

Technology Transfer, Licensing, & Commercialization

As the technology transfer office of Arkansas State University, we are responsible for managing the intellectual property generated at the institution. Our team, made up of experts in licensing, business development, and legal matters, assists inventors and startups in commercializing their technology, thereby contributing to regional economic and social development.

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? What is Intellectual Property (IP)?

Intellectual Property (IP) refers to creations of the mind—inventions, designs, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, and images used in commerce—for which exclusive rights are recognized by law.

In technology transfer, IP is the **core asset** being moved from one party (like a university or research lab) to another (like a company or startup) for the purpose of commercialization and public benefit. It's the intangible value that makes the technology unique and valuable.

? Key Types of IP in Technology Transfer

The most common types of IP involved in transferring technology are:

IP Type	What it Protects	Relevance to Technology Transfer
1. Patents	An invention : a new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter.	Provides an exclusive right (usually for 20 years) to prevent others from making, using, or selling the invention. This exclusivity is often the main draw for a company to license a new technology.
2. Trade Secrets	Confidential information that gives a business a competitive edge (e.g., proprietary formulas, practices, designs, or processes).	Highly valuable, especially for "know-how" or technical data that might not be patentable. Protection depends on the owner maintaining its secrecy.
3. Copyrights	Original works of authorship (e.g., literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic works).	Critically important for software code , databases, technical documentation, manuals, and instructional materials that are part of the technology package.
4. Trademarks	Brand names, logos, or symbols used to identify and distinguish goods or services.	Less central to the <i>technology</i> itself, but crucial for branding a resulting product or company spun out of the technology transfer process.

? IP's Role in Technology Transfer

IP is the foundation that enables the transfer process to work:

1. **Protection:** IP rights (like a patent) protect the inventor and institution, allowing them to disclose the invention to potential partners without losing their right to control its use.
2. **Incentive:** The legal exclusivity granted by IP provides a powerful financial incentive for companies to invest the significant time and capital needed to develop the early-stage research into a market-ready product.
3. **Commercialization:** Technology transfer is often achieved through a **licensing agreement**, where the IP owner grants the company the right to use the IP in exchange for financial consideration (royalties, fees, etc.).

Extending the Impact of Your Research - System Policy on IP

At Arkansas State University, our mission extends beyond the creation of knowledge; we are dedicated to applying that knowledge for the public good. While publication disseminates ideas, **Intellectual Property (IP) protection** is often the necessary bridge that allows those ideas to be developed into tangible products, cures, and solutions that benefit society.

We manage IP at the System level to ensure that:

- **Your Work is Protected:** We provide the legal and financial resources to secure patents and copyrights, preventing unauthorized commercial use of your innovations.
- **We Honor Our Stewardship:** Much of our research is funded by public and federal dollars. Managing IP allows us to meet federal compliance obligations (such as the Bayh-Dole Act) and ensure the tax-paying public sees a return on their investment.
- **Incentives are Aligned:** A clear IP policy ensures that when research is successfully commercialized, revenue is shared fairly between the inventor, the department, and the university to fund future research.

The following System Policies outline the frameworks we use to manage ownership, disclosure, and revenue sharing.

[??IP Policy as applies for patentable inventions](#)

[??IP Policy for items not subject to patent, such as items arising out of Scholarly Production capable of legal protection under the Copyright, Trademark, Trade Secret, or other laws of the United States.](#)

You can always find the latest version of the [ASU system policies](#) on their [→website](#).

? What's Next, and Who to Contact

If you're working on research with potential commercial applications, have questions about intellectual property, or are interested in new venture development or forming a startup, please connect with Luna Acosta, Director of Technology Transfer.

Technology transfer supports faculty in moving innovations from the lab to the marketplace through intellectual property protection, licensing, and industry partnerships.

Luna serves as a key resource for faculty navigating this process and can assist with early-stage questions, invention disclosures, and startup-related inquiries.

Luna works by appointment—[her booking link is available here](#).