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- Your research has resulted in a new discovery
- You want to send research tools or materials to another institution
- A company has contacted you and wants to learn more about your research
- You plan to publish or present an idea

Terms Glossary

Copyright
The legal right granted to an author, composer, or publisher to exclusive publication, production, sale, or distribution of a literary, software, musical, dramatic, or artistic work.

Inventor
An individual or group of individuals who invented, authored, or were otherwise responsible for the creation of the intellectual property.

Intellectual Property (IP)
Any invention, discovery, improvement, software, copyrightable work, trade secret, or other intangible property that is the subject of a patent or trademark application.

Intellectual Property Disclosure Form
Confidential form used to document the details of the intellectual property in compliance with University policy and the Bayh-Dole Act.

Invention
Any useful process, machine, composition of matter, or useful improvement of the same. Computer software may also be classified as an “invention.”

License
Legal permission granted by the owner to allow another party to use the intellectual property.

Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA)
A legal contract to prevent information considered to be proprietary or confidential from being disclosed to third parties.

Patent
Property rights granted by the government that allow the owner to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale, selling, or importing the invention. A U.S. patent term is 20 years from the application filing date.

Provisional Patent Application
A strategy to preserve your rights for one-year during which a decision must be made whether to file a regular patent application. A Provisional Patent Application is not examined but can serve as the priority date for later-filed applications.

Prior Art
The total body of knowledge including publications and patents, which teaches or otherwise relates directly to an invention. This is the primary criterion in determining the patentability of a new invention.

Publication Disclosure
Any communication to a person not obligated to keep the information confidential which provides enable information to third parties. Examples of disclosure include: oral communications, emails, letters, computer software, theses, books, patents, Web sites, slides, e-mails, blogs and even a confidential conversation that occurs in public.

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Technology Commercialization

At the University of Minnesota, we continually inspire exploration of new ideas and breakthrough innovations. We are Driven to Discover. The Office for Technology Commercialization (OTC) oversees all aspects of technology commercialization at the University, bridging the gap between the lab and the marketplace to connect faculty with companies to achieve results.

There are many benefits to technology commercialization, and transferring discoveries to the commercial market:

- **Allows** you to see your work benefit society
- **Leads** to new products and services that improve quality of life
- **Creates** new businesses and jobs
- **Attracts** research sponsors
- **Provides** recognition and financial reward for you and the University
- **Increases** industry contact and chances for student employment

**Lab Notebooks**

It’s important for all researchers to keep accurate, detailed, and up-to-date records to prove inventorship and support the validity of research results.

**Patent Law**

United States patent law requires inventions meet three criteria to be eligible for patent protection:

- **Novel** The invention was not previously known, sold or used by others.
- **Useful** The invention must have an application or use.
- **Non-obvious** The invention could not be readily deduced from public information.

**Step by Step**

Technology commercialization is at the intersection of discovery, business, and intellectual property law. We’re here to partner with you throughout the entire process to come to the best solution.

1. **Research**
   - Ideas
   - Experiments
   - Observations
   - Records
   - Lab notebooks

2. **Pre-disclosure**
   - Contact a technology strategy manager before making your discovery public to discuss your idea and our process.

3. **Intellectual Property (IP) Disclosure**
   - Send us your completed IP Disclosure form to document your IP & initiate the evaluation.

4. **Evaluation**
   - We review the IP Disclosure Form with you, conduct patent searches, and analyze the market to determine commercial potential.

5. **Protection Decision**
   - We select the best protection strategy for technologies likely to provide a suitable return to the University. This is generally reached in three months.

6. **Protection**
   - We file the patent application with the U.S. Patent Office and/or foreign patent offices. Some IP may only be protected through copyright.

7. **Marketing**
   - We develop the commercialization strategy—either license to an existing company or form a start-up company.

8. **Licensing**
   - We negotiate the terms of the license agreement, which require the licensee to bring the technology to the marketplace.

9. **Commercialization**
   - The licensee turns the technology into a product or service. This usually requires additional development and sales investments.

10. **Revenue**
    - Revenues received from the licensees are distributed to the inventors, college or school, department or center, and the University.

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Proprietary

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Inventorship

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Trade Secret
A type of Intellectual Property that provides protection for information that is of value to the owner and which has been taken reasonable steps to prevent disclosure of the information to others.

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