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Traineeship -Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

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1. General questions

1.1. Where are trainees based?

All trainees are based at the European Medicines Agency's seat in Amsterdam.

1.2. What is the traineeship period?

There is one intake per year for a 10 months traineeship period. The traineeship starts on 1 October of each year and ends on the 31 July of the following year. There may be an extra intake taking place from 1 March to 1 December of the same year.

1.3. Can I do a traineeship during the summer or any other period outside of the regular traineeship duration?

No. As stated in the question 1.2, traineeships are only offered during the regular traineeship periods.

1.4. Can I extend the duration of my traineeship?

No. Traineeships run for 10 months and cannot be extended.

1.5. How many traineeship places are offered?

Depending on the Agency's needs and budget available there are around 50 traineeship places offered per year.

2. Eligibility

2.1. What educational background do I need to have to apply for a traineeship?

The requirements are stated in the advertised job profiles on the [EMA Careers portal](#). The Agency also offers traineeship placements in support functions, such as information technologies, legal affairs, communications, human resources, finance, project management or other areas as needed.

2.2. What are the minimum criteria to apply for traineeships?

You need to be an EU/EEA citizen, i.e. you must hold a passport of an EU or EEA member state. A work permit is not enough. You also need to be a recent university graduate or you should be on an Erasmus+ or similar programme or a PhD student or a Master's students (provided they have fully finalised a previous degree). You also need to have a thorough knowledge of English (at least level C1) and a good knowledge of another official EU language (at least level B2) of the [Common European Framework for Languages](#).

2.3. My degree is issued by a university from a non-EU country, is it accepted?

Yes, qualifications issued by universities located within or outside EU member states are accepted. However, for diplomas issued by universities outside the EU, the equivalency to the EU diplomas will be verified.

2.4. I am a UK national. Can I still apply?

No. Candidates must meet the eligibility requirements, including those on nationality, at the time of applying for the traineeship. Therefore, UK nationals are not eligible and cannot be selected for the traineeship programme as the UK is not an EU member state.

2.5. I have a disability. How will my disability be taken into account?

We encourage candidates with a disability to apply for a traineeship. Candidates with a disability who need any form of measures which would constitute reasonable accommodation should indicate this in their application form and submit justification. The traineeship stipend might be increased by 50%.

3. Selection process

3.1. How do I apply for a traineeship?

To apply for the Agency's traineeship program you need to create your profile on the [EMA Careers portal](#) and apply for the vacancy/vacancies you are interested in. Detailed instructions are available in the [EMA Careers user guide](#). Any other forms of application (e.g. via email, LinkedIn etc.) are not accepted.

3.2. Can I apply to more than one traineeship opportunity?

Yes, you can apply to more than one traineeship opportunity. Note that if you are in the selection process for more than one traineeship and accept an offer for one of them, your candidature will be excluded from the other selections.

3.3. Is my eligibility for the EMA traineeship program affected by my prior traineeship experience at another EU agency?

No. All candidates with prior experience at other EU agencies, such as the Bluebook traineeship, are encouraged to apply for the EMA traineeship programme.

3.4. Do I need to send supporting documents when applying for a traineeship?

No. There is no need to send any supporting documents when applying. Selected candidates will be contacted by the Traineeships Coordinator by e-mail and requested to send supporting documents by a given deadline at a later stage of the process.

3.5. How am I kept informed about the status of my application?

You will be kept informed by email through the stages of the process. Please make sure that we have your current email address so that you are contactable, and check your SPAM folder on a regular basis. You can also check the status of your application via the e-recruitment system.

3.6. Are spontaneous applications considered?

No. All applications for a traineeship position must follow the application procedure described on the [EMA Careers portal](#).

3.7. How are trainees selected?

The EMA makes its selection of trainees based on the applications received. The different divisions review the applications and in line with the requirements, shortlist applicants for further steps of selection process. Shortlisted candidates may be asked to undergo video interview (recorded or live), written test, ability or personality assessment. Based on the results of those assessments, best candidates will be offered placements.

3.8. Can I postpone my traineeship offer to the next traineeship intake?

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

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

Only in exceptional and duly justified cases it is possible to delay the start date of the traineeship.

3.10. Will I receive a traineeship agreement/contract?

Yes. Each selected trainee signs a traineeship contract which will be sent to you by e-mail.

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

Some tasks and expected learning outcomes are already communicated to you in the placement advertising. If you are shortlisted for interview, your interview is an opportunity for you to clarify tasks and responsibilities in more detail. Once selected, the mentor is responsible for setting and monitoring your tasks and expected results.

3.12. If I have a question, who do I ask?

You will be allocated to a mentor who will guide you through your traineeship programme and who is your first person of contact for any task-related questions. If you have questions on the traineeship contract, office hours, leave etc. contact the Traineeship Coordinator. For any practical/logistical/organisational questions, please contact the Traineeships Coordinator under traineeship@ema.europa.eu.

3.13. I work in a pharmaceutical company. Can I take unpaid leave from my current employment to take up a traineeship at the Agency?

Trainees that are currently in employment within the pharmaceutical industry or other commercially motivated healthcare sectors including consultancy and/or legal services are required to produce documentary evidence that they have resigned and ended all contractual associations with their employer before starting their traineeship at the Agency.

4. Practical information when you start

4.1. Does the Agency provide accommodation?

No, but we do provide accommodation advice and guidance.

4.2. An estate agent requires a letter from EMA confirming my traineeship. Do you provide this type of letter?

Yes. We could provide you with a standard certificate outlining your status and the period of your traineeship contract.

4.3. How do I register in the Netherlands?

You need to be registered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and, if you do not have it yet, you need to obtain a Burger Service Number (BSN). You can register with the MFA using the EMA office address if you are not able to find accommodation that allows registration (only for the duration of your traineeship). The Agency will help you with this registration upon the start of your traineeship and will send you the necessary details.

In addition, we recommend that you register with your [local municipality](#).

5. Financial aspects

5.1. Do I get paid?

Yes. Trainees receive a monthly maintenance stipend corresponding to 25% of AD5 step 1 (or 50 % or 80% for part-time trainees) and weighted using the correction coefficient for the Netherlands. The amount is published on the [EMA Careers portal](#). In addition, trainees also receive a contribution to their travel expenses at the beginning of the traineeship should they travel at least 50 km from the place of recruitment to the seat of the Agency.

5.2. When am I paid?

You will be paid on the 15th of each month into your bank account. If the 15th of the month falls on a weekend or public holiday you will be paid on the last preceding working day.

5.3. What does the traineeship stipend include?

The stipend covers your expenses, such as accommodation, commuting to and from the Agency, food, insurance contributions as appropriate etc. The only additional payment you might receive from the Agency is the travel contribution.

5.4. When do we receive our travel contribution?

You will receive your travel contribution after starting your traineeship the Agency. Please be aware that this is a contribution to your travel costs when joining and leaving and may not cover your actual costs. It is a flat rate depending on the kilometric distance between your place of recruitment and Amsterdam and is only paid if your place of recruitment is further than 50 km from the seat of the Agency.

5.5. Will the Agency cover the costs of my daily commuting to and from EMA?

No, the Agency will not contribute to your daily commuting separately. The cost for your daily commuting is part of the stipend.

5.6. I do not have a bank account in Euro, will the EMA help me to open one?

You can ask the Traineeship Coordinator to provide you information about opening a bank account in the Netherlands. Please note we can only pay the traineeship stipend into Euro bank accounts; it does not need to be a Dutch bank account. If you do not manage to open an account within the first few days of your traineeship you may have to wait longer to receive your first stipend.

6. Tax and insurance

6.1. Is the traineeship stipend taxable?

No, the stipend is not taxable, but if you have another income in addition to the stipend, you may have to pay tax. It is your responsibility to verify this with your [tax office](#).

6.2. Are trainees insured by the Agency?

Trainees are only insured against the risk of accidents and death under the Agency's liability insurance.

The Agency does not provide health insurance for trainees. You are responsible for taking out your own health insurance and for registering with a General Practitioner in the Netherlands. More information can be found here: [Health insurance in the Netherlands](#), [Health insurance for international students in the Netherlands](#), [General Practitioners \(GPs\) & Doctors in the Netherlands](#)

You may consider taking out a third-party liability insurance. More information can be found here: [Liability insurance](#)

7. Your first day at the Agency

7.1. My traineeship starts on the 1 October. This is a Saturday/Sunday. Do I need to report on Saturday/Sunday?

Should this day be a weekend or EMA holiday, you do not need to report to EMA for work. Please report to EMA reception by 09:00 a.m. on the first working day (i.e. Monday to Friday).

7.2. When do I come/start on my first day?

Please report to reception by 9.00 a.m. on your first day. The reception opens at 7:30 a.m. so if you arrive earlier than expected you are welcome to enter the building. You will be informed before the traineeship who your contact person will be.

7.3. What will happen on my first day?

There will be a welcome briefing where the main elements of your traineeship will be explained to you. You will have a chance to meet all the other trainees who are starting on the same day. You will meet your mentor who will introduce you to your colleagues in the division.

7.4. Is there a dress code?

There is no strict dress code at the Agency. Staff are expected to dress in a tidy manner and appropriately for their work. It is normal for staff to dress more formally for meetings where there are external participants.

8. Time in and out of the office

8.1. What are the working hours and what days I am supposed to be in the office?

Working hours of the Agency are between 9:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday (one hour lunch break to be taken after 12:00 and return from your break no later than 14:00). The normal working week is 40 hours, a full working day counts for 8 hours and a half day 4 hours.

If you are on a part-time pattern, your hours are reduced accordingly, i.e. 32 hours for part-time 80% and 20 hours for part-time 50%.

8.2. What is flexitime?

Flexitime is a system to allow staff a better work/life balance. However, the Agency does not encourage a culture of longer working hours for trainees. If you do happen to be present extra hours in one week, you are asked to try to work less hours the following week. If you happen to carry forward a surplus of hours from one month to the next you are also advised that you reduce the total number of hours in that month. Trainees are not permitted to take flexi leave.

8.3. Can I change my traineeship pattern?

In exceptional cases and on a substantiated request by the trainee, approved by the mentor and the Traineeship Coordinator, the traineeship pattern can be changed.

8.4. What is my annual leave entitlement?

Your total entitlement for days off is 2 days per month (i.e. 20 days for a full-time traineeship, 16 days for 80% and 10 days for a 50% traineeship period). In addition, you will have [EMA holidays](#). Unused annual leave days will not be paid in lieu at the end of the traineeship.

8.5. Can I swap days off for working days (weekends, official EMA holidays)?

No, trainees are not authorised to swap days off.

8.6. Am I entitled to 'special leave'?

You may be granted special leave for exams, family reasons, religious reasons, interviews and elections in your home country which require you to be present in person.

8.7. I am sick, who do I inform?

Please immediately contact your mentor and the Traineeship Coordinator on the first day of your sickness. You should state when you expect to return to work. The Agency is entitled to terminate the traineeship with immediate effect if there is a reason for doing so, for example in case of unauthorised absences. Any overpayment of the stipend is to be reimbursed to the Agency.

8.8. Can I telework?

Yes, trainees are allowed to telework from their residence in the Netherlands up to 40% of working time (applied weekly), under the condition that trainees have appropriate working environment and necessary equipment to perform their tasks, and that such remote working is compatible and aligned with the schedule and the needs of the team. Trainees are also allowed to telework from abroad up to 10 days during the 10-month period of the traineeship.

8.9. Where can I eat during lunchtime?

There is a subsidised restaurant and coffee bar at the Agency's premises which operates on a cashless payment system. The restaurant offers a varied selection of warm and cold dishes. You can also bring your own food and warm it up in the microwaves provided in the restaurant area.

9. Support during the traineeship

9.1. What is a mentor?

Your mentor is there to guide you during your entire traineeship. He/she is your first point of contact for queries. On the first day, the mentor will introduce you to your colleagues in the team. The mentor will supervise your tasks and help you to meet your learning objectives.

9.2. What training will I receive?

You will be invited to attend Introduction training on the activities of the Agency, training of Agency databases as required for your tasks and a Health and Safety briefing. The traineeship is considered as being your on-the-job training and a development programme will be created for you. All training activities have to be within the scope of your tasks and learning objectives.

10. At the end of the traineeship

10.1. What is the traineeship presentation at the end of the traineeship?

At the end of the traineeship, you must hold a presentation about your learning and activities at the Agency. You should explain your background, your learning objectives, your tasks, lessons learned and what you take away from the experience at the Agency.

10.2. Can I get a job at the Agency afterwards?

If you would like to be employed by the Agency after your traineeship, you need to be successful in an external selection procedure for Temporary Agents or Contract Agents. The Agency's vacancies are published on the [EMA Careers portal](#).

10.3. Is it possible to have a certificate at the end of the traineeship?

Yes. We will provide you with a standard certificate outlining your status and the period of your contract. Upon request, you may receive a recommendation letter from your mentor.