

# Frequently Asked Questions

As a University of Waikato researcher, when should I let WaikatoLink know about my new research?

It is often helpful for us to find out about new ideas and research as early as possible. We can then work with you to evaluate whether your research can be applied commercially and help in securing the appropriate protection and industry partnerships where necessary. This ensures that you can both publish your work and retain future commercial opportunities. If your research is at idea stage, we can also carry out market and patent research to provide any information you may need or introduce you to companies that could support development.

Can I still publish my research if WaikatoLink are working towards commercialising it?

Of course. Like you, we believe that publication is a great way to transfer knowledge and attract interest in your research. However, timing is very important. It is essential for us to protect the novel and unique aspects of your invention before they are publically disclosed. If the novelty is disclosed before patent protection is secured, commercial opportunities are likely to be lost.

There are a few possible options available to us. We can either file a provisional patent application prior to publication, or you can go ahead with publishing, being careful not to disclose novelty. By beginning conversations with us early, we can work together to reach the best possible outcome.

Does every University commercialisation project follow the same process?

No, every project is different and has its own unique requirements. Our commercialisation process provides a general guideline for stages that should be ticked off along the way, but no two projects will follow the exact same path. We can expect to face hurdles to commercialisation along the way – most ideas fail a few times. For example, an interested company could find a solution to a problem in-house, meaning that we have to find a new deal target. Our commercial team have years of experience in tackling such hurdles and one of the main lessons learned is that if the research team is involved throughout, the project is much more likely to get to market.

Why should industry partnerships be established early in the commercialisation process?

We believe that it's important to begin conversations with companies as early as possible. It can be useful to bounce ideas off people in the industry to understand market needs and problems, and identify

opportunities for new technologies. These relationships can also be valuable later on in the process when we're looking to identify suitable partners or deal targets. WaikatoLink can help by establishing these connections, advising on discussions around IP and supporting the development of collaborative relationships.

As an inventor, should I be involved during the commercialisation process?

Absolutely! Commercialisation is a team sport, so we feel that it's important for us to work closely with you during the commercialisation process. We know that researchers have immense knowledge, skills, networks and capability so it's valuable to have your input along the way. We believe that your expertise and our commercialisation experience are an ideal combination in taking emerging technologies to the marketplace.

How are the revenues from commercialisation successes distributed within the University system?

The University of Waikato's IP policy indicates that net revenues, which can be in the form of up-front licence payments, royalties or revenue from technology sales, are distributed as follows:

- Inventor(s) 1/3
- Inventor(s) Department/Faculty 1/3
- University 1/3

See the University of Waikato's Intellectual Property Rights Policy and Policy on Sharing of Benefits from Commercialisation of Intellectual Property for more information.

Can University students share in returns from commercialisation successes if they make an inventive contribution?

Yes, students who have contributed to the inventive step of a technology can gain a share of revenue distributions if they assign their IP to the University. IP assignment is an important step because it is difficult for WaikatoLink to commercialise projects that aren't 100% owned by the University. However, the upside of students' assigning their IP to the University is that they receive a share of revenue payments if the project is successfully exited by WaikatoLink.

What happens if WaikatoLink decides not to proceed with a University of Waikato opportunity?

WaikatoLink does not go forward with commercialising all disclosures that are submitted to us. Possible reasons for not proceeding could include: the requirement for further technical developments, limited market need, or existence of many competing technologies. We are dedicated to providing meaningful

feedback, recommendations about future commercial opportunities and, where possible, connections to industry that may guide on-going development. We encourage all inventors to return to us if the barriers identified are overcome.

Does WaikatoLink only get involved in projects with commercial potential?

WaikatoLink offers services to support both commercial and non-commercial projects. If you have a research idea, we can help by providing market research, patent results or literature searches where needed. We can also put you in contact with companies who might be interested in working with you.

What happens to my research when a commercialisation exit occurs?

Whether a commercialisation exit is in the form of a licence deal, technology sale or spin-out company, WaikatoLink will strive to ensure that the research rights of inventors are retained. This means that you can continue working on the proposed area in research settings.

What is intellectual property?

Intellectual property refers to a number of distinct types of creations of the mind, which are capable of being protected under national and international law. Common types of intellectual property include: patents, trademarks, copyright, design rights and trade secret. The link below provides more detailed information about intellectual property.