

IPAN PRESS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) – NEW RESEARCH SURVEY PUBLISHED BY THE IP AWARENESS NETWORK (IPAN) – LONDON, 27TH JULY 16

Students want better understanding about intellectual property (IP) and how it impacts them and three quarters of UK Higher Education staff want IP to be taught, as evidenced in a new IPAN research report: “University IP policy – perception and practice” launched on 27th July.

The research, commissioned by IPAN and carried out by the National Union of Students Insight research group, surveyed the views about IP, its teaching and policy impact, of 2800 students and 250 teaching staff across 150 UK Universities and Higher Education Institutions.

“It was only while completing this questionnaire that I realised how important intellectual property is and will be to my future career”

- a typical student response to the online questionnaire about perceptions and practice of IP policy on campus.

The research report (available at www.ipaware.net) was launched at a meeting at the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys in London on 27th July, attended by an audience including invited guests from the world of IP higher education as well as IPAN members.

Introducing the launch, Sir Rod Aldridge of the Aldridge Foundation shared his enthusiasm for ensuring future entrepreneurs learn about IP. Having had his eyes opened to the commercial risks and benefits IP presents in a business context, he now has plans to run IP audits at all of the Foundations entrepreneurial academies.

The report, prepared by Prof. Ruth Soetendorp, Mandy Haberman and Steve Smith of the IPAN Education Group, was based on the analysis and other research findings generated by the independent NUS Insight group. The research confirms anecdotal opinions that knowledge about IP continues to be poor across the HEI sector. Understanding and operation of IP policy is inconsistent across institutions. Staff assume they understand what IP is, and how IP policies operated for their students. But the extent of understanding is questionable.

The research shows students have a strong desire to understand more about IP and its implications for them and their future careers. They expect university teaching staff to be able to advise them about IP but staff are reluctant and feel ill-prepared to do so. Students expect more to be done by their university to protect their interests in work that goes on public display at end of year degree shows. International students are more likely to arrive at a UK HEI having heard about IP, than are their UK educated colleagues.

Based on the research findings, the report makes the following recommendations to higher education policy makers and those concerned with the future enterprise capacity of UK plc:

- **HEI IP policies** – write them in plain English and regularly review them
- **Staff IP knowledge and confidence** – improve staff ability to advise and enable students to understand how Institution IP policy may impact them.
- **Public exhibition of student work** – develop good practice guidelines that ensure necessary confidentiality and control so that IP rights are not compromised.
- **Student work experience IP learning** – staff and students preparing for external work experience should expect to know in advance about IP.
- **Student IP Learning** – provision of opportunities for students to learn about IP should apply to all students; different subject disciplines may require more focused learning on specific IP rights.
- **IP rights in QAA Benchmarks** – Work through Quality Assurance Agency subject benchmark statements to ensure they refer to IP rights

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Information for Editors:

About IPAN – the Intellectual Property Awareness Network:

<http://ipaware.net/node/2>

The IP Awareness Network – IPAN – formed in 1993 by a cross-section of organisations concerned to improve awareness and understanding of IP, is now established as an independent charitable, “not- for- profit” company, limited by guarantee with around 40 members. IPAN does not lobby for any particular member or sector viewpoint; its main goal is to help improve education about IP, enabling the knowledge market to function. To do this, it divides its work between three interest groups: Parliamentarians, Finance & Economics and Education. The Parliamentary group organises an annual event in Parliament for World IP Day.

About the Aldridge Foundation: <http://www.aldridgefoundation.com/about-us/>

Established by Sir Rod Aldridge, the Aldridge Foundation sponsors seven entrepreneurial academy schools, a Studio School and two University Technical Colleges, with another school in development