



### Best Practice: Student statute for student entrepreneurs



Best practice implemented at VentureLab – Université de Liège, UHasselt and University of Tilburg

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The best practice captured in a Business Model Canvas

 <b>Best Practice: Student statute for student entrepreneurs</b>				
<p><b>Key activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screening and assessment of applicants</li> </ul> <p><b>Key resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Man hours by lecturers, student administrators and potentially entrepreneurs</li> <li>Network that can offer support to the students</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical success factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create flexibility in the study program, but not of costs of the teachers</li> <li>Expectation management between student and university</li> <li>Create synergies with existing entrepreneurial support measures</li> </ul>	<p><b>Value proposition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational flexibility</li> <li>Recognition:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future employers</li> </ul> </li> <li>Career</li> <li>Optional coaching of students (depending on university strateg)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Customer management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on website</li> <li>(sometimes) information via student counsellor</li> <li>Promotion during:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Events</li> <li>Competitions</li> <li>Courses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Target group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who already have their own company</li> <li>Students who want to further develop their idea in a startup</li> </ul>
<p><b>Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinator</li> <li>Administration</li> </ul>			<p><b>Revenues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student can do both, be an entrepreneur and complete their study</li> <li>University's reputation</li> </ul>	
				
<p>Case selected from Venturelab – Université de Liège, U Hasselt &amp; Tilburg University</p>				

## Best practice to support student entrepreneurs: special statute at the university for student entrepreneurs

Many universities seek to encourage entrepreneurship among their students. While being a student comes with a number of benefits when it comes to being an entrepreneur (e.g. lack of financial obligations, lack of family obligations), the combination of pursuing an entrepreneurial career with an educational career can be challenging. To accommodate this, many universities sought ways to provide more flexibility to student entrepreneurs when it comes to educational obligations.

### The Target Group

Different universities address different target groups with their special statute for student entrepreneurs. While some universities aim to support any entrepreneurial endeavour, others are more selective and only reward the most promising student-entrepreneurs with a special statute. For this best practice, we drew on the approach of the Université de Liège, the University of Tilburg and the University of Hasselt. The criteria that are used to assess if a student is eligible for the statute varies among these three universities. Typically the criteria become more stringent when the statute not only offers more flexibility for education (e.g. an additional exam opportunity, doing an individual assignment instead of a group assignment) but is also used as a selection procedure for granting access to other supportive measures offered to student entrepreneurs.

### The Value Proposition

The key benefit offered by this special statute is that it offers the student more flexibility to combine his/her education with their entrepreneurial activities. The flexibility may be offered in the form of additional examination dates, alternative examination formats, extended deadlines for assignments, reduced study load or the opportunity to work on an individual assignment instead of a group assignment, as well as additional guidance throughout the study.

When the statute also gives access to additional support, the key benefits are far more wide-ranging and may include the following:

- Support from an academic professor who serves as the 'academic mentor' of the student, he or she helps the student to ease every step in the study
- Support from an administrative coordinator: the coordinator functions as the contact person between the student and the university and offers the student administrative and logistics support during the year.
- Reputational benefits with potential entrepreneurial contacts and future employers
- Access to the incubator. Particularly at VentureLab (University of Liège) the special statute grants access to many benefits including:
  - A personal coach who guides the students through their entrepreneurial project.
  - Training & coaching sessions at the incubator
  - Access to the entrepreneurial ecosystem and all other support measures of the incubator (voucher systems for specific expertise that is lacking)

It depends on the strategy of the university whether the statute only leads to educational benefits or whether it also comes with other benefits.

### How to Reach the Target Group

Typically the existence of this special statute is communicated on the website of the university and the initiative should come from the student to apply. An additional source of information can be the study counsellor. Additionally, the special statute may be mentioned in entrepreneurship related courses that are likely to have more entrepreneurial students present.

These are the links of the respective universities that provided input for this best practice:

- Université de Liège:
  - [https://www.enseignement.uliege.be/cms/c\\_9101022/en/student-entrepreneurs](https://www.enseignement.uliege.be/cms/c_9101022/en/student-entrepreneurs)
- Universiteit Hasselt:
  - <https://www.uhasselt.be/Study-coaching-student-support>
- Universiteit van Tilburg:
  - <https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/students/studying/study-progress/flexible>

### Organizing for Delivery of the Value Proposition

The main activity related to this type of support is the screening of the candidates. When the granting of the special statute is linked to the other types of entrepreneurial support, each candidate is typically assessed by a committee where not only academic personnel is represented (a lecturer and a study administrator) but also entrepreneurs. To facilitate the screening process, the universities typically make use of a standardized form, which is complemented with an interview with the candidate to arrive at a reliable assessment.

### The financial Side

The main costs associated with this measure are the man hours that are necessary for screening and supporting the candidates. This can typically be arranged within the existing task descriptions of university personnel. When it comes to the time investment of entrepreneurs, it is simply a matter of finding experienced entrepreneurs who enjoy taking on a mentor role.

### More information

<https://www.uhasselt.be/Study-coaching-student-support>

[https://www.enseignement.uliege.be/cms/c\\_9101022/en/student-entrepreneurs](https://www.enseignement.uliege.be/cms/c_9101022/en/student-entrepreneurs)

<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/students/studying/study-progress/flexible>

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