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A Guide for Successful  
Academic-Industrial Collaborations

# Research Quick Guide



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Research Collaboration Summary

ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE	KEY ISSUES	INDUSTRIAL PERSPECTIVE
	Managing Expectations	
Understand that Industry’s mission is to provide goods and services, expand the state of the art and create value for investors.	Collaborative research may accomplish what is not possible in any other way despite varied missions, cultures, and motivations.	Understand that the Institution’s mission is education, related creation and dissemination of knowledge, and outreach.
Utilize your institutional resources and ensure policies and procedures are in place to effectively manage industry-sponsored research projects.	Most organizations have a centralized office dedicated to coordinate and navigate through the different approaches to legal and IP policy.	Determine company’s perspective on IP ownership, use restrictions, and publication sign-off authority by finding appropriate internal contacts.
Determine up-front whether you can and want to meet the sponsor’s business needs while satisfying your core mission.	A better chance of successful project outcomes results from correctly aligning industry with institutions based on needs and skills sets.	To gain appropriate internal approvals, show that collaboration investment will provide compelling benefits.
Determine the type of project within the continuum of interaction.	Project type affects the terms of a contract, which in turn affects the desirability of the relationship.	Determine the expectation of intellectual property generation to help guide the project contract type.
	Benefits and Challenges	
Sponsors offer: alternative funding sources, product development expertise, insight into trends, valuable intellectual property, and special facilities.	Both entities offer resources that the other can leverage for success and mutual benefit.	Institutions offer: special facilities, expertise, new perspectives, new recruits, funding, and potentially valuable intellectual property.
Industry is timeline- and deliverable-driven with complex needs like publication delays and confidentiality. Smaller firms tend to be resource limited, have short-term vision and limited follow-on opportunities.	Conflicting goals and timelines are the biggest cause of negative experiences yet can be aligned with management from both parties.	Internal justification can be problematic, institutional contract negotiations can be lengthy, and project execution depends on researcher availability – plan early for budget cycle completion.
Work with your licensing office towards different solutions for different market segments and different-sized companies.	Misalignment of expectations of licensing revenue versus cost of commercialization can kill deals. Up-front fees, royalties, and other costs must be reasonable.	Have frank discussions internally and with institutional licensing office about the relative value of any potential IP in market segment in relation to commercialization costs.
	Establishing Contacts	
Leverage personal, institutional and business networks to find contacts. Market your expertise in various media as well as publishing and being active at conferences.	The key challenge is getting to the right person with whom you can arrive at a mutual understanding of a technical problem and its plausible solution.	Use multiple mechanisms for finding the right contact: internet searches, networking, requests for proposals, conference attendance and external matchmaking services.
Use initial discussions to determine if sponsor project expectations can be met in a mutually acceptable Statement of Work (SOW) with deliverables, timelines, and budgets.	Minimize disputes and objective creep with careful evaluation and selection of a compatible partner and mutual agreement on project SOW.	Establish mutual understanding of the research problem, proposed solution and SOW in order to develop internal ROI discussion and management approval.
Assist in developing appropriate documentation to protect the institution’s interests based on SOW.	Follow-on discussions will require confidentiality agreements and contracts.	Contact your legal services to set up a confidentiality agreement to cover any in-depth conversations.
	Proposals	
Develop an executive summary that shows an efficient plan to resolve issues and has a SOW outlining the deliverables, timelines and communication plan. Craft fair and realistic budget with grants and contracts office.	Proposal format depends on who initiated contact and where the funding is coming from. Regular, frequent communication is necessary to develop a successful proposal, SOW, and project.	Set up a communications plan with institutional partner to develop the proposal (exec. summary and SOW), informal and formal updates and reports. Review the proposal with technical and financial management.

ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE	KEY ISSUES	INDUSTRIAL PERSPECTIVE
	Budgeting	
Discuss research costs including overhead, travel, and tuition reimbursement with a sponsor new to Institutional collaboration. Craft budget with internal parties to avoid future problems later in the process.	Federal agreements may require cost sharing and may include restrictions on Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rates that are unfamiliar to industry.	Discuss cost effective ways for accomplishing the SOW. Structures include: sponsored research, consulting, or gift. Work venue affects costs, facilities and overhead charges.
	Compliance Issues	
Work with your compliance office to understand applicable aspects to the sponsored research project.	Improper management of compliance may cause significant consequences to individuals and put the relationship and company’s business at risk. Compliance issues to consider include export control, immigration law, and employment law.	Determine who to contact in your company to see if there are any compliance issues that impact the project scope and deliverables.
	Confidential Proprietary Information	
Protect confidential and proprietary information, since this is extremely important to industry. It can impact your ability or the timeframe to publish results. Special consideration necessary when students will be involved in the project. If the fundamental research exclusion is used to avoid export control issues, then technical information must not be held as confidential and all project results must be published.	Maintaining confidentiality is in everyone’s best interest. Contractual breaches damage relationships and can lead to litigation. Document discussions in writing to clarify future IP matters.	Self-censor information that is core to your company but not the project, even with a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). Discuss project segmentation and automatic press releases of projects and titles with your Institutional partner.
	Consulting/Outside Activity	
Confirm with appropriate office rules for consulting. Learn about IP rights, confidentiality requirements and agreements, and identify any potential conflicts of interest.	Each Institution has unique policies on IP ownership related to consulting that can lead to uncertainty about the consultants’ obligations and other conflicts of interest.	Confirm who at the institution has authority to sign a consultancy agreement, can assign intellectual property, can set fee structures for the consultancy agreement, and other potential conflicts of interest.
	Intellectual Property Concerns	
Identify any background and potential foreground IP and who is responsible for IP protection, maintenance, and funding. Understand the impact of any confidential agreements on future publications, conference presentations, other funded agreements, or internal use of existing and new IP	Intellectual property ownership can be one of the more contentious issues in Institutional-Industrial projects. Issues are reduced by identifying IP owners and processes to handle IP before the project starts. Understand difference between assignments and rights.	Discuss background IP for project with your technical and IP management. Patent before discussing commercialization or publishing project results. Define up front contract option terms to foreground IP license. Joint IP ownership does not prevent competitors from licensing the IP
	Long-Term Relationships	
Consider the long-term benefits when structuring contracts with industrial partners that are a good fit for your research, department and/or institution.	Long-term benefits and local impact of Institution-Industry collaboration often go beyond initial expectations when long term relationships that are built impact and outweigh the specific project goals. Effective collaborations hinge on building and maintaining trust, effective communication, and agreeable contributions from all parties.	Develop long-term collaborations by carefully selecting a suitable partner, managing project progress, being an in-house champion, and creating metrics to evaluate the collaboration.