

EDA TRAINEESHIP POLICY

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Introduction

The European Defence Agency (EDA) is an intergovernmental agency of the Council of the European Union, established in 2004 and based in Brussels, Belgium.

The aim of EDA is to support the Member States and the Council in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the European Security and Defence Policy as it stands now and develops in the future.

As a European Union institution, the Agency is committed to offering professional development opportunities to young European citizens in its domain of expertise, within existing resource constraints and where such opportunities are of mutual benefit.

Article 1 – Purpose and scope

The EDA traineeship programme is addressed to university graduates, including those who, in the framework of lifelong learning, have recently obtained a university diploma and are at the beginning of a new professional career.

EDA offers traineeship positions in the following Directorates/Units within the Agency:

- Chief Executive Policy Office (CEPO);
- Media and Communication Unit (MCU);
- Research, Technology and Innovation Unit (RTI);
- Capability, Armament and Planning Directorate (CAP);
- Industry, Synergies and Enablers Directorate (ISE);
- Corporate Services Directorate (CSD).

The aim of the traineeship at the Agency is to:

- introduce graduates to new professional world and enable them to apply knowledge acquired during their studies, particularly in their specific areas of competence;
- create a pool of young people with first-hand understanding of EDA's mission and activities;
- enrich the work of EDA with a fresh point of view and up-to-date academic knowledge;
- promote European integration and create awareness of European citizenship in a multi-cultural and multilingual environment.

The number of traineeships offered yearly will be determined on a yearly basis by the needs of the Agency and by the availability of budgetary resources.

Article 2 –Duration

Traineeships start in September and begin either on the 1st or on the 16th of the month.

Traineeship agreements are offered for a fixed period of twelve months¹ and shall not be extended after that period.

Article 3 – Eligibility

To be considered eligible, applicants must satisfy all of the following requirements by the deadline for submission of applications:

- **Nationality:** be a national of a Member States participating in the Agency;
- **Educational qualifications:** applicants must have completed at least the first (minimum three-year) cycle of a higher education course (university education) and obtained a full degree or its equivalent by the closing date for applications;
- **Languages:** applicants must have a very good knowledge of at least two participating Member States languages of which one must be English as it is EDA's main working language. The knowledge of additional participating Member States languages is an asset;
- **Background related to the EDA's operational activities:** educational background in a field relevant to the activities of the Directorate/Unit the trainee applies for and is allocated to;
- **Personnel Security Clearance Certificate (PSCC):** applicants must hold, or be in a position to obtain, a valid (national or EU PSC at SECRET UE/EU SECRET level). A PSCC is a certificate issued by a competent authority establishing that an individual is security cleared and holds a valid national or EU PSCC². Note that the necessary procedure for obtaining a PSCC can be initiated by EDA and not by traineeship applicants.

Traineeships shall be open to applicants who have not previously undertaken a paid or unpaid traineeship or any kind of employment in another European institution or body and which lasted for more than six weeks.

No age limit is imposed on the candidates for traineeships; however, traineeships are as a matter of priority offered to recent graduates.

Failure to comply with one or more of the eligibility criteria will result in disqualification of the concerned applicant.

The Agency reserves the right to amend the eligibility criteria as and when necessary. Any such changes will be published on the EDA website before the opening of the application period.

Article 4 – Selection process

Applications must be made in strict accordance with the procedures established by the Agency, based on the instructions published on the Agency's website.

The Agency defines its requirements for each call and successful candidates are selected on the basis of the educational background, qualifications, competences, and motivation.

¹ Or shorter if the traineeship starts later than 1st of September.

² A PSCC shows the level of EUCI to which that individual may be granted access (CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above), the date of validity of the relevant PSC and the date of expiry of the certificate itself

EDA's Human Resources Unit assesses compliance of applications with the eligibility criteria defined in Article 3. The respective Directorates/Units, will shortlist applications and short-listed applicants may be contacted to check their availability. Prior to the final selection, the AACC/Chief Executive shall authorise the proposed list of candidates.

Only a limited number of traineeships can be offered at each intake. If an application is unsuccessful, a candidate may re-apply for a subsequent traineeship period.

Candidates should inform the EDA of any change in their situation that might occur during the selection process. Likewise, at any stage of the application process, applicants may withdraw their application by informing the Agency's HR Unit in writing. In such case, they shall be excluded from any further stage of the process for that specific vacancy. When re-applying for a subsequent traineeship period, it is, however, necessary to submit a new application, including all supporting documents.

If at any stage in the selection procedure it is established that any of the information that the applicant has provided is incorrect, he/she will be disqualified. Selected trainees must provide any supporting documents and certificates required by the Agency's HR Unit. If a candidate is unable to provide the requested documents within the given deadline, the EDA may withdraw the offer.

Article 5 – Organisation of the traineeship

Once the trainee is allocated to a Directorate/Unit within the Agency, his/her work shall be directed by a trainee supervisor appointed by the relevant Director/Head of Unit. The trainee supervisor is responsible for instructing the trainee and advising him/her in the performance of the work allocated. The supervisor ensures that the trainee is involved in the everyday work of the Agency as far as possible.

In exceptional cases only, trainees may be sent on a mission provided that the mission is of a technical, and not of a representative, character. The authorisation shall be granted by the Director of the respective Directorate. For the reimbursement of these mission expenses, the general procedure of reimbursement provided in the EDA's Staff Regulations will apply.

Throughout the traineeship, the trainee shall act as instructed by his/her supervisor. The trainee shall consult his/her supervisor on any initiative he/she plans to take regarding the work of the Agency.

The supervisors must immediately notify the HR Unit of any significant incidents occurring during the traineeship (in particular professional incompetence, absences, sickness, accidents, misbehaviour, or interruption of the traineeship) which come to his/her attention or of which the trainee has informed him/her.

Trainees keep the same hours of work and have the same official public holidays as EDA staff. The current working time regime is 40 hours per week (Monday-Friday).

Trainees are entitled to two days' leave per month. Days of leave not taken are not to be paid instead. Leave requests must respect the needs of the Directorate/Unit to which the trainee is assigned. They must first be approved by the supervisor/Head of Unit and then checked and approved by the HR Unit.

In case of illness, trainees must notify their supervisors 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 the Agency's HR Unit.

When trainees are absent without justification or without notifying their supervisor or the HR Unit, they shall provide, within five working days, a written justification for the unauthorised absence. These days are automatically deducted from the trainee's annual leave entitlement. The AACC will decide, following the evaluation of the justification given, or if no justification is given in five working days, on an appropriate action to be taken.

If a trainee wishes to terminate the traineeship earlier than the date specified in the contract, a written request must be submitted to the HR Unit for approval. The request, stating the relevant reasons, must be submitted at least three weeks in advance of the new termination date foreseen. Where appropriate, the equivalent part of the allowance already paid must be reimbursed to the EDA,.

Article 6 - Conduct and obligations of trainees

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

During their traineeship, trainees must consult their supervisors or, if unavailable, their Head of Unit, on any action they propose to take on their own initiative relating to the activities of EDA.

Trainees must not have any professional connections with third parties which might be incompatible with their traineeship (for example, they must not work for lobbyists), 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 supervisors and the HR Unit in writing.

Trainees must respect the same rules for contacts with the Press as other EDA staff and follow the instructions provided. EDA reserves the right to terminate the traineeship should the trainee not respect this obligation.

Trainees must not, either alone or with others, publish or cause to be published (including on social media) any matter dealing with the work of a Unit/Directorate without prior written authorisation. Such authorisation is subject to the conditions in force for all EDA staff. All rights, for any articles or other work done for EDA, are the property of EDA.

In line with the EDA Guidelines on outside activities, trainees wishing to engage in outside activities or to publish a text, must always consult the HR services in advance, and their request will be assessed for authorisation on a case-by-case basis.

Trainees must exercise their duties and behave with integrity, courtesy and consideration in line with EDA's Code of Good Administrative Behaviour. If the conduct of the trainee does not prove satisfactory, the Head of HR, in response to a reasoned request by the Director to which the trainee is allocated, may, after hearing the trainee, and subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive, at any moment decide to terminate the traineeship.

The HR Unit, following a reasoned request by the Directorate to which the trainee is allocated and subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive, 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.

The HR Unit 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 documents at the moment of application or during the traineeship period.

Article 7 – Financial matters

Trainees are awarded a monthly allowance of 25% of the basic remuneration of a temporary agent at grade AD 5, step 1. The exact amount of the allowance is set on a yearly basis and is subject to annual revision of the remuneration. Trainees will also receive a fixed monthly meal allowance of 100 euros (to be reviewed annually taking into consideration budgetary availability and living cost levels).

Upon presentation of the proper justification, trainees with disabilities may receive a supplement to their allowance equal to a maximum of 50% of the amount of the traineeship allowance. The objective of this extra payment is to help disabled trainees to cover extra expenses such as transport, the cost of special accommodation etc., which might be required due to their disability.

Health and accident insurance is mandatory. Trainees shall be responsible for organising their own insurance against accident along with health cover and any insurance required for family members for the duration of the traineeship.

Trainees whose place of origin is more than 50km from the place of employment are entitled to a reimbursement of travel expenses incurred at the beginning and at the end of the traineeship. Travel allowances are paid at the end of the traineeship period, provided the trainee has completed a minimum of 6 months of their traineeship.

Trainees are solely responsible for the payment of any taxes due on the Agency's allowances by virtue of the laws in force in the State concerned. For tax purposes at the end of the traineeship, the Agency will provide a letter stating the amount of allowance given to the trainee and confirming that tax and social security payments have not been made.

Article 8 – Reports and certificates

At the end of the traineeship, trainees shall receive a certificate specifying the duration of their traineeship, the Directorate/Unit in which they were employed and the tasks performed, provided that they have completed a minimum traineeship period of 6 months.

In order to constantly improve the traineeship programme, trainees will be requested by the HR Unit to complete evaluation and feedback reports at the end of the traineeship. In addition, the traineeship supervisors will be requested to complete the relevant evaluation reports.

Article 9 – Future employment

Admission to a traineeship does not confer on trainees the status of temporary agents or other servants of the European Union, nor does it entail any right or priority with regard to future engagement in the Agency. Trainees cannot benefit from any privileges and immunities granted by the host country to temporary agents or other servants of the European Defence Agency.

A person can only benefit from one traineeship experience at the EDA. Traineeships are not renewable and may not, in principle, be extended. However, the Director may grant an extension at the end of each traineeship period, which may not exceed six months. Requests for extensions will only be accepted if the budgetary appropriations and the capacity of the Unit to accommodate trainees allow it, and if objectively justified in the interest of the service.

Regardless of the traineeship, trainees are entitled to participate as candidates in any selection procedures organised by the Agency, provided that they meet the requirements for doing so. If successful and considered to be the most suitable candidate, they may be offered a position as staff of the EDA.

Article 10 – Equal opportunities

The Agency applies an equal opportunities policy and accepts and treats applications without distinction on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Article 11 - Data protection

All applicants' and selected trainees' personal data will be processed in accordance with EU rules on the protection of personal data applicable to EU institutions, bodies and agencies, and in line with the Data Protection Statement [EDA-DPR-025 - Selection and Recruitment](#).