

Invention Disclosure

What is an invention disclosure?

An invention disclosure is a written description of the invention that is provided to the technology transfer office (TTO). The invention disclosure should list all collaborating sources of support and include all of the information necessary to fully evaluate the invention and make a patent and commercialization decisions. It can also include presentations, posters, drafts of papers, or a thesis—more information about the invention is always better. Invention disclosures are treated as confidential university information.

Why should a researcher submit an invention disclosure?

Disclosure of inventions is required under the University Collected Rules and Regulations. When a researcher discloses the invention to the TTO, it starts a process that could lead to commercialization of the technology. This may involve legal protection of the intellectual property and working to identify outside development partners. If government funds were used for the research, a prompt disclosure is required by law and will be reported to the sponsoring agency. Similar requirements may exist for other sponsored projects.

How does a researcher know if a discovery is an invention?

Researchers are encouraged to submit an invention disclosure for all inventions and developments that may solve a significant problem and/or have significant value. If a researcher is in doubt, the researcher should contact the TTO to discuss the invention.

When should a researcher complete an invention disclosure?

A researcher should complete an invention disclosure whenever there is a discovery of something unique with possible commercial value. This should be done well before presenting the discovery through publications, poster sessions, conferences, press releases, or other communications. Such disclosures may adversely impact patent protection both in the United States and abroad.

Differences exist between the U.S. and other countries on the impact of such publications or other disclosures on a potential patent. Be sure to inform the TTO of any imminent or prior presentation, lecture, poster, abstract, website description, research proposal, dissertation/master's thesis, publication, or other public disclosure that includes the invention.



Should a researcher submit an invention disclosure for research tools?

If new research tools would benefit other researchers and the university researcher is interested in providing them to collaborators or to other third parties, an invention disclosure should be submitted. Typically, research tools are materials such as antibodies, vectors, plasmids, cell lines, mice, and other materials used as tools in the research process. Most research tools do not necessarily need to be protected by patents in order to be licensed to commercial third parties and/or generate revenue for a researcher's laboratory. If the research tools may be valuable or the researcher desires to provide them to others (including research collaborators), the TTO will work to develop the appropriate protection, licensing, and distribution strategy.

How does a researcher submit an invention disclosure?

An invention disclosure form and simple instructions may be obtained from:

http://ecodevo.mst.edu/media/center/ecodevo/documents/MS&T_Invention_Disclosure.pdf

For questions or more information, visit the Missouri S&T Office of Technology Transfer and Economic Development website: <http://ecodevo.mst.edu/>

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