



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

Directorate-General Administration
Directorate Human Resources and Personnel Administration
Staffing and Mobility Unit
Traineeships Office

FAQ
TRAINEESHIPS
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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A. General questions

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

Paid traineeships for graduates who already have a university degree.

Compulsory unpaid traineeships for third, fourth and fifth year students (and for students working toward a doctorate) who are required to complete a traineeship as part of their studies.

Traineeships for students of member states' national schools of administration.

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.

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

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

Most of the traineeships offered are paid. Paid trainees receive a traineeship grant of 1229,32 €/month, a restaurant card, 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.

Compulsory trainees and students of national schools of administration do not receive a traineeship grant. Compulsory trainees receive the travel allowance, the accident insurance coverage and a restaurant card.

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

Phone: +32(0)2 281 36 77

E-mail: traineeships@consilium.europa.eu

Web: www.consilium.europa.eu/trainee

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

[Decision 40/17](#) containing the rules governing traineeships is available via the [website](#) of the Traineeships Office.

[Decision 1/20](#) establishing a positive action programme for trainees with a disability is also 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 around 50 paid traineeship places, 10-12 compulsory unpaid traineeship places and up to 3 places for the positive action programme for trainees with a disability, offered in each traineeship period.

8. How many applications does the Council receive?

This can vary, but generally, there are 4500-7400 applications per period for paid traineeships.

For compulsory unpaid traineeships, there are around 250 applications for each traineeship period.

The positive action programme for trainees with a disability was launched in 2020. We have received 79 applications for the September 2021 - January 2022 traineeship period.

9. What is the duration of the different traineeships?

Paid traineeships and positive action programme run for 5 months. Compulsory traineeships and traineeships for students of national schools of administration may be a minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 5 months. Traineeships shall not 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 their Facebook group (e.g. [2021 first period](#)).

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 **longer than 6 weeks**, 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 longer than 6 weeks, 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 longer than 6 weeks, 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.

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

Yes. You can apply for paid traineeships and for compulsory traineeships, if research is requested by the university.

26. I'm a doctoral candidate and don't fall into either of the categories, since I don't need a paid internship, but I'm not a student in need of a mandatory internship either. Can I still apply?

You can apply for the compulsory traineeship, as it is also open to candidates who are required to do research for a thesis or doctorate.

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

Applicants should have completed all academic requirements to earn a bachelor's degree at the closing date of on-line application at the latest (proof needs to be provided if selected) and should be in possession of the diploma at the latest when the traineeship agreement is signed.

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, to do a paid traineeship, you must have obtained a full university degree by the time of the traineeship agreement is signed at the latest.

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 listed in Annex I to [Decision 40/17](#).

30. Could I be offered an unpaid traineeship at the Council under the Erasmus+ placement programme?

We do not accept Erasmus+ trainees. You are most welcome to apply for an unpaid/compulsory traineeship, but we cannot sign any agreement (convention) with your university. There will, however, be a traineeship agreement binding the Council and the trainee.

31. 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

32. How do I apply for a traineeship?

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

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

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

34. 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.

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. Can I submit more than one application in order to increase my chances of being selected?

No. If we receive more than one application for a candidate for the same traineeship period, we will keep the most recent one and delete the previous ones.

38. 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 the main characteristics that set you apart from other applicants and make you a perfect candidate.

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.

39. 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.

40. 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.

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

You can recall and modify your validated application within the deadline for applications. After the deadline, it is not possible to modify the validated application, but you can still delete it.

42. 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 submitted and you should try again.

D. Application - Paid traineeship

43. 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.

E. Application – Compulsory unpaid traineeship

44. What are the eligibility criteria for compulsory unpaid 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 third, fourth or fifth year student of a university/college, and
- ✓ the traineeship must be required by the university as part of the course/studies (or for access to a profession or as research for a thesis or a doctorate).

45. What exactly is meant by "third, fourth or fifth year university students"?

For first cycle degree programmes (bachelor's degree, 3-4 years), we accept students in their 3rd and 4th year.

For second cycle degree programmes (master's degree, 1-3 years - after the bachelor's degree) and for PhD students we accept all candidates if the traineeship is compulsory/required for thesis. They are considered to be in 4th and 5th year of studies.

For single cycle degrees of 5 or more years (combined bachelor's and master's degree, e.g. law), we accept students as from their 3rd year of studies.

46. Do I need to upload any document when applying for a compulsory traineeship?

Yes, during registration you will be asked to upload an official certificate from your education establishment certifying either that you are required to complete a traineeship as part of your studies or for access to a profession, or that you are required to do research for a thesis or a doctorate. The certificate should be signed and dated, and it should mention your name and the fact that you are enrolled for studies and that the traineeship is compulsory.

47. 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.

F. Application - Positive action programme for paid trainees with a disability

48. 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 (you will need to upload an official document from a national authority or an accredited body confirming the disability as part of the application form).

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

Yes, during registration you will be asked to upload an official document from a national authority or any accredited body confirming your disability.

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

Yes. Reasonable accommodation enables people with disabilities to perform a job on an equal basis with others. People with disabilities have a right to reasonable 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.

51. How can I request reasonable accommodation?

In order to request reasonable accommodation, please send a message to reasonable.accommodation@consilium.europa.eu once you have submitted your application. The request should describe the reasonable accommodation arrangements that you would need during the traineeship and should be accompanied by documentary 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.

G. Selection procedure

52. 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.

53. How are trainees selected?

Trainees are selected based on merit taking into consideration the information provided in the application form. Candidates might be interviewed on the phone or via video conference; in this case the Traineeships Office will contact candidates 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.

54. 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 were not 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 to you.

55. 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.

56. 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.

57. 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.

58. 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.

59. 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 does not go through with the traineeship, the candidates on the waiting list will be contacted, by order of merit. This could happen anytime, even at the last minute, just before the beginning of the traineeship.

H. After selection - recruitment as a trainee

60. 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.

61. 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.

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

During the selection procedure candidates may be interviewed by phone / video call. You should clarify the tasks at this stage. A 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.

If you need more information please contact the [Traineeships Office](#).

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

63. 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 proof. It is your responsibility to check the coverage it offers.

64. 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.

65. 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.

66. 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 at this stage. Upon arrival trainees are requested to present the originals or certified copies of supporting documents.

67. 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 explaining that you know the language due to having done a course, it being your second mother tongue, or any other explanation, justifying the lack of supporting documents.

I. During the traineeship

68. Does the Council provide training during the traineeship?

Yes. Depending on the budget available, the Traineeships Office organises a series of (online) 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 (depending on how the COVID-19 situation evolves). Trainees also organise various professional events themselves.

69. Can I terminate my traineeship early?

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

70. Can I interrupt my traineeship?

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

71. 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.

72. 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@commissioner.brussels

Phone: +32 (0) 2430 66 14

73. 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.

74. 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.

75. 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.

76. 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).

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

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

78. 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.

79. 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.

80. Can I extend the duration of my traineeship?

No. Traineeships run for 5 months and may not be extended.

81. 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.

J. Financial aspects

82. How much is the grant?

In 2021, the grant for paid trainees is 1229,32 € net/month.

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

The traineeship grant is always paid on the last working day of the month.

83. Do trainees have to declare the grant?

Trainees must declare their grant in Belgium even if they have completed the traineeship from abroad in teleworking mode and they have never registered in Belgium. At the end of the traineeship, trainees will receive a tax certificate with the total amount received during the traineeship.

84. 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 health insurance through the Council. In this case, paid trainees and Positive Action Programme trainees pay circa 15 €/month, which corresponds to one third of the premium, and the Council pays the remaining two thirds. For compulsory trainees the Council bears the cost of the entire insurance premium.

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

Circa 15 €/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. For compulsory trainees the Council bears the cost of entire insurance premium.

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

86. 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. In order to be eligible, trainees need to complete at least half of their traineeship period.

87. 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 the period of your traineeship 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.

88. 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 restaurant card to be used only in the Council's restaurants and cafeterias (paid trainees and positive action programme trainees: 38 €/month, compulsory trainees: 125 €/month). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the amounts are transferred directly to the trainees' bank accounts.

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.

89. 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.

90. 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.

91. Is it possible to obtain an advance payment of the traineeship grant on arrival?

No. It is not possible to receive an advance payment.

92. In order to qualify for the grant, trainees cannot receive financial support from any other source during the period of the traineeship. I am currently working as a freelance translator: is my activity considered a "financial support"? I have self-employed status and cannot suspend my work.

Upon arrival, paid trainees are asked to sign a declaration stating that they will not receive any external remuneration during their traineeship. Either you sign this and commit to it, or you inform us of any remuneration received for translations you might do outside working hours, during the five months of your traineeship. In this case, that amount will be deducted from your grant. For trainees in the positive action programme, this does not apply to income received in relation to a disability.

93. Am I allowed to benefit from financial aid as a compulsory (unpaid) trainee?

The Council does not pay a traineeship grant or any other financial aid to compulsory trainees. They do receive the travel allowance and a restaurant card to be used in Council's restaurants and cafeterias.

Compulsory trainees can try to find a grant elsewhere to cover some or all of their costs.

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

A 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 the Belgium authorities.

95. 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. 700 - 1000 €) 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: 450-600€, 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.

96. Traineeships during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The organisation of traineeships is currently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the uncertainty as to how the situation will evolve, we are not able to guarantee that traineeships will take place as planned. The working arrangements put in place by the Council also depend on the measures taken by the Belgian federal government.

The Traineeships Office is keen to ensure that the traineeship experience is beneficial both for trainees and for the Council. As the Council is not able to guarantee in advance that travelling and working conditions will be such as to make a real traineeship experience possible, changes may be made to the selection procedure and traineeships periods. Candidates will be informed of any such changes in due time.

You can find the latest information regarding the COVID -19 in Belgium on the website [**Coronavirus COVID-19**](#) and on [**Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs**](#) (for information regarding travelling to and from Belgium).