

**Duke**  
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE *of*  
**LICENSING  
& VENTURES**

**4 STEPS**  
Turning Your  
Research into  
a Commercial  
Product  
TECHNOLOGY  
TRANSFER

## FROM IDEA TO COMMERCIALIZATION

Tim Burners-Lee wasn't sitting under an apple tree when he came up with the idea of the internet. In fact, he spent years developing other ideas, scrapping them and developing more before nearly a decade later he realized where he'd landed.

Many great ideas come from the slow churn of working through a problem until a solution presents itself. Sometimes, you only have half the answer, and someone else has worked out the other half.

That's where The Office of Licensing & Ventures (OLV) comes in. Our office is dedicated to helping you navigate every step of the innovation process, starting with just your basic idea, outline, sketch, or unique research outcomes. We can develop your idea or connect you with others to help move it forward.

The innovation process is not always a simple linear series of actions. Each invention has its challenges, and your active input and participation will be a big part of its ultimate success.

# 4 STEPS TURNING RESEARCH INTO A COMMERCIALIZED PRODUCT

## 1 DISCLOSE IT

Submitting your idea to our office is the first step in the process of protecting and commercializing your idea.

Ownership of inventions depends upon the employment status of the creators of the invention and their use of University facilities.

In some countries we can lose the ability to protect your idea, so it's important that you get in touch with OLV before you publish and tell us about your novel concept.

### YOU CAN DO THIS BY:

1. Submitting via our on-line Invention Disclosure Form or IDF (preferably, at least three months before disclosing your idea to the public). <https://olv.duke.edu/disclosure-form/>
2. Get in touch with us—we welcome the opportunity to meet with you early in your research to discuss strategies for future development and commercialization. <https://olv.duke.edu/contact/>

The IDF is a confidential, internal document that summarizes your idea and its potential usefulness

## What we'll ask for

- Any federal or other financial support
- A list of contributors and their percentage contribution to the invention
- A description of the invention
- Any materials from third parties
- Your plans for any public disclosures

## 2 ASSESS IT

You will need to research your idea from a legal and business

standpoint. But don't worry, we've got you covered!

### IN THIS STEP, YOU AND YOUR OLV LICENSING SPECIALIST WILL:

1. Review the invention disclosure
2. Conduct patent searches
3. Analyse the market and competitive technologies to determine your invention's commercialization potential

This helps us size up your competition. Everyone has competition—no matter how unique you think your invention is.

This assessment may also include consideration of whether the intellectual property can be the basis for a new business start-up.

If OLV decides not to pursue patent protection and/or chooses not to actively market the invention, the University may transfer ownership to the inventor(s). Reassignment of inventions funded from U.S. government sources requires the government's prior approval. You will find further information on this topic in the Patent Policy at <https://olv.duke.edu/faculty-innovators/policiesprocess/>

## The IDF is NOT

- A legal document
- A part of the formal patent application process
- Legal protection for your invention

Your IDF is an official submission to OLV to document your invention with us.

## OUR LICENSING SPECIALISTS WILL EXAMINE EACH INVENTION DISCLOSURE TO REVIEW:

- The novelty of the invention
- protectability and marketability of potential products or services
- Relationship to other intellectual property
- Size and growth potential of the relevant market
- Amount of time and money required for further development
- Pre-existing rights associated with the intellectual property (IP)
- Potential competition from other products/technologies

### 3 PROTECT IT

Based on our initial assessment, OLV may file a provisional patent application, which is valid for twelve months and is not examined or published by the US Patent Office. It establishes a priority date from which prior art will be determined.

The steps leading from the conversion of this provisional application to an issued patent can be quite complicated and extend over many years. The University will pay the costs incurred during this process with the goal of recovering that investment from a license partner.

**It is important to note that not all inventions need to be protected by patents.**

For example, most software, databases, and content is best protected via copyright. Research tools and materials, such as transgenic mice and cell lines, may be maintained as proprietary and licensed without patent protection. You can learn about the patent process at <http://olv.duke.edu/faculty-innovators/protection/>

#### HELPFUL LINKS

In parallel with patent protection, we also encourage inventors to continue to develop and grow their technology to the proof-of-concept stage. This will de-risk your early-stage technology and increase the likelihood of attracting potential licensees and investors as applicable.

We have put together a list of internal and external translational grants and entrepreneurial resources to facilitate this process, found at <http://olv.duke.edu/resources/startupresources/>

Studies have shown that 70% of licensees were already known to the inventors. Your research and consulting relationships are often a valuable source for licensees.



### 4 LICENSE IT

A license is a permission that the owner or controller of intellectual property grants to another party. This may involve partnering with an existing company or forming a start-up.

With your active involvement, OLV staff identify candidate companies that have the expertise, resources, and business networks to bring your technology to market. Existing relationships of the inventors, OLV staff, and other researchers are useful in marketing an invention.

#### WE CAN IDENTIFY PROSPECTIVE LICENSEES THROUGH:

- Market research
- Complementary technologies and agreements
- Using our website to post inventions
- Leveraging conferences and industry events
- Direct contacts and existing OLV relationships
- Faculty publications and presentations are often excellent marketing tools as well.

More about Marketing & Licensing can be found at <http://olv.duke.edu/faculty-innovators/licensing/>

WE HELP YOU WITH THE SMALL PIECES SO YOU CAN SEE THE BIG PICTURE



Our team is here to guide you through the process of launching your innovations into the marketplace.



#### Resources

Everything from FAQs to Funding Opportunities



#### Start-up Wiki

Your Start-up Starting Point



#### Digital Innovations

Software, apps, databases, data, and creative works



#### Invention Disclosure Form

1st Step in Documenting and Protecting your Idea

## MISSION

Through our partnerships with faculty, industry, entrepreneurs and investors, ensure that Duke innovations reach the marketplace for the benefit of society and to enable future investment in Duke research and innovation.

## VISION

Duke will be a leader in transferring its knowledge and innovations to the worldwide community.

### HAVE AN INVENTION?

Tell us about it! Please note that public disclosures such as conference abstracts and publications may preclude our ability to protect your invention. Be sure to inform OLV of any imminent or prior disclosures!

[www.olv.duke.edu](http://www.olv.duke.edu)



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