

Supervising other researchers

Involvement of University staff, students, honorary appointees or visitors in your research program can be a rewarding experience as well as a pathway to increasing the scope and impact of the research. As the supervisor, you carry an obligation to ensure the individuals you supervise fully understand how intellectual property (IP) relating to their research work will be owned and managed.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

You must ensure that all researchers under your supervision are informed of the specific topics listed below. These are best covered in a formal meeting soon after the researcher commences at the University, and before commencing work on a new research project. Document agreed understandings. Prior to this, you should become familiar with the University's [IP Policy](#) and [Statute](#).

WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY NEW RESEARCHER?

- Advise the researcher of any IP arrangements that apply to the project and who will own the IP created as part of the project. Document understandings.
- Advise the researcher that they must maintain adequate records to enable the University to identify, assess, safeguard and translate the IP.
- Ensure the researcher is aware of their obligation to disclose IP to the University which may have commercial potential, by completing an IP Disclosure.
- Advise against making such IP publicly available before its commercial potential has been assessed. Publicly available information includes, but isn't limited to, presentations, abstracts, publications, non-confidential discussions with potential partners, or interactions with AI platforms (such as ChatGPT or QuillBot).
- Advise the researcher of any external agreements such as ARC or NHMRC grants, industry or government grants, other third party agreements or background IP required for the project that impact on their research and the ownership, use and confidentiality of IP.
- Note the requirement to comply with reasonable requests by the University in its management of IP.

You must provide details of any grants and other third party agreements relevant to the researcher's project work. This includes any agreement made between the University and a third party which relates to ownership or use of IP.

Material Transfer Agreements should also be reviewed for their impact on the project. These agreements may also impose requirements to maintain confidentiality, restrict publication and observe third party rights. The researcher must be made aware of and comply with all requirements. Grants and other third party agreements are particularly important for students, visitors and honorary appointees, since in the absence of such an agreement they may own the IP that they create unless it constitutes teaching materials.

Supervising Graduate Researchers

Supervisors of Graduate Researchers have specific obligations under the University's IP Policy. Supervisors should familiarise themselves with the provisions of the IP Policy governing Graduate Researchers IP and their responsibilities to Candidates. For further information, see the [Graduate Researcher IP Guide](#).

NEED HELP?

Support is available from your Faculty's [Business Development Manager](#). Alternatively you may contact a member of the [RIC Knowledge & Technology Transfer team](#).



Case Study

Tania and Jing both supervise PhD students. Tania's project is funded by the ARC and Jing's is a community engagement project with funds from the Commonwealth Government.

Tania arranges a meeting with her graduate researcher prior to starting the project and confirms that any IP created will be owned by the University as it is governed by an external agreement. Tania also ensures that her graduate researcher completes an assignment deed confirming the University's IP ownership prior to commencing the project.

Both projects eventually create valuable intellectual property and Tania and Jing are keen to begin translation of the results to the community. Tania and her graduate researcher both sign the paperwork to confirm that the University owns their IP, and they look forward to sharing in 40% of the net royalties. Unfortunately, Jing's graduate researcher lodges a complaint in which she claims that she wasn't notified that the government owns the IP, and refuses to participate in any translation activities.