

Sharing Your Innovative Research Tools

How researchers can disclose and share biological materials

Has your lab developed transgenic mice, antibodies, cell lines or constructs that could be licensed to companies? Would you like to share your research tools with industry to advance research and facilitate the development of diagnostic tests and drugs while also generating revenue for you, your college, department and laboratory?

UW TechTransfer is dedicated to the broad dissemination of all UW technologies, including innovative research tools. We utilize appropriate licensing strategies based on the type of material, its potential applications, and other factors.

Licensing biological materials

Technology manager Valerie Carricaburu encourages researchers to disclose research materials to UW TechTransfer.

“Sometimes inventors are hesitant to disclose their biological materials to industry because they believe the potential licensee would then own the material or gain control of the licensing. That is not the case; the UW controls the licensing of biological materials and retains ownership of the materials even after licensing,” said Valerie.

Even if the biological material isn’t new, or has been discussed in a published research paper, it can still be licensed to companies because it is not necessary to patent biological materials for them to be commercialized. “Our goal is to disseminate UW innovations as widely as possible so they can help the greatest number of people,” she said, “so we license biological tools to multiple companies.”

When researchers wish to share biological material with academic colleagues, they work with UW TechTransfer’s Material Transfer Agreements (MTA) group. When they wish to license materials to a for-profit company, they work with technology managers who can draft a revenue-generating license agreement.

Valerie actively contacts for-profit companies to market UW biological materials such as cell lines for antibody production. Companies look for sources of new antibodies in published research papers, or sometimes their regular source of antibodies has ceased production.

Pharmaceutical or biotech companies find new transgenic mice for internal research via colleagues or by reading peer-reviewed journals, so marketing transgenic mice is more successful once the scientific community has read about them. Valerie recommends researchers let her know as soon as they have published data on their transgenic mice so she can market them more efficiently.

Disclosing biological materials is easy

The first step in sharing research tools is to disclose them to UW TechTransfer. The disclosure process isn’t time-consuming or cumbersome. When they have something valuable, researchers should contact UW TechTransfer by submitting an ROI form (available on our website) or by emailing Valerie Carricaburu (carricav@u.washington.edu). The following information should be included in the ROI or email: a short description of the research tool and how it was generated, whether or not any outside

materials were used to develop the research tool, and any publications that include information on the material.

Shortly thereafter, Valerie contacts the researcher to gather additional information.

If researchers are uncertain as to the value of their research tools they can call UW TechTransfer, as we are happy to discuss the commercial potential of research projects prior to submission of an ROI.

Where to find UW research tools available for licensing

Academic researchers and companies can search for UW technologies available for licensing on UW TechTransfer’s website at <http://depts.washington.edu/techtran>.

For more information on disclosing or licensing biological materials, contact Valerie or visit our website.

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