***How do I make sure that my SLCE project and any deliverables are in compliance with Georgia Tech’s intellectual property protocol and guidelines?***

Within higher education, intellectual property (IP) issues typically hinge on whether the deliverable is for an external client, and whether that client has paid to work with a student group on the given product.  According to Georgia Tech’s [intellectual property guidelines](https://ip.gatech.edu/ip-resources), while the Institute owns the intellectual property for faculty research, students are the owners of intellectual property for any work they produce, except in special cases like some Capstone Design courses or classes housed within Engineering for Social Innovation, where the IP belongs to the client. Please first check directly with your department or program in order to clarify the rules and guidelines for IP for student work.

There are some situations in which students need to work out the IP arrangement directly with the client themselves, and many of these situations could be relevant for SLCE-linked projects and courses. For example, in most Mechanical Engineering capstone projects, the client must state at the outset—when submitting the project for consideration—whether they wish to be given the IP. If the client requests the IP assignment—for example, a nonprofit organization might want to own the design of a prototype—then that client is responsible for creating their own IP agreement and working with the student team to complete and sign off on it. Or, perhaps a grassroots organization’s precondition for working with students from the Sustainable Cities minor is that the organization must own the IP for any infrastructural ideas or plans that are produced via the partnership. In this case, too, clients must craft their own IP agreements and negotiate with students for final sign-off and approval.

While SLCE does not have a formal template for an IP agreement, we strongly encourage all parties for whom IP may be a concern to use the [Collaborator Agreement template](http://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/images/Toolkit/collaborator_agreement_final.pdf) to establish a mutual understanding around the project as a whole, including IP ownership. SLS staff are happy to provide additional guidance in drafting this agreement if needed. Please contact Ruthie Yow ([ruth.yow@gatech.edu](mailto:ruth.yow@gatech.edu)), the Service Learning and Partnerships Specialist, for more information or guidance.  And although we cannot provide any legal advice, in the rare cases in which teams need professional legal support and guidance, we can facilitate a conversation with GT Legal Affairs.

***Note****:* The Georgia Tech library has a useful collection of materials pertaining to [patents and trademarks](http://libguides.gatech.edu/patent_guide/inventors), as well as occasional workshops dedicated to learning more about intellectual property rights.

***What are some Georgia Tech-specific examples?***

In the Computer Science Junior Design program, IP expectations are articulated in the project proposal document. The intellectual property rights to the software itself rests with the students under Institute policy. The students will normally release the software to the customer under an open-source license of the student’s choosing. Other options are allowed; however, clients should work such arrangements out directly with the team early on in the project. Complete details are in the [faculty handbook](http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/faculty-handbook/5.4-intellectual-property-policy).