

Invention & Commercialization

A Simple Guide for Sharing Your Idea
with UH Ventures

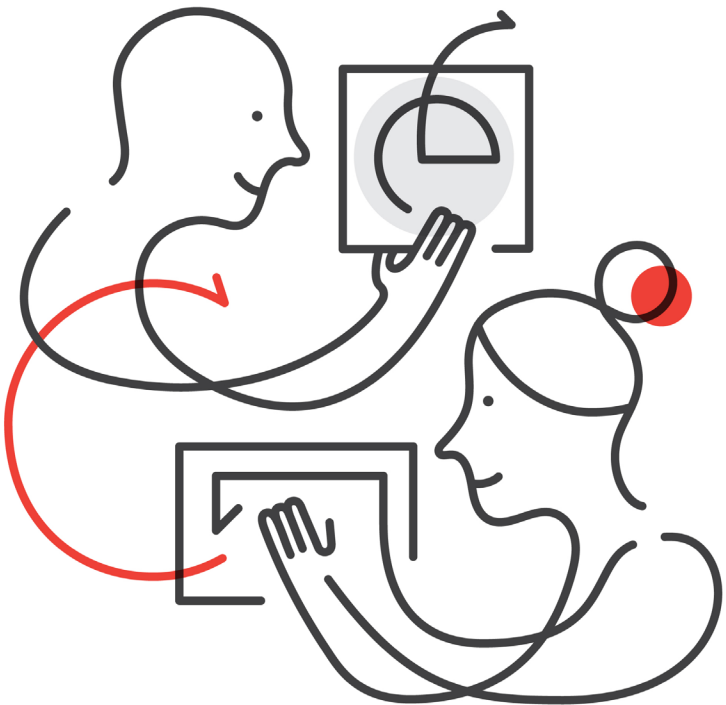


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Overview

So you think you got something. It might be a thought or a sketch or even a healthcare solution that you've already developed or even implemented at UH, and you are wondering if it has commercial potential. You likely know that the next step is to share it with UH, but you hesitate. Maybe you've heard Intellectual Property (IP) protection is complicated, or inventor rights are confusing, or maybe you have doubts that your idea is even novel or that it has any commercial potential. For all UH employees, we have great news. The team at UH Ventures (UHV) is here to answer those questions and blaze a commercialization trail for you in a way that makes the most sense for you, for UH, and for our patients. UHV will take any ideas: Large, small, half-baked or well-done. We are here to help assess all of your innovative ideas and move the most promising ones to the market.



**This guide highlights
the top things to keep in
mind when beginning
your innovation journey.**

2

**Thinking about
disclosing?
Remember these
things.**

Know and understand the UH
intellectual property policy

Time is money

Silence is golden

It's not all about patents

Know and Understand the UH intellectual property policy.

The UH IP Policy (found on the UH Digital Work Place) discusses the role and the rights of the institution and the inventor as intellectual property is developed and commercialized at University Hospitals. Read [this policy](#) to learn how revenue is distributed upon successful commercialization.

Note: For those that have joint 50-50 appointments at UH and Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), or if your team of inventor contribution is split 50-50 at both institutions, a joint CWRU-UH Committee will determine which institution's policy is best suited for your invention.



Invention & Commercialization Overview

Time is money.

If your idea has legs, it can only run on them if we can keep it protected. If it's a device, diagnostic, or therapeutic, that usually means filing it with the United States Patent & Trademark Office ([USPTO](#)) before any other inventors or companies can. UHV will take a quick look to assess commercial potential, and if it looks promising and warrants protection, we can seek appropriate protection.

Silence is golden.

Divulging your invention without a patent filing can seriously hinder the ability to protect your idea later. This can unintentionally happen by publishing findings, presenting at a conference, discussing with external peers or industry partners, or even using the invention in public. These types of “public disclosures” can be considered “prior art” when attempting to file any patent claims. To put it more clearly, the directive of the USPTO is to only award patent claims to matters that are useful, novel and non-obvious, and once your invention enters the public domain, whatever you’ve already revealed can be cited as prior art against the claimed invention.

So before you publish or present, a disclosure to UHV will fast-track the patent filing process if a commercialization pathway can be identified. In addition to presentations or publications, be careful when speaking to others outside of UH, especially industry partners. By submitting your idea to UHV via an official invention disclosure form, we will automatically be your guide for any confidentiality agreements needed to ensure that your idea isn’t lost to the wind before it ever takes flight.

Invention & Commercialization Overview

It's not all about patents.

While patents can be vital to commercialization, it's important to remember two things when it comes to UH's philosophy on intellectual property.



1. An investment into a patent is only worth it if there is a clearly defined commercial pathway.

Think of IP like a real estate investment. While we certainly could buy an acre of swampland, or a closet-sized condo in an overpopulated city, neither is necessarily the wisest investment. In other words, just because we can, doesn't always mean we should. UHV and our counsel will help make an informed, value-based decision for you. If IP protection isn't in the cards, we can explore other creative opportunities to help you share your idea with the world.

2. There may be opportunity to commercialize without a patent.

This is especially true when it comes to information technology inventions as well as other process innovations. For one, these types of patents are hotly contested in these markets, and secondly, the value of these is more often the “know-how” or the proprietary knowledge embodied within the invention. In these cases, it often makes more sense to keep the details to ourselves in the form of a trade secret. In other words, innovation doesn’t start or end with patents. If you’ve dreamed of—or implemented—a better way to do your job or care for patients (i.e. improved processes, patient experience enhancements, etc.), UHV is here to let you know whether or not it can be effectively developed, deployed, and scaled outside of our institutions.



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OK. You're ready to disclose. Keep these tips in mind.

Find the UHV Invention Disclosure Form

Tell us as much as you can

Inventor distribution is up to the inventors

Is a grant tied to this idea?

Got industry contacts or leads?

Press the "Submit" Button



Find the UHV Invention Disclosure Form

UHV has an electronic Invention Disclosure Form (IDF) that can be completed on [our website](#). This process is necessary to get your IDF in the queue for UHV to assign someone on our teams to reach out to you and learn more. Please let us know if there is a deadline (i.e. an upcoming presentation or publication), so we can expedite the process accordingly.

Invention & Commercialization Overview

Tell us as much as you can.

While it can be tempting to be general in your invention at the earliest stages, use the IDF to spill as much of your thoughts as possible, so UHV can begin researching right away. Our team members are quick studies, but anything you can add to give us a head start is always appreciated.

One of the main things our reviewers will be looking for is how valid the need is that you are addressing, and how different (or similar) your idea is to other approaches being used or developed. It's important to think about who are the ultimate users of your invention as well as what companies and individuals might benefit from your invention. And because we all love a good business challenge, our reviewers are always curious about the market players that might be threatened by your innovation. While each IDF will result in more conversation between our offices and the inventors, those types of details can inform the next set of pertinent questions as we better understand the unmet need and explore the right commercialization paths.



Inventor distribution is up to the inventors.

Distribution refers to the split of any revenue that the idea eventually generates. We recognize that some inventors can get caught up in the distribution percentages when a team of inventors is involved. This can also be tricky when there is plenty of developing left to do. In any case, we encourage you to take your first stab at it before submitting your IDF. This helps to set the tone for any subsequent progress, and also helps to determine the “lead” institution for commercialization as well the “lead” inventor(s) for UHV to interact with. Remember that if commercialization is successful, everyone wins – so don’t let this keep you from getting started.

Invention & Commercialization Overview

Got industry contacts or leads? We want to hear about them.

This might be putting the cart before the horse, but it's never a bad idea to start compiling a list of potential licensees or customers at the outset. UHV has an ever-growing network of contacts, but it's almost always the inventor that knows the specific subject and the space better than anyone. Remember not to disclose your idea to any external contacts directly, but cluing UHV into your target list can help us to more quickly determine if and how to commercialize.

Is a grant tied to this idea? We need to know.

If your idea has been the result of any federal or state grants, it's important that we know right away. This way, we can be sure to comply with all grant requirements.



Press the Submit button.

Maybe we're being redundant, but we hear time and again that the IDF is "almost" ready. Don't overthink it, just submit it!

4

**You submitted!
Now what?**

The ball is now in our court

Fair warning:
We may close your invention

Buckle your seatbelt.

The ball is now in our court.

UHV has a comprehensive process for giving every idea a top-level assessment. The first step is our Identification stage (followed by Development and Deployment), in which we take a preliminary look at answering the following questions:

- How clear and compelling is the unmet need?
- What is the overall value proposition of the invention, and what are the key advantages over the current state?
- What IP can be protected? What is the strength of the IP? How crowded is the field?
- What are the market dynamics and what does the competitive landscape look like?
- Is there a clear path to market? What regulatory hurdles might need to be overcome?

If the answers to these questions are positive, we will move the idea to the next stage of diligence in which we'll begin to protect the IP and work with you to develop a robust plan for the development and commercialization of the idea.

Invention & Commercialization Overview

Fair warning: We may close your invention.

Believe us, it's not exactly fun to dash the ideas of our colleagues at the outset, but we also know that it's a lot easier to do this early, rather than after spending lots of time and effort on it. In every case, however, it is our goal to keep UH inventors inventing. We hope every closed opportunity will come with a few lessons for making your next idea all the more powerful.

Buckle your seatbelt.

If the diligence continues to check out, we'll soon be starting our cross-country road trip to our final commercialization destination. While UHV will take the majority of the driving duties, we'll need our inventors to help us navigate. There will be some scenic and exciting moments, and there will also be long boring cornfields and likely a handful of wrong turns. We might also argue over the radio station a few times. In every case, we will need to rely on our inventors for your knowledge, effort, and creativity throughout the entire journey.



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Conclusion

If there is one takeaway that our UH and CWRU colleagues should ingest from this guide, it should be that **UHV is your dedicated resource for all of your ideas.** We're here to guide you through of the thorny intellectual property and commercialization details. We can't always promise a successful outcome, but we can commit to giving you timely feedback and to providing advice for your next idea.

Please never hesitate to reach out. We look forward to collaborating with you.

Contact us.

For more information on UH Ventures, please visit our website: uhhospitals.ventures.org

For further questions, contact us at: idea@uhhospitals.org

