

TTU Accelerator Program

Thank you for your interest in applying for the TTU Accelerator Program. This year-long program offered by the Texas Tech Innovation Hub provides support and resources to help entrepreneurs and startups advance their business ideas and prepare for market success. The program is designed to accelerate the growth of innovative ventures, particularly those that align with Texas Tech University's research, technology, and innovation focus.

Applications Requirements:

Eligible teams will be required to submit:

- ✓ Application
- ✓ Pitch presentation deck
- ✓ Resume of primary applicant
- ✓ Sample Use of Proceeds
- ✓ Timeline of MVP Development
- ✓ Demonstration of your product or service.

Submissions go through an evaluation process including an application submission, initial pitch presentation, interview, and final pitches. The details of each round are discussed later in this guide.

A public event will be held where guests are invited to watch the final presentations. Attendance at this event will include: potential investors, TTU contributors, local and state politicians, media, the Innovation Hub mentors, and TTU staff. All the selected startup teams will have ten minutes to pitch their venture.

General Requirements

Application Submission

Upload all submission requirements by the deadline ([listed on Innovation Hub website](#)). All required content outlined on the TTU Accelerator webpage **MUST** be created for a seed, startup, or early-stage venture addressing the entire business concept and go to market strategy.

Disclosure

Companies or startup teams must disclose the amount(s) and resources of secured arrangements for capital from all sources, including: loans, grants, or outside investments. Resource investments must not have exceeded \$200K prior to submission. Revenue generated by the proposed venture must not exceed \$250K prior to submission.

Mentoring Sessions

Each selected startup team is **REQUIRED** participate in Pitch Scrubs (mentoring session) prior to the final round. Pitch Scrubs is a mentoring session with the Innovation Hub mentors to preview pitch decks and provide advice for presenting. All finalists will be provided the session date and time.

Prior Submissions made to TTU Accelerator Program

Ventures and business plans that were previously submitted are eligible to compete if they were not accepted into the TTU Accelerator Program.

Types of Ventures

Ideally, the competition is for new, independent ventures in the seed-stage, startup, or early growth stages. Nonprofit organizations may also apply. Generally **EXCLUDED** are: tax shelters, real estate syndications, franchises, and spinouts from existing companies.

Venture Team Eligibility Requirements

Each participant within the startup team must meet the following requirements to compete in either competition.

- Applicants do **NOT** need to have formed an official company. If a company has already been formed, the corporate headquarters must be in the state of Texas.

Team Composition:

- Each participant of the team must be at least 18 years old.
- Each participant must provide proof of US residency or Visa. Each company may be made up of students, TTU alumni, and entrepreneurs in the West Texas community.
- Each registering team may **NOT** exceed a total of five members.
- **Faculty and TTUS Employee Participation:** Faculty members (defined as full-time or adjunct), full-time employees, and contractors of TTUS, must disclose participation to their immediate supervisor.
- **Student Participation:** All TTUS students in good academic standing are eligible to participate.
- **Community Entrepreneurs:** Entrepreneurs in the business community without affiliation with TTU are encouraged to participate as well as ventures launched by licensing university technology.

Final Decision

The Innovation Hub staff makes the final decision on which companies are invited to compete in the TTU Accelerator Competition as a finalist, we reserve the right to include or exclude any startup teams for any reason.

Starting Your Application

Step #1

An important first step is to establish one company member as a dependable “captain” to manage all communications and logistics for the company and correspondence with Hub staff.

Step #2

Create a profile on the competition platform Accelerator App. You will be asked to complete application questions and then submit all required documentation listed below.

- Application
- Pitch presentation deck
- Resume of primary applicant
- Use of Proceeds
- MVP Timeline
- Demonstration (This can be a video, wireframes, diagram, or storyboard that answers "how will the technology/product/service work?")

Examples of Demos: Devices/Product (physical prototype demonstration), Phone App (wireframe/storyboard), Process/Service (illustration/layout the process)

Step #3

Mark your calendars for the important dates listed on the TTU Accelerator Selection Process Timeline. The 2025-2026 Accelerator Cohort will be announced during an awards ceremony mentioned on the TTU Accelerator Program Timeline.

Step #4

Don't miss the submission deadline!!! Schedule time on your calendar to be mentored and prepare to be a finalist as well as all the competition activities. The entire team is **REQUIRED** to attend if you are finalist.

Submitting Your Application

Step #1: The File Name

- **All submissions must be made in PDF format.** These documents will be uploaded to the competition's platform Accelerator App.
- All entries must clearly identify team/company name, contact information, academic semester, and year of submission.
- Each company **MUST** follow the file naming method below and submit before the expiration of the deadline to be considered eligible to compete.

Example File Naming Method:

- Company Name: John Doe Services
- Event Showcase identifier: YEA, BPC, the Hub
- Semester & Year: Spring 2025
- Type of file submission MVP Timeline, Use of Proceeds, etc.
- Recommended File Name: **johndoeservices_(Competition Name)_spring2025_PV.pdf**

Step #2: Format

Submissions that do not follow the specified format guidelines listed below will **NOT** be pre-screened. If the submission deadline has passed, then the company forfeits the right to compete. If the deadline has not passed, then the company can resubmit up until the designated submission deadline.

- The submission's file name **MUST** follow the example shown in **Step #1**.
- **RUN SPELLCHECK!!!** Revise and edit your content to ensure there are no grammatical or spelling errors. There will be a **5-point deduction from each judge** for typographical errors.
- If information is missing, you will lose points.

Judging Criteria and Evaluation Process

The competition is intended to reflect and simulate the real-world process of entrepreneurs seeking funding. Judges will consider market opportunity, distinctive core competence, management capability, financial understanding, risk analysis and investment potential.

A scorecard will be used to judge all submissions. The scorecard is consistent with what most venture capital or early stage/angel investors need to understand to decide to invest on a particular venture. The scorecard tool has three functions: scoring preliminary round, a tie breaker in the final round, and used to provide feedback to the companies in the judge feedback session.

Round One: iTTU Mentors Read and Score Applications

Industry-expert mentors will read, evaluate, and discuss concerns for each application and score them according to the competition's scorecard. An example scorecard can be found below. The top finalists will be selected to move to the next round.

Round Two: Pitch Day & Interviews

The startup team will present their pitch deck to iTTU Mentors and Innovation Hub staff. The presentation will be no longer than 10-minutes for each finalist. Mentors will evaluate startup teams on their professionalism, coachability, and criteria outlined on the scorecard.

Each team will have the opportunity to demonstrate their product or service. Examples of demonstrations can be found listed on each competition webpage.

Each team will be interviewed during the pitch day to determine coachability, team dynamics, and answer:

- Do you understand your business model?
- Do you understand the expectations of the TTU Accelerator Program?
- How do you think you'd spend the \$40,000 grant funding?
- What are your plans and goals for your venture over the next 5 years?

A rubric will be provided to mentors and staff conducting the interviews to determine the final interview score. The rubric will contain mandatory questions and follow-up questions to maintain a fair, equal standing between the finalists.

Round Three: Final Presentation

Each team must have a completed presentation by Tech Check Day. The presentation **MUST NOT** exceed a 10 minute presentation and a 2 minute grace period for switching presentations/teams. Teams are **REQUIRED** to follow the rules listed below.

1. Arrive 30-minutes prior to scheduled time slot on competition day.
2. All registered team members **MUST** be present at the entire event.
3. Presentation duration **SHOULD NOT** exceed 10 minutes.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Team members/presenters should arrive to the competition and present in professional business attire.

Industry leaders and experienced investors will be the final round judges. The final round judging rubric will be based on how clear and passionate the pitch is and the "willingness of the judges to invest in the venture". Judges will ask themselves, and evaluate the startup team, "Is there a commercialization potential and complete business model here?"

Scorecard & Judging Criteria

TTU Accelerator Scorecard					
	<i>Low</i>				<i>High</i>
Team	1	2	3	4	5
Market Opportunity	1	2	3	4	5
Product/Service	1	2	3	4	5
Technology	1	2	3	4	5
Strength vs. Competition	1	2	3	4	5
Revenue Strategy	1	2	3	4	5
Sales Strategy	1	2	3	4	5
IP Potential	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstration of Prototype, Proof of Concept, or MVP	1	2	3	4	5
MVP timeline	1	2	3	4	5

TTU Accelerator Event (Spring)

The final competition will take place in the spring annually and may be combined with other activities related to TTU innovation and entrepreneurship. The specific event date, time, and location is posted on the website.

Finalists are required to attend all activities to be eligible for the award. The TTU Accelerator Event has the following components:

- Welcoming Remarks to Sponsors, Competitors, & Guests
- TTU Accelerator Competition Presentations
- Social Innovation Challenge Presentations
- Closing Remarks
- Awards Announcement & Social

Guests are welcome to attend the competition and awards social. For more information, contact the Hub staff team at researchpark@ttu.edu.

