



# GUIDELINE

Founding at the BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg

The advisor for all startup-related questions.

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### Foreword

You want to start your own business, write a business plan, protect your idea or need support in building your prototype - the Guideline "Founding at the BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg" is your initial advisor. Here you will find first pointers and all the important contacts.

If you prefer personal counselling to a written guide, please contact the [BTU Startup Service](#) directly. This advises all students, graduates (up to 7 years after graduation) and academic staff at all Brandenburg universities. Other groups of people are advised externally by [Startup Lausitz](#).



## 1. EVERYTHING AT A GLANCE



### I need advice:

Trades must be registered with the trade office (Gewerbeamt) and self-employment or freelance work must be registered with the tax office (Finanzamt). Employee or student status may change depending on the scope of the activity. The **BTU Startup Service** and **Startup Lausitz** provide comprehensive advice on all startup topics & offer networking opportunities.

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### I need time to implement my idea:

Students clarify the possibilities of part-time study with the **BTU Startup Service** and the **Admissions & Registrar's Office**.

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### I need premises:

Offices and coworking facilities are available at **STARTBLOCK B2**, the **Innovation Centre Senftenberg** and **Dock3 Lausitz**.

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### I am looking for capital:

The **BTU Startup Service** provides detailed advice on financing and funding opportunities, in particular **EXIST funding**.

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### I am international:

People without German citizenship must first apply to the Foreigners Registration Office (Ausländerbehörde) responsible for them for startups, self-employment and residence permits.

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### I need technology or would like to build a prototype:

The **colab** and **FabLab Cottbus e.V.** have workshops equipped for prototyping, among other things.

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### I would like to protect my idea:

Employees are legally obliged to report their inventions to their employer, BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg. Invention reports must be submitted to the responsible **Patents and Licenses Department** using the **form** available on the BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg's website. Students can voluntarily contact the department to discuss utilisation options. They are regarded as independent inventors and are therefore not legally obliged to submit an invention disclosure.

## 2. LEGAL MATTERS AND ADVICE

Before you start providing your service or selling your product, it is necessary that you register your activity.



**Many consultations, services and subsidies are only possible before the official registration with the tax office or trade office. Be sure to go to the startup counselling service first and then to the office!**

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Depending on the type of activity, certain professions must be registered with either the tax office or the trade office. **Liberal professions**, such as artistic or intellectual activities, generally only need to be registered with the tax office. Self-employed persons who carry out commercial activities, on the other hand, must register with the trade office. Depending on the legal form of the company, different documents and formalities are required when registering a business. Make sure you find out about the different legal forms in detail before registering.



**Here you will find everything you need to know about legal forms.**

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Once the business has been registered, the information is automatically forwarded to the tax office. The tax office then usually contacts the trader and requests tax registration.

Depending on the type of business, automatic registration with the relevant Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) or Chamber of Crafts (HWK) usually follows the business registration. In many cases, membership of the relevant chamber is compulsory and involves certain obligations and contribution payments. The activity must also be registered with the nursing care, pension and health insurance funds. The tariffs may change.

In the case of **public sector employees (state of Brandenburg)**, the employer must be notified in writing of the commencement of part-time employment. If the secondary employment conflicts with the employment relationship or impairs its fulfilment, the employer may prohibit the secondary employment or impose conditions. As a general rule, the total time spent on secondary employment and the main job should not exceed 40 hours per week. In addition, the earnings and time required for the secondary employment must not be higher than for the main employment. The latter would make the secondary employment the main employment, which would have an impact on insurance, taxes and other contributions.

The obligations and rights of **civil servants (Beamten)** are regulated separately and are subject to individual examination.

There are special rules and tax allowances for **students**. If you take up self-employment alongside your studies, you must inform the statutory long-term care and health insurance company.



**In order to continue to receive BAFöG, possible income and assets are limited. More information can be found [here](#).**

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As with other study-related activities, self-employment should not exceed 20 hours per week in order to maintain student status and continue to be covered by family insurance. This rule does not apply to part-time students.

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**More information on tax registration & allowances for students can be found [here](#).**

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### 3. INVENTION DISCLOSURE

The **Patents and Licences Department** is the point of contact for questions relating to intellectual property (IP), industrial property rights, copyright and related rights. If people from the startup team are employed at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, they should contact the Patents and Licences Department to clarify the legal situation regarding the use of an invention for a startup. This also applies to research assistants (HiWis). According to the Employee Inventions Act and the Copyright Act in conjunction with the German Civil Code, a university is generally the owner of all teaching, research and work results generated by its employees.

If results are to be used in a spin-off company, the framework conditions must be clarified with BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg via the department. The department will check which protective measures and patent applications make sense and how rights can be granted. In general, inventions that are generated during an employment relationship at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg must be reported to the Patents and Licences Department, even if the company is not founded.



**This also applies to inventions by BTU employees together with BTU externals together. You can find more information [here](#).**

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The legally binding regulations on reporting inventions only apply to employees of BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg. Students do not have to report their inventions to the university, i.e. the Patents and Licences Department. They are regarded as so-called free inventors and can therefore manage their property rights, patents and licences themselves. However, students have the option of voluntarily transferring their inventions to BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg by contract in order to jointly commercialise them.

## 4. EXEMPTION RULES

- **Part-time study**

Due to professional obligations, including start-ups, freelance work and self-employment, it is possible to complete some degree programmes as part-time studies. The relevant study regulations apply here. Part-time study is applied for at the responsible degree programme coordinator. As the change from full-time to part-time study can lead to a change in insured status, insurance and study-related issues should also be discussed.

- **Full-time study**

If you are studying full-time, you may work a maximum of 20 hours a week part-time; there is no such limit for part-time students.



**Not every study programme can be completed part-time. Find out more from the contact person for your **study programme**.**

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## 5. PREMISES

Offices and coworking facilities are available for BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg founders in Cottbus, Senftenberg and the Schwarze Pumpe industrial park.

- **Startblock B2**

The **Startblock B2** startup centre is located directly on the central campus of BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg and is home to the BTU Startup Service, colab and Startup Lausitz. It houses a modern coworking space with numerous workstations as well as meeting and event rooms. Founders who rent space in Startblock B2 have access to regular community events and become part of the start-up centre's large partner network.

- **Innovation Centre Senftenberg**

Located on the BTU campus in Senftenberg, the **Innovation Centre Senftenberg** offers modern facilities with laboratories and office space for the development of usage models and startup ideas. The innovation centre also facilitates the transfer between industry and the scientists and graduates of BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, particularly in the fields of biotechnology and medical technology.

- **Dock3 Lausitz**

The **Dock3 Lausitz** competence centre offers fully equipped office and conference rooms, co-working spaces, workshops and social rooms. Its location in the Schwarze Pumpe industrial park gives tenants access to a broad network of companies in various technical fields.

## 6. WORKSHOPS

The colab and FabLab Cottbus e.V. have workshops with modern equipment for prototyping, among other things.

- **creative.open.lab (colab)**

As a makerspace located directly on the central campus of BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, **colab** offers founders the ideal environment to realise their ideas. Whether prototyping or the realisation of advertising materials - colab provides a wide range of technical equipment, including 3D printers, embroidery machines and 5-axis milling machines, as well as expertise at the highest level. Startups can also expand their knowledge in various seminars.

- **Fablab Cottbus e.V.**

**Fablab Cottbus e.V.** is another makerspace that offers a creative, accessible and low-threshold workshop community. Here, founders can find a variety of tools and machines for projects of all sizes. This community not only shares access to resources, but also valuable knowledge. Members of the association benefit from unrestricted access and are invited to tinker and experiment on their own.

## 7. FINANCING OPTIONS

Here we will shortly present common financing options for founders. For detailed information, please contact the relevant counselling services.

- **EXIST** is a programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) for the promotion of startups from science. The **Business Start-up Grant** and the **Transfer of Research** support highly innovative startups. **The BTU Startup Service** can help with the application process. It should be noted that acquisitions via EXIST can be used by the founding teams, but generally belong to the university and remain there. An **application for de minimis aid** can be submitted for a transfer, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The **Berlin-Brandenburg Business Plan Competition (BPW)** is sponsored by the states of Berlin and Brandenburg and the European Union. The best concept among the participating ideas is evaluated in three phases and honoured with prize money totalling more than €50,000. The BPW also offers a large network of support for startup projects..
- **Gründung innovativ 2022** is a grant funding programme of the Investitionsbank des Landes Brandenburg (ILB) with funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support innovative and socially innovative small companies in the first three years after their foundation. This grant can be between €25,000 and €150,000. .
- The **Business Angels Berlin-Brandenburg (BACB)** supports start-ups with expertise, networks and capital.

- The **Startup Financing Programme of the Sächsische Aufbaubank (SAB)** supports startups based in the Free State of Saxony with various forms of loans or grants.
- The **STAR\*PARADE (Lausitzer Existenzgründungswettbewerb LEX)** is an annual pitch event organised in collaboration with Startup Lausitz, the BTU start-up service and other regional players. Participants receive coaching and workshops and can win various prizes for their business ideas.
- Crowdfunding and crowdinvesting are based on acquiring capital on online platforms through campaigns. The **Startup Platform of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action** provides an overview.
- The **EU funding programmes** offer various types of funding and financing for startups and entrepreneurs.

## 8. RIGHT OF RESIDENCE

Persons without German citizenship who wish to set up a business or become self-employed after completing their studies must contact the Foreigners Registration Office (Ausländerbehörde) responsible for them. If the business plan is assessed favourably, it is possible to obtain a visa to set up a business or become self-employed. The **BTU Startup Service** provides advice on drawing up business plans.

## 9. INTERNATIONALISATION

We would like to sensitise you to consider whether you want to operate nationally or internationally before setting up your business. In addition to the BTU Startup Service, the German Accelerator, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), is a competent contact for questions on this topic.

## 10. REFERENCES

[Regional startup atlas](#)

[Lusatian atlas for freelancers in the music sector](#)

[Guideline to the German authorities](#)

[Make it in Germany – Federal Government portal for skilled workers from abroad](#)



## **CONTACT**

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## **IMPRINT**

Publisher: BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg  
Typesetting: Full-time Vice President for Research and Transfer  
Cover: Stefan Winkler  
Status: October 2024