Thinking of forming or joining a start-up company?

Tip sheet for U-M Employees

**1. Name your company**

Select a company name that is different from your:

- U-M lab/group name
- Intellectual Property (IP)

**2. Get U-M approvals!**

Obtain the appropriate agreements and approvals BEFORE your start-up company:

- Uses U-M IP or designated U-M space in the Startup Incubator
- Uses U-M facilities, equipment, hardware, or software
- Invites U-M students or trainees to join the company
- Does financial business with U-M through sponsored research grants, contracts, or subcontracts

**3. Disclose in M-Inform!**

Involvement with a start-up company is an outside activity. Disclose:

- Your ownership of (equity or financial stake in) the company
- Your leadership role with the company (e.g., President, Board of Directors member, CEO, CTO, CSO)
- Any U-M intellectual property (IP) you’ve invented that is licensed, optioned, or open-sourced to the company
- Any consulting or advisory services you provide to the company

For approvals work with:

- Innovation Partnerships (for IP);
- Your unit & the Real estate Office (for facility use); and your COI Office (for management of agreements and student/trainees)

Once you’ve formed / joined the Start-up Company...

**Will the company be involved in your U-M research?**

You must answer “Yes” to the COI questions on Proposal Approval Forms (PAFs), Awards, IRB applications (HUMs), and Unfunded Agreements (UFAs) when the:

- Research uses U-M IP licensed, optioned, or open-sourced to the company, or
- Company funds the research (including SBIR/STTR subcontracts to U-M), or
- Company may benefit in any way from the research.
Regulations to Remember

State of Michigan Law

- Financial contracts between the company and U-M require **Regental approval** before execution.
- You **May Not** represent the start-up company or U-M in financial contract negotiations or approvals (i.e., signing the contract).

**U-M SPG**

- You may not use your U-M position for the benefit of yourself, family members, or business associates to the detriment of U-M or its students.
- You may not make more than incidental use of U-M resources (e.g. facilities, personnel, students, equipment, etc.) to pursue or fulfill your outside interests/obligations.
- The use of U-M marks (e.g., U-M name, logo, and block M) is generally prohibited for outside entities.

Questions? *The U-M COI Offices are here to help you!*

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Visit our webpages for details!

[**U-M Start-up Disclosure Process**](#)

[**Outside Interest Disclosure Process**](#) (general information)