

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AT NAU: A Handy Guide for Student Inventors, Developers, Innovators, Designers, and Makers

What is IP? Who owns it?

Why is it important?

Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of human intellect that can be commercialized—that is, licensed for profit. There are federal, state, and international laws regulating the use of IP. Patents, copyrights, and trademarks are some of the ways that creators can legally protect their IP from unauthorized use and earn recognition (and sometimes royalties) for their IP.

Examples of IP

- As a music major, you may compose a piece of music for the cello. The composition is considered IP.
- As a computer science major, you may develop software that enables researchers to run genetic sequences. The software program is considered IP.
- As a health sciences major, you may develop a new assay to test for jungle fever. The assay is considered IP.

Other resources for students

- [boundaryless](#) at NAU
- NAU's W. A. Franke College of Business [Clubs and Organizations](#)
- [Moonshot](#) at NACET
- [ABOR Policy 6-908](#)

Do I own IP I developed at NAU?

An Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) policy governs the ownership of IP developed at NAU (see section A3, "Student-Created Works" of [ABOR Policy 6-908](#)). Here are some examples of ownership scenarios based on this policy:

If you are an undergraduate student and you...

- Created IP as a result of classwork and/or for a student dissertation or capstone project intended to fulfill degree requirements at the university, you **can** own that IP. Contact Will Aylor at William.Aylor@nau.edu for more information.
- Are employed by NAU as a student worker, you **cannot** own the IP you created as part of your employment at NAU.
- Developed IP as part of a research project carried out under the direction of NAU faculty or staff, you **cannot** own the IP.
- Developed IP as part of a sponsored research project that was funded by NAU directly or through funds administered by NAU, you **cannot** own the IP.

If you are a graduate student and you...

Are under an assistanceship of any kind, you are considered an employee of NAU—so you **cannot** own the IP you created as part of your employment at NAU.

You can learn more about IP rights and responsibilities by visiting the NAU Innovations [website](#). If you have questions about IP, ownership, rights and responsibilities, or any other IP questions, reach out to the NAU Innovations team at nauinnovations@nau.edu.