



Decision of the European Ombudsman concerning traineeships

Strasbourg, 30 January 2019

Article 1 - General provisions

The European Ombudsman has adopted the following internal rules on the conditions governing traineeships, after consultation of its Staff Committee.

The Ombudsman offers traineeships to university or higher education graduates with a keen interest in European Union public administration and, in particular, in how the EU administration relates to citizens.

Applicants are selected according to their merits, taking into account the needs of the Ombudsman's Office.

Without prejudice to the specific qualifications and selection criteria provided in the Traineeship Notice, candidates should, as a minimum, have a 3-year university degree or diploma or other qualification at a corresponding level.

Trainees are assigned to Strasbourg or Brussels, depending on the needs of the Office.

There are normally two training periods: one starting from 1 September and the other from 1 January each year.

Article 2 - Aim of a traineeship

A traineeship is intended to provide recent graduates with practical experience of the work of the Ombudsman and to enable them to build on the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies.

The main tasks of trainees include assisting in the investigation of complaints, assisting in the area of media and communications, work on IT projects or on research projects relevant to the work of the Ombudsman. Trainees work under the direct supervision of an official or agent of the European Ombudsman, normally a Head of Unit or equivalent.



Article 3

Duration

The maximum duration of a traineeship is a full year.

A traineeship is offered for an initial period of four months, which can be extended by eight months subject to an assessment of the trainee's performance.

Article 4

Eligibility conditions

Candidates should:

1. be nationals of a Member State of the European Union, or of an accession/candidate country;
2. have a university degree or diploma of at least three years (or an equivalent qualification) in one of the following disciplines: law; political science; European studies; European public administration; international affairs/relations; economics, audit and statistics; human resources; media and communication; computer science or web development.
3. have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the European Union and a very good knowledge of another one. The main working language of the European Ombudsman's Office is English. A very good knowledge of English is therefore required;

Candidates should not, for more than eight consecutive weeks or two full months:

4. have already benefited or benefit from any kind of paid in-service traineeship within a European institution, body, agency, office, service, delegation, representation, including the office of a Member of the European Parliament or of a European political group or
5. have had or have any kind of remunerated employment within a European institution, body, agency, office, service, delegation or representative office, whether it is as temporary, contract, auxiliary or interim agent, or seconded national expert, or assistant to a Member of the European Parliament or European political group.

Candidates should inform the traineeships officer of any change in their administrative situation that might occur at any stage of the application and selection process.

Article 5 - Selection procedure



- 1.** Annually, normally on 1 February each calendar year, the Ombudsman issues a Traineeship Notice inviting applications for both traineeship periods and specifying specific areas of work and other conditions.
- 2.** For both traineeship periods (starting on 1 September or on 1 January), applications must be registered by the date stated in the Notice.
- 3.** Unless otherwise provided, applications must be registered through the online application system on the Website of the European Ombudsman and include the following documents:
 - a completed application form;
 - the applicant's curriculum vitae drafted in English;
 - a one-page cover letter in English explaining the reasons and the motivation for applying for the traineeship;
 - a letter of reference; and
 - copies of the applicant's diplomas, degrees, or certificates (copies do not need to be certified).
- 4.** Long-listed applicants will be invited to take a written test.
- 5.** Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview, normally on the phone.
- 6.** In case an applicant with a disability is selected, s/he will be provided, if needed, with reasonable accommodation at work to enable him/her to carry out the assigned tasks [1] .
- 7.** The Ombudsman's office will inform applicants of the decision taken on their application on 30 June at the latest. Applicants who were not successful in their application may apply for another traineeship period by submitting a new application.
- 8.** The processing of personal data by the European Ombudsman is governed by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 [2] . Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (Article 5(1)(a) of Regulation 2018/1725). The provision of information requested when applying online and the supporting documents is obligatory. Incomplete applications will automatically be excluded from the registration system.

The Ombudsman's Office collects the personal data in question for the sole purpose of the selection of trainees by its services. Applicants have a right to access and to rectify any incomplete or inaccurate data concerning them without delay. They also have the right to object to the use of their data by the European Ombudsman when they dispute the accuracy of the data or when they consider that the processing is illegal. Candidates have the right to request erasure of their data if their personal data are no longer needed by the Ombudsman's Office.

The Ombudsman's Office will destroy personal data concerning unsuccessful applicants nine months after the beginning of the traineeship period for which such data were collected. Applications submitted for a given traineeship period will not be taken into consideration for



future selections of trainees or for recruitment purposes.

The Ombudsman's Office will keep applications of successful applicants for two years after the end of the traineeship, except the data relating to the reimbursement of travel costs, which are kept for seven years. Data necessary to issue a copy of the traineeship certificate (name, surname, dates of traineeship) are kept for 30 years.

Data subjects may contact the Data Protection Officer of the European Ombudsman (DPO-Euro-Ombudsman@ombudsman.europa.eu) or have recourse to the European Data Protection Supervisor (edps@edps.europa.eu) at any time.

Article 6 - Financial arrangements

A. Monthly grants

Trainees receive a monthly grant during the traineeship period. Trainees who receive a salary or other financial support of a similar nature during the period of the traineeship, should declare it. In such cases, the level of the monthly grant paid by the Ombudsman's Office will correspond to the difference, if any, between the amount of the external support and the value of a full monthly grant.

The amount of a monthly grant is equivalent to 25% of the basic salary of staff in grade AD 6 step 1 applicable at the time the offer is made, plus the household allowance, where appropriate. In this respect, provisions applicable to officials of the European Union apply by analogy. This amount may be altered by decision of the Ombudsman.

If an applicant with a disability is selected, the Ombudsman's Office will make appropriations available to cover additional costs related directly to the condition of the selected trainee and which are insufficiently covered by the monthly grant.

B. Travel expenses incurred at the beginning and end of the traineeship

Trainees who are not entitled to claim travel expenses from any other source may claim reimbursement of the cost of travel within the territory of the European Union and accession countries between their place of residence and Strasbourg/Brussels at the beginning and end of the traineeship, as follows:

- second class rail fare by the most direct route, with sleeping car, if necessary;
- economy class air fare, for the cheapest route, if that is less expensive, or if the rail journey exceeds 500 km, or if the journey involves a sea crossing. The cost of air tickets shall be reimbursed only on presentation of supporting documents;
- kilometric allowance of EUR 0.20 for travel by car, based on the shortest route as determined by commonly used route planning websites.



The booking of transportation tickets at the start and/or the end of the traineeship is made by the European Ombudsman's office. Trainees may however book transportation tickets on their own, subject to prior approval by the Ombudsman's Office.

Reimbursement of fees payable for excess luggage is possible, subject to prior approval by the Ombudsman's Office. The maximum amount of luggage for which reimbursement is possible is 50 kg.

No person other than the person benefitting from the traineeship will be reimbursed any expenses.

C. Mission expenses incurred during the traineeship

For the reimbursement of expenses incurred during duly authorised missions, the provisions applicable to officials of the European Union apply by analogy.

Article 7 - Insurance

Trainees must be insured against sickness and accident. Whenever possible, trainees should keep the primary insurance policy they had before their arrival at the Ombudsman's Office. The Ombudsman will take out a sickness insurance policy, as well as an accident insurance. The Ombudsman's Office pays the full costs for both the health insurance and the accident insurance.

At the request of the trainee, the European Ombudsman will also insure his or her spouse and children against the risk of sickness and accident. In such cases, the trainee will pay the insurance premiums in full.

Article 8 - Leave and sickness

Trainees are entitled to two working days' leave for each month of the traineeship.

In exceptional circumstances, trainees may ask the Head of the Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit for permission to be absent from work. Such requests will, in particular, be examined in the light of the special leave provisions applicable to the Ombudsman's officials. If an authorisation is granted, the procedures applicable to officials of the European Union will apply by analogy.

If absent as a result of sickness, trainees must notify the Ombudsman's Office immediately. Absences of more than three days must be justified by a medical certificate.



Article 9 - General obligations for the trainees

1. Trainees must undertake to observe the rules, procedures and practices applicable at the Ombudsman's Office, in particular:

- the instructions of their superiors and of the official or agent under whose guidance they are placed;
- the established office hours; and
- the rules and procedures relating to public access to, and confidentiality of, documents.

2. Trainees must not have any professional connections with third parties that might be incompatible with the traineeship. They are required to respect the obligations of confidentiality imposed on the Ombudsman and his or her staff by the Statute of the European Ombudsman. They must observe the utmost discretion with regard to facts and information that come to their knowledge during the traineeship. They remain bound by that obligation after the completion of their traineeship.

3. Trainees must contribute to the work of the service to which they are assigned. The European Ombudsman retains all rights to whatever work they carried out during the traineeship.

Article 10 - Supervision

In addition to the direct supervision of an official or agent of the European Ombudsman, each trainee will be assigned a mentor at the beginning of the traineeship. The role of a mentor is to supervise the daily work and facilitate the integration of the trainee in the institution.

Individual objectives will be set by the Head of Unit responsible for the trainee at the beginning of the traineeship. The objectives are explained to the trainee in an initial meeting. After two months, a progression meeting will take place with the responsible Head of Unit, with a view to checking whether an extension of the traineeship beyond the initial four months is desired by both parties and whether it can be recommended.

In case of an extension, two further meetings will take place with the responsible Head of Unit, after eight months and at the end of the traineeship.

An exit interview will be conducted at the end of the traineeship by the Head of Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit in order to collect feedback from the trainee.

Article 11 - Suspension, early termination and end of traineeship

Requests for suspension of a traineeship are granted by the Ombudsman in exceptional circumstances, taking into account the interests of the service. During a period of suspension



of a traineeship, monthly grant payments are suspended. Suspension of the traineeship does not entitle the trainee to reimbursement of travel expenses under Article 6.B. above.

The Ombudsman may terminate the traineeship at any stage. This can occur either following the trainee's request which should be addressed to the Head of the Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit, at least one month in advance, or in cases in which performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory or in which the trainee has failed to observe the terms of the traineeship. In the latter cases, the trainee will first be given the opportunity to be heard.

Article 12 - Coming into force

This Decision will enter into force on the day of its signature and will be applicable to traineeships starting as from 1 February 2019. Traineeships started before this date will remain governed by the decision of the European Ombudsman concerning traineeships adopted on 23 January 2017.

Emily O'Reilly

[1] By analogy to the reasonable accommodation defined in Article 1 d (4) of the Staff Regulations of Officials and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Community, 'appropriate measures, where needed, to enable a person with a disability to have access to, participate in, or advance in employment or to undergo training, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer'.

[2] Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/ECText with EEA relevance - OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39-98