A Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) is a contract that governs the transfer of research materials between two organizations when the recipient intends to use it for his or her own research purposes. The MTA defines the rights of the provider and the recipient with respect to the materials and anything that is developed from it (i.e., the derivatives). Biological materials, such as reagents, cell lines, plasmids, plants, animals (i.e., mice), etc. are the most frequently transferred materials, but MTAs may also be used for other types of materials, such as chemical compounds and software. As an employee of the Salk you are required to utilize a MTA whenever you ship material out of the Institute. The Office of Technology Development implements and signs the Institute’s MTAs.

Four types of MTAs are most common at the Salk: transfer from the Salk to other academic or research institutions; transfer from other academic or research institutions to the Salk; transfer from Salk to industry; and transfer from industry to Salk. The form that is provided below is for the first type of transfer, from the Salk to other academic or research institutions.

*Please contact the OTD directly for transfers between the Salk and Industry.*

An MTA is important when you are supplying materials to an outside researcher because: 1) it protects the Salk and the researcher from litigation arising from the use, storage or disposal of the materials; 2) it restricts use of the materials to academic research; 3) it prevents commercial exploitation of your material; 4) it controls release of the materials to a third party; and 5) it ensures you are appropriately acknowledged in future publications.

For MTAs from the Salk to academic or research institutions we utilize a standard agreement adapted from the National Institutes of Health, as do most academic and research institutions. It is straightforward and can be executed rapidly. For MTAs from other academic and research institutions to the Salk, the “sending” organization will implement the form (and send it to our office for signature).

For questions about MTAs or assistance with these forms, please contact:

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