

Rules governing the official traineeships scheme of the European Commission

(Commission Decision of 2.03.2005 - C(2005)458)

1. RATIONAL OF THE PROGRAM

1.1. General

These rules govern the official traineeships scheme of the Commission of the European Union. This scheme is addressed mainly to young university graduates, without excluding those who – in the framework of lifelong learning – have recently obtained a university diploma and are at the beginning of a new professional career.

1.1.1. Aims

The aims of the official in-service training with the Commission of the European Union are:

- To provide young university graduates with a unique and first hand experience of the workings of the European Commission, in particular, and of the EU institutions in general. In addition, it aims to provide an understanding of the objectives and goals of the EU integration processes and policies.
- To enable such trainees to acquire practical experience and knowledge of the day-to-day work of the Commission departments and services. To provide the opportunity to work in a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic environment, contributing to the development of mutual understanding, trust and tolerance. To promote European integration within the spirit of new governance and through active participation to create awareness of true European citizenship.
- To provide the opportunity to young university graduates to put into practice knowledge acquired during their studies, and in particular in their specific areas of competence. To introduce these graduates to the professional world and the constraints, duties and opportunities therein.

The European Commission, through its official traineeships scheme:

- Benefits from the input of young enthusiastic graduates, who can give a fresh point of view and up-to-date academic knowledge, which will enhance the everyday work of the European Commission;
- Creates a pool of young people with first-hand experience of and trained in European Commission procedures, who will be better prepared to collaborate and co-operate with the European Commission in the future;
- Creates long-term “goodwill ambassadors” for European ideas and values both within the European Union and outside.

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1. Nationality

Trainees are selected from nationals of the Member States of the European Union and of candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy. However, a limited number of nationals of non-Member States are also accepted according to available resources.

2.2. Qualifications

2.2.1. University Diploma

Candidates must have completed the first cycle of a higher education course (university education) and obtained a full degree or its equivalent by the closing date for applications. For minimum national qualifications required by the legislation in the country where the diploma was obtained, see Annex I. The Commission maintains the right to change these minimum qualifications used for the official traineeships programme in line with any possible future changes in civil servants recruitment policies. Any such changes will be published on the website of the Traineeships Office¹, hereafter called "the Website".

Candidates must provide copies of diplomas (or of relevant official certificates), of all university or post university studies declared in their on-line application. It is obligatory that these copies accompany their posted application. For declared on-going studies an official declaration from the relevant university must be provided. Applicants whose university or post-graduate diplomas are not issued in one of the official Community languages must provide a translation of these documents into one of the European Commission working languages (English, French and German). If recruited for a traineeship, certified copies of all diplomas declared and, if applicable, official *certified* translations will be required.

2.2.2. Languages

In order for the trainee to fully profit from the traineeship and to be able to follow meetings and perform adequately:

- Candidates from Member States must have very good knowledge of at least two Community languages, of which one should be one of the working languages of the European Commission (English, French or German).
- Candidates from non-Member States must have very good knowledge of at least one working language of the European Commission (English, French or German).

Knowledge of the languages declared on the application form, other than the mother tongue, should be supported by the appropriate justification (i.e. diplomas, certificates, proof of having studied in the language in question, etc.).

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/stages>

2.3. Prior employment

The European Commission wishes to offer to as many people as possible the opportunity of in-service training. Therefore applications will not be accepted from candidates who – for more than six weeks:

- have already benefited or benefit from any kind of in-service training (formal or informal, paid or unpaid) within a European institution or body², or
- who have had or have any kind of employment within a European institution or body²,

including anyone who is or has been an assistant to a Member of the European Parliament, an intra-muros consultant or researcher, a temporary staff member, a contract staff member, an auxiliary staff member or an interim staff member of any EU institution, body, delegation or representative office.

Candidates should inform the Traineeships Office of any change in their situation that might occur at any stage of the application process.

3. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1. Submission

Applications should be made in accordance with the procedures established by the Traineeships Office. All necessary instructions are published on the Website.

Applications postmarked after the closing date will be rejected automatically. Applicants must provide all the justification documents required together with their printed application. No additional documents or justifications will be accepted after reception of the application.

3.2. Eligibility check

Upon receipt by the Traineeships Office of the printed version of the applications, previously electronically submitted, their eligibility will be examined on the basis of the criteria established by the Traineeships Office, which are published on the Website.

The Traineeships Office reserves the right to amend the eligibility criteria as and when necessary. Any such changes will be published on the Website before the start of the opening of the application period.

3.3. Pre-selection procedure

3.3.1. Objective

The main objective of the pre-selection procedure is to provide all Commission services with the best possible choice of candidates with as wide a range of academic

² See list in Annex 2

disciplines as possible from which the Directorates-General and Services can make their final selection. The pre-selection procedure also aims to keep, to the best level possible, gender balance and equilibrium between candidates from the different Member States.

3.3.2. The pre-selection Committee

Pre-selection is carried out by Committees made up of Commission officials according to guidelines and criteria established by the Traineeships Office and published on the Website. The work of the Committee is confidential, final and binding. There is no appeal procedure.

The Traineeships Office reserves the right to amend the pre-selection criteria and procedure as and when necessary. Any such changes will be published on the Website before the start of the opening of the application period.

3.3.3. Pre-selection results

Pre-selected candidates appear in a database that is available to all Commission departments for the final selection process, hereafter called "the Database". The Database contains at least three times as many applicants as there are training places available. The application numbers of the pre-selected candidates are published on the Website.

3.4. Final selection procedure

Taking into consideration the existing conditions (size, absorption capacity, results of the evaluations carried out, etc.) and the budget availability, the Traineeships Office determines the number of trainees to be attributed to each Directorate General and Service for each period.

The Commission Services, following a search in the Database according to specific criteria and an established "profile", select their trainees from the list of suitable candidates meeting these criteria. A job description for each trainee selected is prepared by the relevant Directorate-General.

3.5. Rejection of application

If an application is unsuccessful at any stage of the application process, depending on the reason for rejection, a candidate may re-apply for a subsequent training period. It is, however, necessary to submit a fresh application, together with *all* supporting documents.

3.6. Withdrawal

At any stage of the application process, applicants may withdraw their application by informing the Traineeships Office in writing. In such case, they are excluded from any further stage of the process. They may re-apply for a subsequent training period. It is, however, necessary to submit a fresh application, together with *all* supporting documents.

3.7. Keeping of Files

The keeping of files by the Traineeships Office respects Regulation (EC) n°45/2001 of 18 December 2000 regarding personal data, whether the applications gave rise to recruitment or were rejected or withdrawn.

The Traineeships Office does not keep applicants' files from one session to another.

4. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

Trainees may not be recruited to any sector where a conflict of interest might occur, irrespective of the candidate's prior professional experience or nationality. Certain Directorates General or Services may not recruit nationals from non-Member States. Relevant information, as provided by the Services, is published on the Website.

Applicants can only be offered a single contract for a given training period. Applicants who decline a contract offer will be excluded from the on-going procedure. They may re-apply for a subsequent training period by submitting a fresh application, together with *all* supporting documents.

Recruited trainees are obliged to provide any forms and certificates required by the Traineeships Office at the time of their recruitment. They are responsible for making sure that they have the correct visa, where applicable, and that they obtain all the documentation required by the authorities of the country in which they are employed.

5. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF TRAINEES

5.1. Duration of Traineeship

5.1.1. Basic Traineeship

There are two training periods per year:

- from 1 March to end July;
- from 1 October to end February of the following year.

Within these two periods, the traineeship may last a minimum of three and a maximum of five months.

Training contracts start on either the 1st March or on the 1st October. However, in exceptional and duly justified cases, after agreement with the recruiting Directorate General or Service, the date of commencement may be deferred, as long as the minimum traineeship period is respected. In any case, contracts begin on the 1st or the 16th of the month. Training periods may not be repeated or extended beyond the maximum length laid down in these rules or beyond the end of the training period.

The Traineeships Office may, if necessary, fix another date of commencement and length of the training period in the case of specific trainee groups (interpreters, etc.).

5.1.2. *The Traineeship itself*

Training periods begin with a general introductory conference on Community matters, lasting up to 2 days. Attendance at these conferences is obligatory for those trainees whose contract starts at the beginning of the session. Trainees are then attached to their Directorates General or Services.

Trainees are placed under the responsibility of an adviser. Each adviser may be responsible for only one trainee per training period. The adviser must guide and closely follow the trainee during his/her traineeship, acting as his/her mentor. The adviser must notify immediately the competent service of any significant incidents occurring during the traineeship (in particular professional incompetence, absences, sicknesses, accidents, bad behaviour, or interruption of the traineeship) which come to his/her attention or of which the trainee has informed him/her.

Trainees shall be required to comply with the instructions given by their advisers, by their superiors in the Directorate General or Service to which they are assigned and with the instructions issued by the Traineeships Office. They must also comply with the rules governing the in-service training programme and the internal rules governing the functioning of the European Commission, in particular the rules concerning security and confidentiality.

Trainees are allowed to attend meetings on subjects of interest to their work (unless these meetings are restricted or confidential), receive documentation and participate in the work of the department to which they are attached at a level corresponding to their educational and working background. Subject to the approval of their adviser and providing it does not conflict with the accomplishment of the tasks assigned to them, they are entitled to attend meetings in a department other than the one to which they are attached or in another institution (provided they are allowed access by that institution), unless these meetings are restricted or confidential, with the aim to get an understanding of the objectives and goals of the EU policies.

In each Directorate General and Service, an official is designated to co-ordinate the management of the trainees attached to the Directorate General or Service. The co-ordinator assists the trainees administratively in the Directorate General or Service in which they are assigned. He/she acts as a contact point/interface between his/her Directorate General or Service and the Traineeships Office.

Visits and trips of relevant interest may be organised for trainees by the Traineeships Office subject to budget availability. Trainees may participate, subject to the conditions of organisation.

5.1.3. *Liaison Committee*

The Traineeships Office may allow up to six trainees to stay on at the end of the October period for one month and up to five trainees at the end of the March period for three months, in order to provide a link (Liaison Committee) with the new intake of trainees. These members are granted a new contract for the required period.

5.1.4. Interruption

Under exceptional circumstances, at the written request of the trainee stating the relevant reasons and with proper justification, the Head of the Traineeships Office may, after consultation with the supervisor and the Directorate General or Service to which the trainee is assigned, authorise an interruption of training for a given period. The grant is then suspended and the trainee is not entitled to reimbursement of any travel expenses incurred during that period.

The trainee may return to complete the unfinished part of the training, but only up to the end of the same training period. No extension is possible.

5.1.5. Early Termination of contract

If a trainee wishes to terminate his/her traineeship earlier than the date specified in the contract, a written request must be submitted by the trainee to the Traineeships Office for approval. This request, stating the relevant reasons, must be submitted at least three weeks in advance of the new termination date foreseen, via his/her adviser and the training co-ordinator. Trainees may only terminate their contract on the 1st and 16th of the month. Where appropriate, the equivalent part of the grant must be reimbursed to the Commission.

5.1.6. Future Employment

Admission to a traineeship does not confer on trainees the status of officials or that of other servants of the European Commission, nor does it entail any right or priority with regard to an appointment in the services of the European Commission.

Trainees can be recruited after completing their in-service training, as long as the conditions and rules established for employment in the category of staff in which he/she will be recruited have been fully respected and applied. The same applies for ex-trainees who are selected through a call for tender procedure or through a call for expression of interest organised by the Commission or one of its services, whether as an individual or as an employee of a selected company.

A person can only benefit from one stage experience in the European Commission with the exception of the case mentioned in point 2.3 above (i.e. one training period of six weeks maximum).

5.2. Absences

5.2.1. Holidays

Trainees should keep the same hours of work and have the same official public holidays, if they fall during their traineeship, as Commission officials.

Trainees are entitled to 2 days leave per month. This entitlement is acquired pro rata to the months worked counted from the first day of the month. Days of leave not taken are not paid in lieu. Days for trips and visits organised either by the Traineeships Office or by the Trainees Committee, days taken for participation to any competition, exam or university work, etc. are to be deducted from this entitlement.

The Human Resource Unit of the Directorates General and Services concerned, or their equivalent, oversee that the above rules are respected. Leave requests should respect the needs of the Service. They must first be approved by the adviser and then checked and approved by the person responsible for holidays within the Directorate General or Service concerned. A copy of the approved requests must be sent to the Traineeships Office.

5.2.2. Absence in case of sickness

In case of sickness, trainees must notify their advisers immediately, and if absent for longer than two days, must produce a medical certificate, indicating the probable length of absence, which must be forwarded to Traineeships Office. A trainee who is absent because of illness may be subject to medical checks in the interest of the service.

5.2.3. Absence without Leave

When trainees are absent without justification or without notifying their adviser and Directorate General/Service, the Traineeships Office shall instruct the trainee in writing to report to the service in which the traineeship is taking place within a week of the reception of the written notification. The trainee should also provide proper justification for his/her unauthorised absence. These days of absence are automatically deducted from the trainee's leave entitlement. The Traineeships Office may decide, following examination of the justification given, or if no justification is received after this deadline, to immediately terminate the traineeship without further notice. Any overpayment of the grant is to be reimbursed to the European Commission. The trainee will also not be entitled to receive the travel allowance.

5.3. Confidentiality

5.3.1. General

Trainees must exercise the greatest discretion regarding facts and information that come to their knowledge during the course of their training. They must not, in any manner whatsoever, disclose to any unauthorised person any document or information not already made public. They will continue to be bound by this obligation after the end of their training. The Commission reserves its legal right to terminate the traineeship and to pursue any person who does not respect this obligation.

Trainees must not have any professional connections with third parties which might be incompatible with their traineeship (i.e. must not work for lobbyists, legal attachés, etc.), and they are not permitted to exercise any other gainful employment during the period of the traineeship which may adversely affect the work assigned during the traineeship. If a conflict of interest should arise during their assignment, trainees should immediately report this to their adviser, to their stage co-ordinator and to the Traineeships Office in writing.

5.3.2. Contacts with the Press

Trainees must respect the same rules for contacts with the Press as other Commission staff and follow the instructions provided. The Commission reserves the right to

terminate the traineeship and to pursue any person who does not respect this obligation.

5.3.3. Publications

Trainees must not, either alone or with others, publish or cause to be published any matter dealing with the work of the European Commission without the written permission of the relevant services (the Traineeships Office will provide specific instructions on how to obtain such permission and should receive a copy of those permissions together with a copy of any publication or article published). Such permission is subject to the conditions in force for all Commission staff. All rights, for any articles or other work done for the Commission, are the property of the Commission.

5.4. Sanctions and disciplinary measures

5.4.1. Social behaviour and conduct

Trainees must exercise their duties and behave with integrity, courtesy and consideration. If the conduct of the trainee does not prove satisfactory, the Head of Unit responsible for the Traineeships Office, in response to a reasonable request by the adviser and approved, after hearing the trainee, by the Human Resources Unit of the Directorate General or Service concerned, may at any moment decide to terminate the traineeship.

Trainees who take part in official activities organised for them by the Traineeships Office must respect the timetables and programmes laid down. The Traineeships Office may demand the reimbursement of costs incurred for the organisation of such activities (ex. Strasbourg visits, etc.) from trainees who absent themselves without due and proper justification.

During their training, trainees must consult their advisers or, if unavailable, their co-ordinator, on any action they propose to take on their own initiative relating to the activities of the European Commission.

5.4.2. Incapacity of Performance

The Traineeships Office, following a justified request by the adviser and approved by the Human Resources Unit of the Directorate General or Service concerned, reserves the right to terminate the traineeship if the level of the trainee's professional performance or knowledge of the working language is insufficient for the proper execution of his/her duties.

5.4.3. Wrongful declaration of facts

The Traineeships Office reserves the right to terminate the traineeship if at any moment it becomes apparent that the trainee knowingly made wrongful declarations, or provided false statements or papers at the moment of application or during the traineeship period.

6. FINANCIAL MATTERS

6.1. Basic Grant

6.1.1. Basic amount

Trainees will be awarded a monthly grant. The amount of the grant is decided by the Traineeships Office on a yearly basis and is dependent on budgetary constraints. The amount of the basic grant will be published annually on the website.

6.1.2. Early Termination of Contract

If the trainee terminates his/her contract early, he/she will be required to reimburse that part of the grant, which he/she may have received, relating to the period after the termination date.

6.2. Insurance

6.2.1. Sickness Insurance

Sickness insurance is compulsory. Where the trainee is not covered by any other sickness insurance scheme, he/she will be insured against sickness under the conditions laid down in the sickness insurance policy that the Commission holds with an insurance company. In which case, the contribution of the trainees is one third of the premium, which is deducted from their grant.

Where a trainee has other sickness insurance, proof of this insurance must be presented to the Commission within one week of the start of the stage period. If this is not done within the deadline, the premium for the Commission insurance scheme will be deducted from the trainees' grant by default and the trainee will be automatically insured.

6.2.2. Accident Insurance

All trainees must be insured against the risk of accident under the conditions set out in the insurance policy taken out by the Commission. The trainees' contribution is one tenth of the premium, the remainder being borne by the Commission.

6.3. Disability Allowance

Upon presentation of the proper justification, disabled trainees may receive a supplement to their grant equal to a maximum of 50% of the amount of the grant. The Traineeships Office may consult the medical service of the Commission if necessary.

6.4. Travel Allowances

6.4.1. The Travel Allowance

Recruited trainees may receive a travel allowance, subject to budget availability. The Traineeships Office establishes the method of calculation of this travel allowance, the modalities, and the procedure to be followed. All relevant information is published on the Website. Travel allowances are paid at the end of the training

period, except for those trainees recruited to work in Delegations and Representations, where the travel allowance may be paid in the second month of the training period.

6.4.2. *Minimum qualifying period – distance*

The trainee must complete a minimum of 3 months of the training period to qualify for the travel allowance. Trainees whose place of recruitment is less than 50 km from the place of employment are not entitled to a travel allowance.

6.4.3. *Special arrangements for Trainees in Delegations and Representations or assigned to a place other than Brussels and Luxembourg*

For trainees recruited to work in a Delegation or Representation or assigned to a place other than Brussels and Luxembourg (other than their country of recruitment), the travel allowance will be calculated along the lines of Article 6.4.1., taking into consideration the trip between the country of recruitment and the place of assignment.

Trainees recruited by DG Press and assigned to Representations are entitled to receive an additional allowance, including a daily allowance, if they are officially called to come to Brussels by the Traineeships Office for specific training.

6.4.4. *Daily allowance*

Trainees who are assigned to a place other than Brussels (amongst others, Luxembourg, Delegations, Representation offices, Dublin, London) and who are not resident in Brussels will receive, in addition to their travel allowance, a daily allowance (per-diem) during the general introductory conferences at the beginning of the traineeship in Brussels. They may also receive this daily allowance if they are officially invited by the Commission in Brussels to attend a meeting directly linked to their traineeship. In such cases the prior approval and authorisation of the Traineeships Office is required.

The Traineeships Office will establish the level of the above mentioned allowances and provide further clarification on the Website.

6.4.5. *Individual missions*

In exceptional cases only, the Director General of the Directorate General or Service in which a trainee has been placed may grant authorisation for a trainee to be sent on mission, on the condition that the mission is of a technical nature and not of a representative one.

For the reimbursement of these mission expenses, the general procedure of reimbursement provided in the Staff Regulations for officials of the European Communities will apply. The expenses will be taken on by the Directorate General which requests the mission.

The Traineeships Office should always receive a copy of the signed mission order.

6.5. Fiscal Arrangements

Grants awarded to trainees are not subject to the special tax regulations applying to officials and other servants of the European Communities. Trainees are solely responsible for the payment of any taxes due on Commission grants by virtue of the laws in force in the State concerned. The Traineeships Office will provide a certificate for tax purposes at the end of the traineeship period. This certificate should state the amount of grant received and confirm that tax and social security payments have not been made.

7. REPORTS AND CERTIFICATES

7.1. Training reports

Trainees must complete the evaluation reports requested by the Traineeships Office at the beginning and end of their traineeship. In addition, at the end of the traineeship, the advisers must also complete the relevant evaluation report prepared by the Traineeships Office.

7.2. Certificates

Trainees who have completed the minimum required traineeship period will receive, after their training period, a certificate specifying the dates of their training period and the department in which they were employed.

8. FINAL PROVISIONS

The Director General of the Directorate General or Commission Service to which the Traineeships Office is allocated, is responsible for the implementation of these rules.

These rules will enter into force as specified in the Commission Decision.

Annex I

Examples of diplomas for which the level of education corresponds to that required for access to the traineeship³

Country	University level education – at least 3 years in length
Belgium FR	Actuellement : Licence ou équivalent - A l'avenir: Bachelor
Belgium NL	At present: Licentiaat, Meester, industrieel ingenieur, Gegradueerde In future: Bachelor (According to the Higher Education Act of 4 April 2003)
Ceská Republika	Diplom o ukončení Bakalářského studia
Danmark	Bachelorgrad
Deutschland	Fachhochschulabschluss (6-7 Semester)
Eesti	Bakalaureusekraad (<160 ainepunkti)
España	Diplomado/Ingeniero Técnico
France	Licence
Greece/Ελλάδα	Δίπλωμα Α.Ε.Ι. (πανεπιστημίου, πολυτεχνείου, Τ.Ε.Ι. υποχρεωτικής τετραετούς φοίτησης)
Ireland/Eire	Bachelor's degree
Italia	Laurea –L (breve)
Κύπρος/Kibris	Πανεπιστημιακό δίπλωμα
Latvija	Bakalaura diploms (<160 kredīti)
Lietuva	Bakalauras (<160 kreditas)
Luxembourg	Diplôme d'Ingénieur Technicien
Magyarország	Főiskolai Oklevél
Malta	Bachelor's degree
Nederland	Bachelor
Österreich	Fachhochschuldiplom (6-7 Semester)
Polska	Licencjat – Inżynier
Portugal	Bacharelato
Slovenija	Diploma o Pridobljeni Visoki Strokovni Izobrazbi
Slovenská Republika	Diplom o ukončení Bakalářského štúdia
Suomi/Finland	Kandidaatti / Kandidat examen Ammattikorkeakoulututkinto/Yrkeshögskoleexamen (min. 120 opintoviikkoa / studieveckor)
Sverige	Kandidatexamen (Akademisk examen omfattande minst 120 poäng, varav 60 poäng av fördjupade studier i ett ämne)
United Kingdom	Bachelor's degree / Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)

³ Situation as of 1 August 2004