What to do when you develop some new IP

When your research has led to a significant development, a new invention or technology, then a new product, or enterprise may be in sight. Your next steps should be to contact your Faculty Business Developer to discuss the potential social, environmental or commercial potential of the intellectual property (IP) and to make an IP disclosure.

An IP disclosure describes the intellectual property resulting from your research. It is confidential between you and the University. It opens the door to University business support services, in particular, assistance with safeguarding IP and with commercialisation opportunities. Importantly it also fulfills your duty of disclosure as defined in the University Statute. This requirement extends to all staff, honoraries, visitors and students developing IP in their role at the University.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

- Get to know your Faculty's Business Development Manager (BDM). If you are uncertain about the commercial or translational potential of your discovery, a chat with your BDM before completing the written IP disclosure may provide some clarity.
- You may lodge an IP Disclosure request through Service Now, or
- Make a full IP disclosure by completing the IP Disclosure Form and submitting it to the University's RIC Knowledge and Technology Transfer office.

An IP disclosure should be completed as soon as you think you might have developed some IP. Once publicly shared, IP has only limited potential for patent protection and reduced commercial value. Remember that IP includes all types of copyright such as software, films and designs, as well as patents.

It is critical to make an IP disclosure well before making your discovery publicly available through, but not limited to, presentations, abstracts, publications, non-confidential discussions with potential partners, or interactions with AI platforms (such as ChatGPT or QuillBot).

WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

Your IP disclosure will be assessed by the RIC Knowledge & Technology Transfer team. If an opportunity is identified, they will work with you to safeguard or patent the IP and make a plan for commercialisation or translation.

NEED HELP?

Support is available from your Faculty's Business Developer. Alternatively, contact a member of the RIC Knowledge and Technology Transfer team.

Case Study

Dmitri and Nala are research fellows in the Faculty of Science at the University. They work collaboratively to design and synthesise new drugs for liver cancer treatment. Dmitri's career focus has always been on building scientific knowledge. He has many publications in his name. Nala has a more entrepreneurial attitude and is always on the lookout for commercial applications from her research.

When discussing a set of unexpected results, Dmitri and Nala agree that the newly synthesised compound does not have the properties they are looking for. However, they note that the properties of the new compound would make it ideally suited to treatment of another type of disease.

Focused on his primary goal and unaware of his duty of disclosure, Dmitri argues for returning to the lab and continuing their search for the new liver cancer drug. However, Nala recalls a recent seminar in which John from the University's RIC office outlined the IP disclosure process and its potential benefits. Although uncertain as to the commercial value of their findings, Nala meets with her BDM. She is encouraged by the conversation and follows up as agreed with an IP disclosure.

After securing patent protection, the University is approached by XYZ Pharmaceuticals requesting a licence to further develop and commercialise the IP. Over a 20-year period, Dmitri and Nala share over $12m in royalties with the University.