The Office of Technology Management (OTM) was established in 1995 as a service unit reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Research with the responsibility for managing the intellectual property (IP) generated by research activities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The OTM’s mission is to encourage innovation, enhance research, and facilitate economic development through the transfer of intellectual property. By providing services that include the identification, evaluation, protection, marketing, and licensing of intellectual property, the OTM seeks to guide technologies through every appropriate stage of the commercialization process.

Although the OTM cannot guarantee that all disclosed technologies will ultimately be protected or commercialized, the office utilizes all of its resources to ensure that technologies are given every possible opportunity to realize their full commercial potential.

WHY WE DO THIS

• Helps retain and recruit best and brightest faculty
• Creates another revenue stream
• Increases sponsored research
• Aides the proliferation of innovative research tools
• Enhances quality of life (public good)

• Creates new companies and jobs
• Implements state government mandate
• Adheres to Federal Bayh-Dole requirement
• Improves the image of the University
• Provides opportunities for economic development
What is an invention?
An invention can be “anything under the sun” made by man, as long as it is new and useful. Inventions may include many types of discoveries and technological innovations, such as processes, methods, machines, articles of manufacture, devices, chemicals, and compositions of matter.

When and how do I disclose?
An invention should be disclosed when something new or useful is conceived or developed. To disclose, fill out a disclosure form and submit it to the OTM. The purpose of the disclosure form is to provide a written, dated record of your invention disclosure and to provide information that will allow your technology to be evaluated in terms of its commercial potential.

Where can I get a disclosure form?
Disclosure forms are available on our website: www.otm.uiuc.edu.

Does disclosing to the OTM protect my invention?
No, not by itself! The only way to protect a new invention is by filing a patent application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Disclosing to the OTM only provides documentation in support of a patent filing if there are questions about when an invention was first conceived.

Can I disclose & publish?
Yes. Disclosing to the OTM does not preclude publication, and will not alter your publication timetable. The OTM will not stop or delay individual publication plans. However, publication or any other public disclosure of your innovation (including conference presentations) before filing a patent application limits the number of countries in which patent protection will be available. Note that disclosure to the OTM is confidential. It is not considered a public disclosure for patenting purposes.

How far in advance of publication do I need to disclose?
It is best to disclose to the OTM at least 8-12 weeks before publication so that, if necessary, actions can be taken to preserve both U.S. and foreign rights. If that timetable cannot be met, please contact the office to discuss possible options.

Who owns the invention?
The University has the right to own inventions created by University faculty, staff and anyone using University facilities and resources. The Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 determined that the University retains title to intellectual property that was created using Federal funding. With this ownership comes the responsibility for patenting and pursuing opportunities to bring innovations into the public arena.
How does the OTM decide what to patent?
For every disclosed technology, the office conducts a process of business analysis that determines when pursuing patent protection is appropriate. This analysis focuses on the business case for the technology and includes research into potential markets, the strength and scope of intellectual property protection, and the technology’s stage of development.

What if the OTM doesn’t pursue patenting?
If the OTM decides not to pursue patenting and commercialization of an invention, it will release the University’s ownership rights back to the inventor. If the invention was created using Federal funding, release to the inventor requires the approval of the Federal agency.

If a technology is licensed, what is my share of the revenues generated?
The inventor receives 40%, the inventor’s department receives 20%, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research receives 40% of the revenues (after expenses). If there is more than one inventor, the revenues are shared between them with a split they determine. If there is more than one affiliated department, that portion of the revenues is also shared.

How does the OTM handle software?
In general, the University owns copyrightable works, including software, unless the copyrightable work is a “traditional academic work” (e.g. manuscript, thesis, textbook, or course content). University-owned software and copyrightable works are reviewed for commercial potential in the same way that patentable inventions are reviewed. For more information, see the related brochure Transferring University Software and Copyrighted Works.

After I disclose, how involved am I in the process?
The inventor’s active involvement is important in all stages of the commercialization process to enhance the chance of successful technology transfer. The inventor provides information and feedback during the evaluation and when patenting is pursued. For commercialization, the inventor’s role could include meeting with potential licensees, helping formulate a marketing strategy, and supporting implementation of the technology with the licensing company.

What other services does the OTM provide?
The OTM can help negotiate many types of agreements involving the transfer of University inventions and technologies to others. Examples include outgoing material transfers, confidentiality, evaluation, and testing agreements.
THE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROCESS

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DISCLOSURES:
When an invention, software, or new discovery is conceived or developed, it should be disclosed to the OTM. Prompt disclosure is important to avoid possible loss of patent protection.

SCREENING EVALUATION:
Within 6 weeks of receiving a disclosure, a technology manager will lead an internal review process to determine whether there is a reasonable business case to warrant proceeding further with patenting and commercialization.

ASSESS:
After patent protection has been sought, further assessment by OTM staff and, at times, external advisors, adds to the OTM’s understanding of the potential market for the technology and helps determine further patenting actions and steps in the marketing process.

MARKETING:
Considerable time and resources are devoted to researching and contacting the best possible licensing partners.

LICENSE NEGOTIATIONS:
The OTM conducts license negotiations with interested industry partners, taking care to formulate the best possible contracts.

LICENSE COMPLIANCE:
After a technology is licensed, the OTM continues to monitor the licensing organization to ensure adherence to all terms and conditions.
Staff
The Office of Technology Management employs over 20 full- and part-time professionals. The office includes business administration, technology managers, registered patent agents, legal counsel, dual-degree graduate student interns, and marketing support.

The OTM also utilizes outside consulting and legal firms to help determine where commercial opportunities exist, protect the intellectual property, penetrate certain markets, and structure the most beneficial licenses.

Technology Managers
Technology managers are assigned to each college to handle the intellectual property arising from that area. The technology manager’s role is to guide the inventor and the innovation through the commercialization process, including: deciding whether and where to patent; marketing the technology; and negotiating license terms.

Other Resources
The University of Illinois offers many additional resources to support technology transfer including IllinoisVENTURES, LLC, a start-up services company, and EnterpriseWorks, an early-stage incubator program. For more information about these services, please contact your technology manager.

For more information, please contact the Office of Technology Management at:

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FINDING COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY INNOVATIONS

The Office of Technology Management
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