

The entrepreneurial environment

Kennispark Twente cooperates with the UT and its partners in creating an environment that is optimally suited to the establishment and growth of businesses. Besides the TOP positions, there are other services of benefit to you as an entrepreneur.

Some examples are:

- Free legal support for starting entrepreneurs
- Intensive training and coaching for ambitious, high-tech entrepreneurs within VentureLab Twente
- Network events and workshops for your personal development as an entrepreneur
- Flexible office space to give you room for growth
- Investment funds for high-tech businesses

See www.kennispark.nl for an overview of the facilities and support for starting entrepreneurs connected to the UT.

The entrepreneurial environment

The TOP arrangement matches the UT's ambition to bring high-level knowledge to the market, through providing help to starting entrepreneurs. The UT is an entrepreneurial university. The TOP arrangement was the first instrument the UT used to stimulate both knowledge transfer and new job creation. Innovative businesses have the greatest potential for growth and provide high-quality employment, which is vital for a region to prosper and grow.

Jann van Benthem, TOP coordinator

Jann van Benthem, TOP coordinator since 1997: "TOP has helped launch more than 400 businesses with an average of eight employees. The survival rate of TOP businesses is quite high, and around 75% are still active. Each year an average of 20 new businesses start." To date TOP is a unique arrangement in the Netherlands. "There is a lot of interest in TOP from other universities, but it is proving difficult to copy. Because it needs to be integrated in an entrepreneurial system."



Information and applications

Those interested in the TOP arrangement can contact:

Nikos

P.O. Box 217
7500 AE Enschede
The Netherlands
Phone: +31(0)53 489 5355
Fax: +31(0)53 489 2159
www.utwente.nl/top

The TOP arrangement receives support from the University of Twente, Technopartner and ABN AMRO, and is part of Kennispark Twente's support for starting entrepreneurs.

Kennispark Twente is an initiative of:

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Gemeente  Enschede

provincie  Overijssel

 regio twente
NETWERKSTAD

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Start your business the TOP way

Entrepreneurship

TWENTE
KENNISPARK

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Start your business the TOP way

For starting entrepreneurs with innovative ideas, the University of Twente (UT) provides the Temporary Entrepreneurial Positions (TOP). This arrangement helps you through the first – and often difficult – year of your business, by providing guidance, advice and contacts. The TOP arrangement enables you to concentrate on the development of your product or service alongside building up your business commercially.

The arrangement is open to graduates of university or higher vocational education degree programmes on condition that your service or product links up with one of the UT research groups. In addition, your business must be self-supporting after one year.

Who can apply?

The TOP arrangement is open to:

- UT graduates and PhD students
- Graduates from other universities and colleges
- Other entrepreneurs with a high level of knowledge

One condition for admission is that you can devote yourself completely to starting up your business in the period concerned. The TOP arrangement will provide for the costs of living in the form of a personal loan.

The idea...

Everything starts with a good idea. You see opportunities for a product or a service that is innovative and of high (technological) quality. And you see the development and marketing as a challenge to be taken personally; as your own boss and in your own way. It often involves jumping in at the deep end.

Sandra de Vos, founder of Medisse, Amersfoort

“Medisse BV develops, markets and sells flexible medical implants that are broken down in the body. The material properties make it possible to aid a healing process in the short term, such as preventing adhesion or covering burns.” Director and co-owner Sandra de Vos applied for the TOP arrangement in 2007. “Life science product and business development is a question of perseverance and big investments. After my TOP year, I managed to get an investor interested and then I knew that Medisse would get off the ground.”



TOP: the helping hand

The TOP arrangement can offer you a strong helping hand. It gives the starting entrepreneur security and many advantages, such as guidance with the start-up and practical support in technical and business areas. One feature of TOP is its link to a research group. This gives the entrepreneur the opportunity of support in the form of contacts with academic and technical staff and/or the use of equipment and space.

Concrete advantages

The concrete advantages of a TOP position include:

- Support in drawing up a business plan and in finding the right research group within the UT
- Business and practical guidance from an experienced entrepreneur and/or coach
- Technical support from academic experts
- Use of the UT relationship network and image
- Monitoring and periodic evaluation by the TOP committee
- An interest-free personal loan of € 20,000



Johannes Wolters, cofounder of SenzAir BV, Enschede

SenzAir BV develops and validates Analyzers for medical diagnosis of human breath air by means of advanced sensor technology and realizes market introductions via partnerships. CEO and cofounder Johannes Wolters applied for the TOP arrangement in 2008. “I can advise every start-up in Twente to apply for TOP. Thanks to TOP we managed to get lab space at UT-BIOS and we were able to intensify our contacts with the University researchers. Next year we will launch our first product, an (ammonia) Breath Analyzer.”

Depending on the nature of the business and the capacity of the research group, there are also opportunities for using UT facilities, such as:

- laboratories
- equipment
- accommodation
- office facilities

Any type of business

Participation in the TOP arrangement is open to any type of business. However, the idea or product must link up with the knowledge available at the UT. In recent years, successful entrepreneurs with a TOP position came from diverse sectors, including information science, psychology, superconductivity, micro and nano technology, and biomedicine.

Expertise at the university

The University of Twente has six research institutes, which specialise in various types of research and cooperate with the world's leading organisations.

MESA+	Institute for Nanotechnology
MIRA	Institute for Biomedical Technology and Technical Medicine
IBR	Institute for Behavioural Research
IGS	Institute of Governance Studies
IMPACT	Institute of Mechanics, Processes and Control-Twente
CTIT	Centre for Telematics and Information Technology

How does it work?

Those interested in a TOP position can contact Nikos, the UT knowledge centre for (knowledge-intensive) entrepreneurship and responsible for implementing the arrangement. The TOP coordinator at Nikos supervises the candidate from intake to exit, helps to draw up the business plan and makes contacts where necessary.

When the (starting) entrepreneur has written a good business plan and a suitable UT research group has agreed to a place, the application will be assessed by the TOP committee.



This comprises experienced entrepreneurs and an expert from the financial world. A decision is taken within a few weeks.

Following allocation of the TOP position, a suitable business coach is found. This coach will guide the starting entrepreneur through the business side of things, including marketing, administration and finance.

Casper Peeters, founder and director of Xsens Technologies, Enschede

“The TOP arrangement has some great advantages for a starting entrepreneur. For instance, the interest-free loan and the office space you can get. And the guidance from the business coach, who taught us about several practical matters in our first year, so that we could focus completely on the technology. Another thing that is just as important is that a TOP position gives you formal status. This explains why there are so many spin-off companies from the UT in the Deloitte Technology Fast 50.” Xsens Technologies was founded in 2000 and in 2008 was listed in the Fast 50 for the third year in a row.

