



Council of the European Union

General Secretariat
Human Resources Directorate
Staffing and Mobility Unit
Traineeships Office



FAQ

TRAINEESHIPS

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

2026

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A.	General questions	6
1.	What kind of traineeships does the Council of the European Union offer?	6
2.	Are traineeships at the Council of the European Union paid?.....	6
3.	What are the contact details of the Traineeships Office?	6
4.	Where can I find the rules on the traineeships at the Council of the European Union?	6
	Decision 14/25.....	6
5.	What is expected of a trainee?	6
6.	What is the deadline for applying?	7
7.	How many traineeship places are on offer?	7
8.	How many applications does the Council receive?	7
9.	What is the duration of different traineeships?	7
10.	What are the traineeship periods?.....	7
11.	Can I do a traineeship during the summer?	7
12.	How can I get in touch with current trainees of the Council?.....	7
13.	What is the Blue Book?.....	7
14.	Can I apply for a traineeship in different EU institutions at the same time?	7
15.	Where are trainees based?.....	8
16.	What are my chances of being recruited after the traineeship?.....	8
17.	How do I apply for a traineeship reserved for students of member states' national schools of administration?	8
B.	Eligibility	8
18.	Can I apply for a traineeship at the Council of the EU if I have already completed a traineeship at another European institution?.....	8
19.	Can I apply for a traineeship if I have worked as an assistant / trainee for a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) or for a political group?.....	8
20.	Can I apply for a traineeship if I have worked as a trainee at a member state's Permanent Representation to the EU for more than 6 weeks?.....	8
21.	Can I apply for a traineeship, if I have worked as a temporary/contract agent at a European institution?.....	8
22.	Is there a maximum age limit for applicants?	9
23.	I am a non-EU citizen. Can I apply?.....	9
24.	I am a national of a country that has applied for EU membership. Can I apply for a traineeship?....	9

25.	I am a PhD student. Can I apply?	9
26.	I'm a doctoral candidate. Can I still apply?	9
27.	I have not yet received my bachelor's degree. Can I apply for a traineeship?.....	9
28.	In most countries, law is a 5-year course, and the degree acquired is a master's, so there is no bachelor's degree in law. However, I have finished all the 10 semesters and I only have my state' exams in September / October (which means I still do not have a diploma). Does this exclude me from the eligibility criteria for a paid traineeship?	9
29.	I have a non-EU diploma. Can I still apply for a paid traineeship?	9
30.	I participated in the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci or Grundtvig). Can I still apply for the traineeship?.....	10
C.	Application.....	10
31.	How do I apply for a traineeship?	10
32.	Is the application form available in all EU languages?	10
33.	Can I use my application from previous years to apply again?	10
34.	I was filling in my application for several days and the draft was not saved. Where can I find it?...	10
35.	Should I also list qualifications from primary and secondary school under "Education"?	10
36.	Can I apply for a traineeship without any working experience?	10
37.	What makes a good statement of motivation?	10
38.	After validation of my application, do I have to send any documents?	11
39.	Is there a quota for English or French-speaking successful candidates, or is every candidate equal in the "main language" matter?.....	11
40.	Can I change my validated application if I realise I have made a mistake?	11
41.	How do I know that my application was submitted successfully?.....	11
D.	Application - regular traineeship (paid)	11
42.	What are the eligibility criteria for paid traineeships?.....	11
43.	My university asked to have a traineeship / placement agreement (convention de stage) signed.	12
E.	Application - Positive action programme for trainees with a disability (paid traineeship)	12
44.	What are the eligibility criteria for the positive action programme?	12
45.	Do I need to upload any document when applying for a positive action programme?	12
46.	Does the Council offer reasonable workplace accommodation to trainees with a disability?.....	12
47.	How can I request reasonable accommodation?	13

F.	Selection procedure	13
48.	When will the selection procedure take place?	13
49.	How are trainees selected?	13
50.	I have been selected for a traineeship interview. What do I need to do?.....	14
51.	Will I receive feedback if my application is rejected?	14
52.	Will the Traineeships Office publish the results of the selection procedure?.....	14
53.	Could my application be considered for domains other than the two for which I expressed a preference?	14
54.	If I decline the traineeship offer, can I apply for the next traineeship period?	14
55.	Is a national quota applied during the selection procedure?	15
56.	My application was placed on a waiting list. What are my chances of being selected?.....	15
G.	After selection - recruitment as a trainee	15
57.	Can I delay the start date of the traineeship?	15
58.	Can I cancel my traineeship and postpone it to the next period?.....	15
59.	I would like to know more about the tasks involved in my traineeship.	15
60.	Health insurance is mandatory. Is the European health insurance card for my country enough?..	15
61.	Will I receive a traineeship agreement?.....	16
62.	Should I provide translations of supporting documents?	16
63.	Do the copies of supporting documents need to be certified as authentic copies of the originals?16	
64.	Do I have to send copies of certificates concerning my language skills?.....	16
H.	During the traineeship	16
65.	Does the Council provide training during the traineeship?.....	16
66.	Can I terminate my traineeship early?	16
67.	Can I interrupt my traineeship?	17
68.	Does the Council provide a place to stay?.....	17
69.	Who can help with administrative questions about living in Brussels?	17
70.	What are the working hours of the Council?	17
71.	Am I entitled to annual leave?	17
72.	Am I entitled to ‘special leave’?	17
73.	Is there a dress code at the Council?	17
74.	Is it possible to work part time during the traineeship?	17
75.	Who will be responsible for me during my traineeship?	18

76.	What should I do if I fall ill during my traineeship?	18
77.	Can I extend the duration of my traineeship?	18
78.	Will I have to travel on mission during my traineeship?	18
I.	Financial aspects	18
79.	How much is the grant?	18
80.	Do trainees have to declare the grant?.....	18
81.	Are trainees insured?.....	19
82.	How much does the health insurance provided by the Council cost?	19
83.	Are trainees entitled to allowances?	19
84.	How is the travel allowance calculated?	19
86.	Do I need to have a bank account in Belgium?	20
87.	I do not have a bank account. Can I give the information of a relative's bank account instead, or do I have to open a bank account in my name?	20
88.	Can traineeship be considered as employment? Will I be exempt from social security payments in my country?	20
89.	Estimated expenses before the beginning of your traineeship and during the first month of your traineeship.	20

A. General questions

1. What kind of traineeships does the Council of the European Union offer?

Paid traineeships for graduates who already hold a university degree at the closing date of online applications.

Positive action programme for students or graduates with a recognised disability (paid traineeship). Candidates must be graduates or at least third year students (or equivalent) of a higher education establishment.

Traineeships for students of member states' national schools of administration (the Council does not provide a traineeship grant).

You can apply to several programmes as long as you meet the eligibility criteria for each one.

2. Are traineeships at the Council of the European Union paid?

Our traineeships are paid, with the exception of the traineeship schemes for students of member states' national schools of administration. Paid trainees receive a traineeship grant of 1.538,16 €/month, a monthly contribution to food expenses, accident insurance coverage and a contribution towards the travel expenses from the place of recruitment to Brussels.

Upon presentation of proper justification, trainees with disabilities may receive a supplementary amount up to half of the traineeship grant.

3. What are the contact details of the Traineeships Office?

E-mail: traineeships@consilium.europa.eu

Web: [Traineeships at the General Secretariat of the Council - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/traineeships/)

4. Where can I find the rules on the traineeships at the Council of the European Union?

[Decision 14/25](#) containing the rules governing traineeships is available via the **website** of the Traineeships Office.

5. What is expected of a trainee?

As a trainee – depending on the needs of the service – your daily work will generally be equivalent to that of junior administrator officials at the beginning of their career e.g.: preparing meetings, drafting minutes, attending meetings of COREPER and Council preparatory bodies, translating documents, researching on a particular project, compiling documentation, writing reports etc.

You will be placed under the responsibility of a traineeship adviser who will guide and supervise your work. You will also be invited to take part in a training programme that

includes various conferences and visits to other EU institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

6. What is the deadline for applying?

Information regarding the application deadline can be found on our [website](#).

7. How many traineeship places are on offer?

Depending on the budget available, there are up to 60 paid traineeship places offered in each traineeship period, 3 of them being exclusively reserved for trainees with a disability.

8. How many applications does the Council receive?

This can vary, but generally, there are 6000-8000 applications per period.

9. What is the duration of different traineeships?

Paid traineeships run for 5 months. Traineeships for students of national schools of administration last for a minimum of 2 months and for a maximum of 5 months. Traineeships cannot be extended beyond 5 months.

10. What are the traineeship periods?

There are two 5 months traineeship periods every year:

- February to June (first traineeship period)
- September to January (second traineeship period)

11. Can I do a traineeship during the summer?

No. There are no traineeships during July and August.

12. How can I get in touch with current trainees of the Council?

The Traineeships Office cannot give you the contact details of trainees, but you can contact them via dedicated groups on social media. The access data will be shared with you only if you are offered a traineeship.

13. What is the Blue Book?

The Blue Book refers to the traineeship programme of the European Commission.

14. Can I apply for a traineeship in different EU institutions at the same time?

You can apply for a traineeship at different EU institutions at the same time if you fulfil the eligibility criteria.

15. Where are trainees based?

All trainees are based in Brussels.

16. What are my chances of being recruited after the traineeship?

The traineeship itself does not give you the status of an official or other employee of the European Union, nor does it give any entitlement to recruitment with the Institutions of the European Union. To be recruited as an official you have to pass a **European Personnel Selection Office** (EPSO) competition. Occasionally, there are vacancy opportunities for temporary assignments and in those cases there is a possibility of contracts as temporary or contract agents. In order to be considered for these vacancies, potential candidates should be registered in an EPSO Contract Agents Selection Tool (CAST) database or in the Commission EU CV Online database.

17. How do I apply for a traineeship reserved for students of member states' national schools of administration?

Applications must be sent to the Traineeships Office by the candidate's national administration school. Please send an [e-mail](#) in order to receive more information.

B. Eligibility

18. Can I apply for a traineeship at the Council of the EU if I have already completed a traineeship at another European institution?

If you have already done a traineeship – paid or otherwise – at any another EU institution/body/agency/office for **6 weeks or longer**, you are not eligible for a traineeship at the Council. A list of EU institutions is available on the following websites: [Institutions and bodies](#) and [Agencies and other EU bodies](#).

19. Can I apply for a traineeship if I have worked as an assistant / trainee for a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) or for a political group?

If you have worked for an MEP or a political group in the European Parliament for 6 weeks or longer, you are not eligible for a traineeship at the Council.

20. Can I apply for a traineeship if I have worked as a trainee at a member state's Permanent Representation to the EU for more than 6 weeks?

Yes. Permanent Representations are not EU institutions, so you can apply.

21. Can I apply for a traineeship, if I have worked as a temporary/contract agent at a European institution?

If you have worked in either of these roles for 6 weeks or longer, you are not eligible for a traineeship at the Council.

22. Is there a maximum age limit for applicants?

No, there is no age limit for applicants. Nonetheless, the traineeship is targeted mainly at young university graduates, without excluding those who – in the framework of lifelong learning – have recently obtained a diploma and / or are at the beginning of a new professional career.

23. I am a non-EU citizen. Can I apply?

No. Traineeships at the Council are only open to nationals of EU member states.

24. I am a national of a country that has applied for EU membership. Can I apply for a traineeship?

Nationals of candidate countries that have **concluded EU accession negotiations** can apply. (Currently none).

25. I am a PhD student. Can I apply?

Yes, you can apply for a traineeship.

26. I'm a doctoral candidate. Can I still apply?

You can apply for the paid traineeship if you fulfil all other eligibility criteria.

27. I have not yet received my bachelor's degree. Can I apply for a traineeship?

No. Applicants 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.

28. In most countries, law is a 5-year course, and the degree acquired is a master's, so there is no bachelor's degree in law. However, I have finished all the 10 semesters and I only have my state' exams in September / October (which means I still do not have a diploma). Does this exclude me from the eligibility criteria for a paid traineeship?

Yes, it excludes you. To do a paid traineeship, you must have obtained a full university degree by the closing time of the online applications.

29. I have a non-EU diploma. Can I still apply for a paid traineeship?

Yes, you can apply. Applicants whose diplomas are not issued in one of the EU official languages must provide a translation of these documents into English or French. If recruited for a traineeship, certified copies of all diplomas declared and, if applicable, official certified translations will be required. The non-EU diplomas must be equivalent to one of the diplomas referred to in the Decision 14/25.

30. I participated in the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci or Grundtvig). Can I still apply for the traineeship?

Yes, you can still apply for the traineeship, unless the programme (or traineeship) took place in one of the European institutions and lasted for more than six weeks.

C. Application

31. How do I apply for a traineeship?

You have to apply online via the link provided on the [website](#) of the Traineeships Office.

32. Is the application form available in all EU languages?

No, the application form is available only in English and French.

33. Can I use my application from previous years to apply again?

You have to apply for each traineeship period separately, but you can copy the data from a previous application when applying again.

34. I was filling in my application for several days and the draft was not saved. Where can I find it?

The issues can occur if you have worked on your application form for several days. The system might clean up your application automatically for maintenance and data protection reasons.

35. Should I also list qualifications from primary and secondary school under "Education"?

You should only list qualifications relevant to the traineeship and domains selected. Generally, primary / secondary school qualifications are not considered relevant, unless they are the only way you can prove your knowledge of certain languages.

36. Can I apply for a traineeship without any working experience?

Yes. You are not required to have professional experience in order to apply for a traineeship.

37. What makes a good statement of motivation?

Given that the selection process is very competitive and that most of the candidates have similar backgrounds and skills, your motivation plays a key role in deciding if you are selected or not.

Keep it simple and informative. Tell us why you are applying for this traineeship and explain why this position appeals to you. Give a brief summary of your main interests in the field and your achievements so far.

Do not repeat your resume. Use this space to tell us something that will make a difference and will show that you are competitive and have something valuable to contribute to the institution.

38. After validation of my application, do I have to send any documents?

No. Once the selection procedure is over, we will contact the selected candidates with an offer, and only then, we will request candidates to supply a complete file.

39. Is there a quota for English or French-speaking successful candidates, or is every candidate equal in the "main language" matter?

There is no quota regarding the main language. The main language should be interpreted as your mother tongue.

40. Can I change my validated application if I realise I have made a mistake?

In order to do that within the deadline for applications, you need to withdraw the application, request to the Traineeships Office to delete it and then you have to recreate it and submit again.

After the deadline, it is not possible to modify the validated application, but you can still withdraw it.

41. How do I know that my application was submitted successfully?

Once you have pushed the "Submit application" and "Submit" buttons you will receive an email confirming that your application was submitted successfully. You will also be given a candidate number. Your traineeship account should now show "Application successfully submitted". If you do not receive the confirmation message and the status of your application has not changed, your application has not been submitted and you should try again.

D. Application - regular traineeship (paid)

42. What are the eligibility criteria for paid traineeships?

- ✓ you must be a national of a member state of the European Union,
- ✓ you must have very good knowledge of at least two EU official languages. Given that English and French are used extensively for internal communication within the Council, a good knowledge of **English or French (C level** according to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)) is required,
- ✓ you must be a university graduate.

43. My university asked to have a traineeship / placement agreement (convention de stage) signed.

The General Secretariat of the Council does not sign any "Convention de stage" or "Placement agreements" with a third party (e.g. your university). A traineeship agreement is signed by the General Secretariat of the Council and the trainee.

E. Application - Positive action programme for trainees with a disability (paid traineeship)

44. What are the eligibility criteria for the positive action programme?

- ✓ you must be a national of a member state of the European Union,
- ✓ you must have a very good knowledge of at least two EU official languages. Given that English and French are used extensively for internal communication within the Council, a good knowledge of **English or French (C level** according to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)) is required,
- ✓ you must be a graduate or at least a third year student of a university/college, and
- ✓ you must have a disability recognised by a national authority or an accredited body or provide a recent certificate issued by a medical doctor. The certificate must be issued in a Member State of the EU and be no more than six months old. It must clearly state the condition that the medical doctor considers a disability and include confirmation from the signing medical doctor that, to the best of their knowledge, the condition in question is a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- ✓ You need to send the aforementioned documents proving your disability to PAPTD@consilium.europa.eu **before the closing of the application period.**

45. Do I need to upload any document when applying for a positive action programme?

No, you do not need to upload any documents in the application system, but you must send the official document/certificate confirming your disability to PAPTD@consilium.europa.eu **before the closing of the application period.**

46. Does the Council offer reasonable workplace accommodation to trainees with a disability?

Yes. Reasonable accommodation refers to the adjustment of the work environment and enables people with disabilities to perform a job on an equal basis with others. People with disabilities have a right to reasonable workplace accommodation, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer.

In the Council, reasonable accommodation can include provision or modification of equipment or technical devices, adjustment of policies or practices, etc. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. To provide the appropriate accommodation, a case-by-case examination is therefore needed.

However, the Council does not help with nor provide accommodation in the sense of housing / finding an apartment in Brussels or its surroundings.

47. How can I request reasonable accommodation?

In order to request reasonable accommodation in the sense of workplace adjustment, please send a message to reasonable.accommodation@consilium.europa.eu **once and only if you have been selected for a traineeship**. The request should describe the reasonable workplace accommodation arrangements that you would need during the traineeship and should be accompanied by document justification of the reasonable accommodation arrangements. Please indicate your full name and the candidate number received when submitting your application. Your request for reasonable accommodation will be handled by the Diversity and Inclusion Office and will not be visible to the Traineeships Office.

F. Selection procedure

48. When will the selection procedure take place?

Validated online applications for the first traineeship period, February to June will be examined as of October. Selected candidates will be contacted in December at the latest.

Validated online applications for the second traineeship period, September to January will be examined as of April. Selected candidates will be contacted in June at the latest.

Successful applicants will receive an offer by e-mail stating the period of their traineeship and the department to which they will be assigned. Once the offer has been accepted, the Traineeships Office will send the traineeship agreement. Please check your SPAM folder regularly to ensure that e-mails have not gone there by mistake.

49. How are trainees selected?

Trainees are selected based on merit taking into consideration the information provided in the application form. The Traineeships Office does not modify the information given in the application form, nor does it assume any knowledge or skills that are not stated. Candidates will be interviewed on the phone or via video conference; in this case candidates will be contacted beforehand to arrange a suitable time.

In case of equal merit of candidates, the Traineeships Office endeavours to secure a healthy geographic balance (i.e. as many nationalities represented as possible) and gender balance (aiming for 40% of the underrepresented gender) of selected trainees.

Applications are scrutinised and compared against the profile sought by the different departments of the General Secretariat of the Council.

50. I have been selected for a traineeship interview. What do I need to do?

If you have been selected for an interview, you will receive an invitation by email to the email address provided in your application. To proceed, confirm as soon as possible (and no later than by the given deadline) that you are still interested and available, and send a scanned copy of your ID card or passport as a proof of EU nationality.

You will receive an acknowledgment from the Traineeships Office within 5 working days. If you do not receive it, please contact us by email at traineeships@consilium.europa.eu or phone at +32 2 281 3677. After you have confirmed your interest and availability and sent the ID document, you will be contacted by the recruiting service to schedule the interview time with you.

Important: Any use of AI during the interview is strictly forbidden. Any violation will result in exclusion from the selection process.

51. Will I receive feedback if my application is rejected?

Unsuccessful candidates will be notified by e-mail. Feedback will not be provided automatically. We cannot supply this service given the large number of applications that we receive. If you have not been selected, it is most probably because we were not in need of anyone with your qualifications, or there were too many applicants with similar qualifications like yours.

52. Will the Traineeships Office publish the results of the selection procedure?

No, the results are not published. Selected candidates will receive a traineeship offer and unsuccessful candidates will also be informed by e-mail.

53. Could my application be considered for domains other than the two for which I expressed a preference?

This happens only exceptionally if your profile (educational and professional background) is considered relevant for other domains as well.

54. If I decline the traineeship offer, can I apply for the next traineeship period?

Yes, you can apply again if you continue to fulfil the eligibility criteria, but you must fill in a new application form for that application period.

55. Is a national quota applied during the selection procedure?

No. Trainees are selected based on merit. In case of equal merit the Traineeships Office endeavours to secure a healthy geographic balance (i.e. as many nationalities represented as possible) and gender balance (aiming for 40% of the underrepresented gender) of selected trainees.

56. My application was placed on a waiting list. What are my chances of being selected?

If the selected candidate accepts our offer, there is very little chance that you will be offered a traineeship. If, on the contrary, the selected candidate declines the offer, the candidates on the waiting list will be contacted, by the order of merit. This could happen anytime, even last minute, just before the beginning of the traineeship.

G. After selection - recruitment as a trainee

57. Can I delay the start date of the traineeship?

In exceptional and duly justified cases, it is possible to delay the start date of the traineeship, up to a maximum of 1 month.

58. Can I cancel my traineeship and postpone it to the next period?

No. If you cancel your traineeship you would need to apply again for the next period and there is no guarantee that you will be selected.

59. I would like to know more about the tasks involved in my traineeship.

During the selection procedure candidates will be interviewed by phone / video call. You should clarify the tasks at this stage. A brief list of tasks will also be sent as part of the traineeship offer.

If you want to learn more about the tasks involved and the domain in which you may find yourself working should you be successful please check the description of domains on our [website](#) (PDF file).

Upon arrival, traineeship advisers complete an Individual Work Programme together with the trainee. This document lists tasks and expected results.

60. Health insurance is mandatory. Is the European health insurance card for my country enough?

Yes. We accept a copy of your European health insurance card as a proof. It is your responsibility to check the coverage it offers.

61. Will I receive a traineeship agreement?

Yes. Each selected trainee signs a traineeship agreement which will be sent by e-mail. No other agreement with a third party (e.g. with your university) will be signed.

62. Should I provide translations of supporting documents?

Supporting documents are accepted in all official languages of the EU. It is also helpful to provide the English or French version of diplomas, if available.

Applicants whose diplomas are not issued in one of the EU official languages must provide a translation of these documents into English or French.

63. Do the copies of supporting documents need to be certified as authentic copies of the originals?

No. Supporting documents need to be sent by e-mail. There is no need to provide certified copies unless requested to do so.

64. Do I have to send copies of certificates concerning my language skills?

You need to prove all language skills that you mention in your application form. If you do not have a specific document (diploma from language studies, copy of evaluation reports including the language or other proof), you will need to write, date and sign a short declaration of honour explaining where you have learned the language (e.g. an online course, it is your second mother tongue, etc.), justifying the lack of supporting documents.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">H. During the traineeship</h2>
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65. Does the Council provide training during the traineeship?

Yes. Depending on the budget available, the Traineeships Office organises a series of conferences on different topics and visits to other EU institutions in Brussels. Study trips to Strasbourg (e.g. plenary session of the European Parliament, Council of Europe, Court of Human Rights) and Luxembourg (e.g. European Court of Justice, European Investment Bank, European Court of Auditors) are also planned. Trainees also organise various professional events themselves.

66. Can I terminate my traineeship early?

In exceptional cases and based on a substantiated request by the trainee, the traineeship can be terminated early.

67. Can I interrupt my traineeship?

In exceptional cases and based on a substantiated request by the trainee, the traineeship can be interrupted.

68. Does the Council provide a place to stay?

No. Trainees are responsible for finding and paying for their accommodation during the traineeship. The Traineeship Office provides a list with rooms / flats available for trainees.

69. Who can help with administrative questions about living in Brussels?

The [Expat Welcome Desk](#) of the Brussels Commissioner for Europe and International Organisations will help you, free of charge, with any practical or legal problem that may arise during your stay such as how to register with your municipality, questions about lease contracts or any other matter regarding settling down in Brussels.

Web: [Brussels Commissioner for Europe and International Organisations](#)

E-mail: info@commisioner.brussels

Phone: +32 (0) 2430 66 14

70. What are the working hours of the Council?

Normal working hours are between 8h30 and 17h30 (40-hours week) with a 1-hour lunch break. The exact working hours will be decided with your traineeship adviser, based on the needs of the service.

71. Am I entitled to annual leave?

You are entitled to 2 days leave per month worked, in addition to public holidays and days when Council offices are closed.

72. Am I entitled to 'special leave'?

When the entitlement for annual leave is exhausted special leave can be granted only for exceptional, duly substantiated reasons.

73. Is there a dress code at the Council?

No, there is no formal dress code. Trainees are requested to dress "smart casual" and more formally, if they are asked to attend a meeting. They are expected to dress appropriately to their functions and tasks (very short skirts and shorts are not considered appropriate).

74. Is it possible to work part time during the traineeship?

No. All trainees have to work full time, namely 40 hours/week.

75. Who will be responsible for me during my traineeship?

Each trainee is assigned a traineeship adviser who is responsible for providing guidance during the traineeship. Besides that, you will have a contact person in the Traineeships Office.

76. What should I do if I fall ill during my traineeship?

You should immediately inform your traineeship adviser and the Traineeships Office. As from the fourth day of absence, a medical certificate is required indicating how long you will be absent.

77. Can I extend the duration of my traineeship?

No. Traineeships run for 5 months and cannot be extended.

78. Will I have to travel on mission during my traineeship?

This is not a common practice. Occasionally some trainees may be asked to go to Luxembourg or Strasbourg with their service. The Traineeships Office also organises study trips to Strasbourg and Luxembourg.

I. Financial aspects

79. How much is the grant?

In 2026, the grant for paid trainees was 1 538.16 € net / month.

Upon presentation of proper justification, trainees with disabilities may receive a supplementary amount up to half of the traineeship grant.

80. Do trainees have to declare the grant?

The allowances paid by the EU to trainees undertaking an internship in Belgium with EU institutions constitute employer-specific expenses.

These allowances are not considered taxable income and therefore do not need to be declared or subject to personal income tax or non-resident / individual income tax, as they cover the costs incurred by the internship.

For residents of Belgium: a tax return must be filed annually. The amount of the allowances paid by the EU does not need to be declared.

For trainees who are not residents of Belgium: provided that, on the one hand, the Federal Public Service Finance has a list allowing for the identification of the trainees concerned and, secondly, that they are indeed subject to non-resident / individual income tax, an INR/p.p. tax return form will not be sent to the trainees provided that they do not receive other taxable income in Belgium.

81. Are trainees insured?

All trainees are insured, free of charge, against accidents. The Council's insurance covers all accidents, whether occurring at work or in the trainee's private life. Cover is only provided for physical injury and does not extend to material damage.

Trainees are also covered by the Council's civil liability insurance for any damage that they may cause to third parties in the course of their professional duties. The Council's civil liability insurance covers any loss or damage for which the Council may be held liable. For civil liability that may be incurred outside work, trainees are advised to take out personal liability insurance.

Health insurance is mandatory. In the absence of another coverage (e.g. European Health Insurance Card), trainees can opt for a health insurance through the Council. In this case, trainees pay circa 20 € / month, which corresponds to one third of the premium, and the Council pays the remaining two thirds.

82. How much does the health insurance provided by the Council cost?

Circa 20 €/month (one third of the monthly premium of the insurance) will be deducted from the traineeship grant of paid trainees opting for the Council's health insurance.

Health insurance is provided by Allianz Worldwide Care. Detailed information can be found on their [website](#).

83. Are trainees entitled to allowances?

Trainees are only entitled to a travel allowance, which is a contribution towards the return journey between the trainee's home address and Brussels, if their place of recruitment is further than 50 km away from Brussels. In order to be eligible, trainees need to complete at least half of their traineeship period.

84. How is the travel allowance calculated?

Trainees who are recruited from a place further than 50 km from Brussels, are entitled to a contribution towards the travel expenses incurred at the beginning and at the end of the traineeship. The allowance is calculated using a method based on the geographical distance between Brussels and the address indicated on the application form (0-500 km: 0,30€/km, 501-1500 km: 0,20€/km, over 1500 km: 0,10 €/km). This is multiplied by 2, with a ceiling of 800 €. There is no allowance for distances under 50 km of Brussels. You must complete at least half of your traineeship period in order to be eligible.

No requests for change of address will be accepted after the traineeship agreement has been signed by the Council.

The travel allowance is usually paid during April in the first traineeship period and during November in the second traineeship period.

85. In addition to the grant, are there other "perks" like the reimbursement of public transport expenses in Brussels, or lunch vouchers?

Trainees will receive a monthly contribution to food expenses (70 €/month).

Trainees have also special rates at the fitness centre situated on the Council's premises.

Trainees are not entitled to reimbursement of public transport expenses.

86. Do I need to have a bank account in Belgium?

No, you can use a bank account in another country, provided it is in your name and that it accepts transfers in euros. You will have to bear any costs that may arise from transfers.

87. I do not have a bank account. Can I give the information of a relative's bank account instead, or do I have to open a bank account in my name?

You must open a bank account in your name. The bank account does not need to be in Belgium, provided it can receive transfers in euros. You will have to bear any costs that may arise from transfers.

88. Can traineeship be considered as employment? Will I be exempt from social security payments in my country?

Traineeship is not considered as employment. As for social security payments, each country has its own laws, so you should find out how to proceed in your country. Nothing is deducted from your grant (neither social security, nor taxes). At the end of the traineeship you receive a tax certificate with the total amount received during the traineeship and it is up to you to declare it to your national authorities.

89. Estimated expenses before the beginning of your traineeship and during the first month of your traineeship.

Please take into consideration that some expenses are expected before your arrival in Brussels, such as the cost of your transport ticket, travel insurance, rent deposit (usually 2 months of rent, approx. 1200 - 1600 €) etc. You will need to cover those expenses yourself.

The traineeship grant is always paid on the last working day of the month, so please be prepared to cover the expenses incurred during the first month in Brussels. These are likely to amount approximately: 550-800€, accommodation and utilities, 200€ for food, 55€ for public transportation, 50-100€ for essentials (toiletries, cleaning products etc.), 100-150€ for other expenses (eating out, travelling etc.). These amounts are indicative. They reflect the experiences of former trainees and may change depending on the type of accommodation rented, your life style, etc.