Press Information Campus Founders

Campus Founders is the platform for startups and co-innovation in Heilbronn. Its primary focus is fostering entrepreneurial thinking and action among founders, students, academia and research, as well as established companies. Support ranges from networking and continuing education formats to individual coaching, incubator and accelerator programs, and co-working infrastructure. Eight distinct programs guide founders along their entire entrepreneurial journey - from ideation and validation to market readiness and sustainable growth - combining practical experience, modern methodologies, financial support, a strong mentor network, and international connections. As a platform, Campus Founders connects students, researchers, founders, investors, and corporations within an active community of over 1,800 members. Campus Founders also actively supports female founders through dedicated networking and mentoring formats.

Campus Founders is a founding member of "Rise Europe," which connects 20 leading startup ecosystems across 14 countries, and is part of the "NXTGN Startup Factory," which even more closely integrates the research- and startup-intensive hubs of Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Heidelberg, Ulm, Freiburg, Tübingen, and Heilbronn. NXTGN was ranked 13th overall out of 180 European startup hubs in the prestigious Financial Times ranking "Europe's Leading Start-up Hubs 2026."

Founded in 2018, Campus Founders is funded by the Dieter Schwarz Foundation. The foundation comprehensively supports the startup culture in Heilbronn and invests in the ongoing development of the local innovation ecosystem.

Quick Facts:

- 8 different programs supporting approx. 200 startup projects per year
- Ranked 13th out of 180 in the Financial Times "Europe's Leading Start-up Hubs 2026" ranking as part of the NXTGN Startup Factory alliance
- 1,800+ community members
- 60+ active mentors
- 50+ events per year
- 200+ workspaces in the GRAVITY coworking and event space on the Bildungscampus
- 60+ employees

Oliver Hanisch, CEO of Campus Founders gGmbH

Oliver Hanisch is an experienced entrepreneur, business angel, and CEO of Campus Founders. Recognized as an expert on startups and startup ecosystems, he is a sought-after advisor, mentor, and investor. Oliver Hanisch has founded and sold numerous startups and companies. During his 14 years in Silicon Valley, he co-founded the German Accelerator, among other ventures. Since 2019, he has led Campus Founders with the vision of creating a center of gravity for entrepreneurship and co-innovation with international appeal in Heilbronn.

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