



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



EASY ACCESS IP

**AN INTRODUCTION FOR WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS**

August 2015

REDI

RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT | DEVELOPMENT | INNOVATION

BACKGROUND

Founded by King's College London and the Universities of Glasgow and Bristol in 2010, the Easy Access IP initiative involves universities making a portion of their intellectual property free to license in an effort to promote its commercialisation. EAIP has now been adopted by all but one of the Sydney universities.

Under Easy Access IP, certain IP is offered for free, using quick, simple and voluntary agreements. The Easy Access IP initiative offers a structured framework for a strategic shift by universities in dealing with their IP from a closed-ended fair dealing to an open-ended fair use of the research outcome and IP. This model promotes an entrepreneurial culture and increased community engagement to seek opportunities to develop the research work and capitalise on its potential by simplifying the process for up-take by the end-user.

Easy Access IP is a new, optional alternative to the traditional IP commercialisation pathway adopted by Western Sydney University to exploit its research outcomes and early-stage IP. Easy Access IP presents an opportunity for Western Sydney University to become a partner of choice for industry and to support its research impact goals.

WHY FOLLOW EASY ACCESS INITIATIVE?

So far, more than 30 universities around the world have adopted this model (<http://easyaccessip.com/>). The model recognises the value that relationships with external organisations bring both to the University and the individual academic, where combining the resources and expertise of a variety of stakeholders to focus on a problem generates novel, practical solutions. In addition to the knowledge transfer benefits Easy Access IP brings, this new approach will also help cement Western Sydney University as an institution that provides significant value to our economy and society. For the individual academic, it also presents more opportunity for academic and professional recognition.

Easy Access IP is entirely consistent with the core mission of all universities, to create and disseminate knowledge, aligns well within the current political emphasis on industry-research engagement, and supports the same priority as outlined in the University Research Strategy. This approach will make it easier for researchers to achieve research engagement outcomes and impact, and to promote a culture of innovation by demonstrating that we have removed the significant obstacles associated with contracting and the licensing of IP.

WHAT IS EASY ACCESS IP?

Whilst the University will still protect and commercialise some IP as before, we will offer some of our IP to industry partners and entrepreneurs for free, to increase the take-up of IP, accelerate the development of these opportunities and to encourage new collaborations and research engagement opportunities with business. Easy Access IP aims to make it easier to finalise agreements, removing the need for lengthy, costly negotiations that often significantly delay the development of the research.

In order for us to decide on the most appropriate licensee, those interested need to tell us how they will use the IP to benefit the economy or society. IP offered under the Easy Access portfolio will have an additional four conditions:

- The partners must acknowledge Western Sydney University's contribution and report on the progress
- The partners agree that if they have not made use of the IP within three years, it will revert back to us;
- There will be no limitations on our use of the IP for our own teaching and research
- The partners agree to pay for all patent costs (where applicable).

We intend that Easy Access IP will raise our profile amongst industry, catalyse new relationships and support long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships.

HOW WILL EASY ACCESS IP WORK?

The Easy Access IP process is driven by understanding the different types of value and most appropriate modes of transfer. The University's approach is based on the following assumptions:

- All IP has inherent value, but only a very small proportion has significant, defined and easily achievable commercial value to the University
- For that proportion of IP with significant commercial value, we will seek to exploit it with commercial partners through traditional routes of technology transfer
- For all other IP we will seek to transfer it for free to those partners who can demonstrate how they will develop it to benefit the society or economy.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS?

The University has always consulted with inventors before conducting any licence agreement and this will not change with Easy Access IP. We will undertake the usual due diligence and market assessments and, where we have identified IP as a potential candidate for the Easy Access Portfolio, will consult with the researchers on the options. It is anticipated that because inventors have been closely involved in developing and attempting to transfer the technology, they will often already be aware of the barriers to its further development, and therefore understand how the Easy Access IP approach might smooth the path to market.

Importantly, the University will always retain teaching and research rights over the IP; we are only licensing the commercialisation rights for up to 3 years. It is a precondition of any agreement that the partners demonstrate the social and economic benefit that will occur as a result of the license and their progress against that plan will be monitored annually. There will of course also be a strong incentive for the partners to remain engaged with the University for the ongoing development of the IP given the inventor is necessarily the field leading expert in relation to the technology.

Western Sydney University will continue to provide support to academics who have agreed to license their IP (whether through Easy Access IP or traditional means) to stay actively engaged in its further development.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT IS 'EASY ACCESS IP'?

REDI will apply the usual principles of evaluation and question how to achieve the best outcome for the University as well as optimise economic and societal impact. If we identify your IP as a potential candidate for the Easy Access Portfolio, we will consult with you on the options and it is your decision as to whether you would like to participate or not.

WHAT IF AN ACADEMIC OR FUNDER OF THE ORIGINAL PROJECT DOESN'T WANT YOU TO PUT THE IP IN THE EASY ACCESS IP PORTFOLIO?

REDI always discuss decision making with academics so this is no different. We perform the usual due diligence checks, including review of any obligations we owe to the funder of the project from which the IP emerged and will liaise with them where appropriate. If it is decided not to offer your IP under Easy Access IP, we will explore alternatives with you.

ISN'T THE IP GIVEN AWAY FOR FREE GOING TO BE PERCEIVED AS LACKING VALUE BY INDUSTRY?

University technology is often at a very early stage of development and requires significant investment in order to release its inherent value; it is a challenge for all universities to resource research to the point that it is of immediate commercial value. The Easy Access IP model recognises this and provides a mechanism to release a proportion of Western Sydney University IP to those who can develop it. It provides an opportunity for companies to take a risk and explore the development of a technology without any financial obligation.

ISN'T THERE A DANGER THAT POTENTIAL LICENSEES WILL BELIEVE ALL IP WILL BE FREE?

There will still be an appetite to gain early access through traditional licensing to inventions which have obvious commercial potential by partners who recognise that potential and are willing to make a financial commitment.

Any company that passes up the opportunity to obtain new IP which is vital to their business is taking a significant risk.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MORE THAN ONE COMPANY IS INTERESTED IN THE SAME IP?

We will review the Statements of Intent provided by all interested companies and select the company that is best suited to deliver impact from the IP.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE LICENSEE DOES NOT DEVELOP THE IP AS DESCRIBED IN THE STATEMENT OF INTENT?

The Easy Access IP license provides the licensee with 3 years to develop the IP. Licensees are required to provide annual progress reports, if they have not made reasonable efforts to achieve their stated plans then Western Sydney University may revoke the Easy Access IP license.

HOW WILL WE TRACK OUTCOMES?

One of the conditions for an Easy Access IP agreement is that the licensee needs to tell us how they will use the IP to benefit society and the economy. We will monitor this as we do for revenue bearing licences. Additionally, if the IP is not developed or commercialised in three years, it needs to be returned to the University. Tracking impact is a core aspect of this initiative.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT TO THE UNIVERSITY?

Easy Access IP helps Western Sydney University fulfil its mission to conduct research with impact. Additional benefits include:

- A boost to our reputation through increasing our knowledge transfer
- We become a partner of choice as we will be easy to work with
- Closer relationships with industry which can lead to further engagements.

ENQUIRIES

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