

Survey on Research Activities and Commercialization of Intellectual Property in Higher Education (SRACIPHE) 2025

Glossary

This glossary provides definitions of key terms used in the Survey on Research Activities and Commercialization of Intellectual Property in Higher Education (SRACIPHE).

Affiliated legal entity: A legally distinct organization that has a formal relationship with a postsecondary institution, such as an affiliated college, centres collégiaux de transfert de technologie et de pratiques sociales novatrices (college centres for the transfer of technology and innovative social practices; CCTT) research institute, technology transfer organization or other related entity, and whose activities may be reported separately or included in a combined report, as permitted by the survey.

Centre collégial de transfert de technologie (CCTT): A Quebec-based college technology transfer centre that supports applied research and technology transfer to industry.

Collaborative research agreement: A project-specific agreement under which two or more organizations jointly undertake research activities and share expertise, resources, facilities or research outcomes with no external funds brought to the reporting institution.

Copyrights: A form of intellectual property that protects original works, including scientific publications, software code, artistic works, technical documentation and other creative outputs arising from research or innovation activities

Field and environmental infrastructures: Research facilities and sites located in natural or controlled environments that support data collection, monitoring, observation or experimentation outside traditional laboratory settings. Examples include observatories, field stations, experimental farms and environmental monitoring sites.

Full-time equivalent (FTE): A measure of work effort expressed as the total hours worked divided by the average annual hours worked in a full-time position.

Grant-based research agreements: A research project funded through a formal grant from a government, non-profit organization or other funding body, where the funding is subject to specified terms and conditions related to project activities, reporting or intellectual property.

Industrial design: A form of intellectual property that protects the visual features of a product, including its shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation.

Institutional-level research partnership agreement: A formal, ongoing collaboration framework between an institution and an external organization that supports multiple or future research projects. Formal research partnerships are broader than individual project-specific research agreements.

Integrated circuit topographies: A recognized form of intellectual property in Canada that protects the three-dimensional layout design of the electronic components and connections within a semiconductor integrated circuit.

Intellectual property (IP): Assets arising from creations of the mind that may be legally protected. Examples include patents for inventions, copyrights for original works, trademarks for names and logos, trade secrets for confidential information and industrial designs for the visual appearance of products.

Intellectual property (IP) commercialization: Activities that support the transfer, development or use of intellectual property arising from research or innovation. Commercialization pathways may include licensing, assignment (sale of intellectual property), spin-offs, start-ups and collaborative partnerships.

Intellectual property (IP) licence: A legal agreement that grants a person or organization permission to use, develop, or otherwise exploit intellectual property (IP) owned by another party under specified terms and conditions. Ownership of the intellectual property remains with the licensor. Licences allow use without transferring ownership.

Intellectual property (IP) management: Activities related to the identification, assessment, protection, administration, transfer and licensing of intellectual property (IP). These activities may include invention disclosures, IP assessment, patenting, licensing, management of IP assets and portfolios, negotiation of IP-related agreements, and support for the commercialization of intellectual property.

Intellectual property (IP) support: Advisory, educational or facilitation services related to intellectual property. These services may include disclosure support, patent strategy advice, IP-related industry liaison activities, training, outreach or other assistance that supports intellectual property activities without necessarily involving ownership or direct management of intellectual property.

Invention disclosure: A formal notification submitted to an institution that describes a potentially protectable invention, design, copyright, plant variety, software, algorithm, trade secret, trademark or other intellectual property arising from research or innovation activities. Invention disclosures are used to evaluate, manage, protect or support the commercialization of intellectual property.

Inventions: A novel product, process or technical solution arising from research, experimental development or other creative activity. An invention may be eligible for protection through intellectual property rights such as patents.

New product: A good or service that is new or significantly improved during the reporting period with respect to its characteristics, functionality, software, components, materials or intended use, and that reached final development, demonstration, qualification, deployment, operational use or commercialization during the reporting period. Minor modifications or routine updates are not considered new or improved products.

New or improved process: A method, technique, procedure or system that is new or significantly improved during the reporting period and is used to produce, deliver or support goods, services or other activities. Improvements may include changes to workflows, manufacturing methods, operational practices, equipment or software. For this survey, report only processes that reached final development, demonstration, qualification, deployment, operational use or commercialization during the reporting period.

New or improved prototype: A preliminary or functional version of a product, process or technology that is new or significantly improved during the reporting period and is developed to test, demonstrate, validate or refine a concept, design or technical solution before full implementation, deployment or commercialization. For this survey, report only prototypes that reached final development, demonstration, qualification, deployment, operational use or commercialization during the reporting period.

Patent: A form of intellectual property that grants the owner the exclusive right, for a limited period, to prevent others from making, using or selling an invention without permission in the jurisdictions where the patent is granted.

Patent application: A formal request submitted to a patent office seeking patent protection for an invention.

Plant variety rights: A form of intellectual property that protects new plant varieties and grants the breeder exclusive rights over the propagation and commercialization of the variety.

Research and development (R&D): Creative and systematic work undertaken to increase the stock of knowledge and to develop new applications of that knowledge. For the purposes of this survey, the terms *research* and *research and development (R&D)* include **basic research**, **applied research**, and **experimental development**, where

applicable to the institution completing this form. These activities are defined according to the *Frascati Manual*:

- **Basic research:** Experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge without a specific practical application in view.
- **Applied research:** Original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective.
- **Experimental development:** Systematic work that draws on existing knowledge and practical experience to develop new or improved products, processes, or services.

Research services / testing agreements: A fee-for-service arrangement in which an institution provides research, testing or analysis for an external organization according to agreed requirements and deliverables.

Spin-off: For this survey, a spin-off is a company created to commercialize intellectual property (IP) or technology developed at the institution.

A spin-off must have a formal and verifiable link to IP developed at the institution. This includes companies where at least one of the following conditions applies:

- The company has licensed IP (e.g., patents, software or know-how) from the institution.
- The company is based on an invention disclosure submitted to the institution.
- The institution holds equity in the company as a result of an IP contribution.

Exclude:

- Companies based solely on knowledge, skills or experience acquired at the institution without a documented link to institutional IP, even if they receive support through incubators, accelerators or mentorship programs.
- Start-ups founded by students, graduates, faculty or staff that do not have a formal relationship to IP developed at the institution.

Start-ups: A start-up is a new company created to address a market need, typically built on a novel idea or technology and supported by a business plan and growth strategy.

For the purpose of this survey, start-up refers to a business that may receive support from this institution, but where there is no formal or verifiable relationship to IP developed at this institution.

Start-ups may include student-led ventures, incubator or accelerator-supported companies or external clients.

Sponsored or contract research agreement: A project-specific research agreement under which an external organization funds research activities in exchange for defined deliverables, timelines or reporting requirements.

Technology access centre (TAC): A specialized applied research and innovation centre affiliated with a Canadian college or CEGEP that provides applied research, testing, technical services and innovation support to external organizations, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to support technology development, adoption, commercialization and the resolution of business or technical challenges.

Technology readiness levels (TRLs): A scale used to assess the maturity of a technology, product, process or prototype as it progresses from research and development to deployment and operational use.

- **TRL 1–3:** Research, concept development and proof of concept.
- **TRL 4–6:** Validation, refinement and testing in laboratory, simulated or relevant operational environments.
- **TRL 7–9:** Demonstration, qualification, deployment and operational use.

Technology transfer office (TTO): An office that supports the identification, protection, management and transfer of intellectual property and research outputs arising from research and innovation activities. TTOs may provide services such as invention disclosure management, intellectual property assessment, patenting, licensing, partnership development and support for intellectual property commercialization.

Trade secret: Confidential business or technical information that derives value from not being generally known and is protected through measures to maintain its secrecy.

Trademarks, branding or marketing outputs: Forms of intellectual property that protects distinctive names, logos, symbols, slogans or other identifiers used to distinguish goods or services from those of others.