan.

What Is an Industrial Design?

Under Pakistani design law, a design generally refers to the features of shape, configuration, pattern, or ornament applied to an article by an industrial process or means, where those features in the finished article appeal to and are judged solely by the eye. In simple words, the law protects the visual appearance of a product rather than the technical idea behind it.

A design may therefore relate to the overall shape of an article, surface decoration, visible contours, ornamentation, packaging appearance, or even the appearance of a part of a product, provided that the feature is visible and forms part of the finished article's visual identity.



What Is Not Protected

Not every feature of a product can be registered as a design. The law does **not** protect a method or principle of construction, purely mechanical features, or features dictated solely by technical or functional considerations. Likewise, internal construction details that are not visible in the finished article do not usually form part of registrable design protection.

This means that the law focuses on **what the eye sees**, not on how the article works internally.

Novelty and Originality

A design must be new or original in order to qualify for registration. A design is generally not registrable if it does not significantly differ from known designs or if it has already been disclosed to the public before the filing date in a manner that destroys novelty. Public disclosure before filing may therefore create a serious risk for the applicant.

For that reason, one of the most important practical rules is this: a design application should preferably be filed before public disclosure, product launch, catalogue circulation, exhibition display, or online publication.

Grace Period

The material you shared also refers to a limited grace period concept for certain disclosures made within 12 months before filing, subject to the applicable legal conditions and proper explanation in the application. In practice, however, applicants should not rely casually on this exception. From a lawyer's perspective, the safer course is always to file the application as early as possible and before any public disclosure that may later become contentious.

Who May Apply

An application may be filed by the creator, proprietor, assignee, joint claimant, or another person legally entitled to claim ownership of the design. Where ownership is based on assignment, agreement, employment relationship, or transfer of rights, it is advisable to ensure that the ownership documents are clear, complete, and legally consistent before filing.

Where appropriate, certified copies of assignments or agreements may need to be produced to support the ownership claim.

Priority Claims for Foreign Applicants

Where the same design has first been filed in another relevant country, a foreign applicant may wish to claim priority in Pakistan. In such cases, the application should clearly mention the priority claim and the required supporting details, including the priority country, priority date, and application number, along with the supporting priority document within the required period.

From a legal drafting point of view, priority claims should always be handled carefully, because an incorrect or incomplete priority claim can affect the filing position and the scope of protection.

How a Design Application Is Filed in Pakistan

As reflected in the filing guidance and the material you shared, a design application may generally be lodged through physical submission at the Patent Office, through postal service, through courier service, and, increasingly, through the official IPO Pakistan online portal. IPO Pakistan also maintains a dedicated **Designs Fee & Forms** page and an online filing system for applicants and representatives.

All applications and supporting documents should be accompanied by the prescribed official fee. The official forms and fee references are publicly listed by IPO Pakistan.

Basic Filing Requirements

In practical terms, a design application typically requires:

- the prescribed application form, usually **Form D-1**;
- the prescribed official fee;
- a clear representation of the design as applied to the article; and
- where applicable, supporting documents such as priority documents, ownership documents, or authorization papers.

The application should clearly identify the applicant, the address, the article to which the design is applied, the relevant class, and an address for service in Pakistan. The application should also be properly dated and signed.

Classification of the Design

The applicant should specify the class in which the design is sought to be registered. If the same design is intended to cover articles falling in more than one class, separate applications may be required. From a practical perspective, proper classification is important because it affects examination, record keeping, and the scope of filing.

Design for a Set of Articles

Where the design relates to a **set of articles**, the representation should show the articles clearly as a set. The overall arrangement and visual relationship between the items should be visible enough for examination and for defining the scope of protection.

Registration of the Same Design for Other Articles

The material also refers to the procedure allowing the proprietor of a registered design, or an authorized person, to seek registration of the same design in relation to other articles in appropriate circumstances. This can be useful where a design concept is intended to be extended across a product range.

Acceptable Forms of Representation

A design may generally be represented through:

The Importance of Design Representations

One of the most critical parts of a design application is the **representation** of the design. In legal practice, the representation is not merely a picture; it is the visual document on the basis of which the Patent Office examines the application and defines the scope of protection.

A poorly prepared representation can lead to objections, unnecessary delay, ambiguity in examination, or a narrower scope of protection than intended. A well-prepared representation, by contrast, makes the application clearer, stronger, and easier to examine.

- drawings;
- photographs;
- three-dimensional models;
- a combination of these; or
- other suitable visual representations.

The selected form should show the design clearly and accurately.

Clarity and Accuracy

The representation should clearly depict the design and its important visual features, including, where relevant, lines, contours, shape, texture, pattern, configuration, and ornamentation. The Examiner should be able to understand the design without confusion and compare it with other designs where necessary.

Multiple Views

In many cases, one image is not enough. A complete filing may require multiple views, such as front, back, side, top, bottom, and perspective views. Where relevant, the article may also need to be shown in different positions or states, for example open and closed positions or different movable arrangements.

The purpose is to ensure that the design is fully disclosed and that the Examiner is not left guessing about any material visual feature.



Neutral Background and Clean Presentation

Representations should generally be prepared on a neutral background. Watermarks, distracting objects, clutter, unnecessary lines, creases, or marks should be avoided. The focus should remain entirely on the design itself.

Where shading is used, it should help reveal the design rather than obscure it.

Consistency Across Views

All views of the design should be consistent with one another. If the same article appears differently in different views without proper explanation, the application may become unclear. Where variations or alternate embodiments are intended, they should be clearly identified and presented carefully.

Resolution and Image Quality

The representation should be of sufficient quality and resolution to show the design details clearly. Blurred, pixelated, dark, distorted, or low-quality images may affect the Examiner's ability to assess novelty and may invite objection.

Use of Color

The material you shared indicates that representations may be in black and white or in color, provided they are clear and suitable for examination. Where color is an important feature of the design, it should be shown consistently and clearly in all relevant views.

Details, Annotations, and Reference Views

In some cases, reference views or explanatory indications may be helpful, especially where a product contains movable parts or a design is more easily understood through additional visual clarification. These supporting visuals should assist comprehension without making the representation confusing or overcrowded.

Optional Video Representation

The material also refers to the possibility of using a **video file** as an optional representation tool, particularly where the design becomes more comprehensible through movement or transitional display. This is best understood as a supportive aid rather than a substitute for the required formal representation.

This may be particularly relevant for display screens, transitional icons, or graphical user interfaces.

Graphical User Interfaces and Screen-Based Designs

Modern design practice is not limited to traditional physical products. The material you provided also contemplates protection for display screens, portions of screens, graphical user interfaces, and transitional icons where properly shown and described. From a practical perspective, such filings require especially careful drafting of the representation, because the claimed design may reside in only part of the visible display.

Novelty Statement

A **novelty statement** should be included to explain where the novelty of the design resides. Depending on the case, the novelty may reside in:

- the shape or configuration of the article;
- the pattern or ornamentation applied to the article;
- both shape/configuration and ornamentation together;
- or a specific identified part of the article.

The novelty statement should be tailored carefully to the actual design. Generic or inaccurate wording should be avoided. In legal practice, this statement is important because it helps define the protected visual feature and reduces ambiguity.

Visual Disclaimer

A **visual disclaimer** may be used where certain elements shown in the representation are **not** claimed as part of the protected design. This can be important where the applicant wishes to exclude background matter, unclaimed product portions, words, letters, numerals, trademarks, mechanical features, or construction-related elements.

Common techniques include broken lines, dotted lines, contrasting shading, blurring, or clear visual boundaries. The claimed and unclaimed features should be easy to distinguish at first glance.

Common Disclaimer Language

The material you shared also includes standard disclaimer concepts, such as disclaimers that no exclusive right is claimed in words, letters, numerals, trademarks, mechanical action, or any mode or principle of construction shown in the representation. From a lawyer's standpoint, these disclaimers are useful because they help separate design rights from trademark claims and from technical subject matter that falls outside design protection.

Physical Format of Representation Sheets

include the applicant's address, design number, class, number of sheets, and sheet number, with the representation displayed clearly in the designated area.

The material you provided also reflects certain practical formatting rules, including:

- representation size should not be smaller than the prescribed dimensions;
- staples should not be used;
- margins should be left around the representation;
- the representation should appear on one side of the paper only; and
- all views should be placed upright on the sheet.

These may appear technical, but they are important for orderly filing



Examination of the Application

After filing, the Patent Office examines the application. The process generally includes a **formal examination** followed by **substantive examination**.

At the formal stage, the office reviews whether the minimum filing requirements have been met and whether the application is maintainable in form. If deficiencies are found, a formality examination report may be issued.

At the substantive stage, the Examiner assesses whether the design satisfies the relevant legal requirements, including registrability, novelty, originality, and compliance with the applicable framework.

Objections, Reply, Hearing, and Extension

If objections arise, the applicant is usually given an opportunity to respond. A written reply may be filed, and in some cases amendments may be made. Where necessary, an extension of time may be sought in the prescribed manner.

The applicant may also request a hearing instead of, or in addition to, a written reply where that is strategically appropriate. After considering the reply and/or hearing submissions, the Registrar may decide to accept the application or refuse it.

From a legal practice perspective, the response stage is critical. Many applications are not rejected because the design is weak, but because the filing record is not handled carefully.

Acceptance, Registration, Certificate, and Publication

If the application is found to be in order, it proceeds toward acceptance and registration. Once the prescribed formalities are completed, the registration certificate is issued and the registered design is published in the relevant official record. IPO Pakistan maintains a public **designs e-journal** for publication of registered designs.

Average Processing Time

Based on the average office timelines reflected in the material you shared, the registration process may broadly move through acknowledgement, examination, reply review, registration, and publication stages in the ordinary course. The average period from filing to registration has been described in your source material as approximately **six months**, subject of course to compliance with requirements, timely replies, and the absence of complications.

From a lawyer's perspective, it is better to describe any timeline as an **average administrative estimate**, not a guaranteed statutory deadline.

Duration of Protection

The material you shared states that design registration is initially protected for **ten years**, and that where a valid priority claim is accepted, the period may run from the priority date. It further refers to the possibility of extension for additional terms, subject to timely compliance with the applicable legal requirements.

Because term calculations and renewal strategy can affect enforcement and portfolio management, these matters should always be checked carefully at the time of filing and renewal.

Publication, Records, and Public Notice

Publication of registered designs serves an important function. It places the registration on public record, clarifies the existence of rights, and supports transparency in the design system. IPO Pakistan's public design publication mechanism reflects this aspect of the registration process.

Practical Advice for Applicants

From a practical legal perspective, the following points are especially important:

1. First, file early. Do not wait until after product launch or public display.
2. Second, prepare the representation with extreme care. In many design matters, the representation is the case.
3. Third, make sure ownership is clear before filing, especially where the design was created by an employee, consultant, vendor, or affiliate company.
4. Fourth, draft the novelty statement and disclaimers thoughtfully. These are not mere formalities; they define the scope of protection.
5. Fifth, respond to examination reports properly and on time. Weak response handling often creates avoidable delay.

Industrial design registration in Pakistan is a valuable legal tool for protecting the visual appearance of products and preserving the commercial exclusivity of design-driven goods. A successful application depends not only on the originality of the design, but also on the clarity of the representation, the quality of the filing documents, the proper handling of ownership and priority issues, and the careful management of examination proceedings.

In our professional view, businesses should approach design registration strategically, not mechanically. A well-planned filing can strengthen market position, deter copying, and support long-term brand and product development. The legal framework for registered designs exists under the **Registered Designs Ordinance, 2000**, with filing, forms, online access, and publication administered through IPO Pakistan's public-facing systems.

