

TRAINEESHIP – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Human Capital Services Unit



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1. General questions

1.1. How many people work at EFSA?

EFSA currently employs around 600 staff members, who work alongside over 600 external experts.

1.2. What is the working language of EFSA?

The working language in EFSA is English.

1.3. Where are trainees based?

All trainees are based in EFSA's offices in Parma.

1.4. How many traineeship places are offered?

Depending on EFSA's needs and available budget, there are around 120 traineeship places offered each year.

1.5. How long is the traineeship?

Traineeships last a minimum of five (5) months and a maximum of **twelve (12) months**.

1.6. What does the traineeship program entail?

The content of the traineeship depends on the unit/team the trainees are assigned to, according to their preference and qualifications. The work might be in the field of Plant Health, Food Ingredients, Pesticides, GMO, Communications, Human Resources, Legal Affairs, etc.

Under the supervision of a traineeship adviser within the assigned unit, a trainee will have the opportunity to:

- Get **first-hand experience** of the work of an European Union (EU) Agency, developing **new competencies and skills** in line with their personal interests and career goals;
- Contribute to the Unit agenda by supporting in drafting documents and reports, **analysing data**, handling scientific and/or administrative tasks, and ensuring prompt communication of outcomes;
- Contribute to inspiring projects and specific activities with **innovative ideas and solutions**;
- Contribute to the planning and monitoring of the Unit's activities;
- Grow through **on-the-job learning** and participate in **various development initiatives**.

2. Eligibility

2.1 What are the eligibility criteria?

1. To have already obtained a university degree of at least 3 years by the closing date of application;
2. To have a very good knowledge of English (minimum level: B2 according to CEFR);
3. To have never been an EFSA trainee or employed by EFSA in any capacity, receiving any sort of remuneration.

2.2 I am a national of a country that is not a Member State of the EU, am I eligible?



The Traineeship call is **open to both EU and non-EU candidates**. Should they be selected, non-EU candidates will have to obtain a relevant VISA prior to the start of their traineeship at EFSA.

2.3 I have already done a traineeship in another European body, can I still apply?

Yes. The candidates who have already started or completed their traineeships in another European body (i.e. [European institution, European Union \(EU\) body, EU Agency](#)) or EU delegations, or are working for Members of Parliament (MEPs) or Advocates General at the EU Court of Justice (EUCJ), **are eligible** to apply for EFSA Traineeship.

2.4 I have not yet graduated from my university (i.e. bachelor's degree), can I still apply?

No, in order to apply you must have already obtained a university degree of at least 3 years by the closing date of application.

2.5 Is there an age limit for applying?

No, age is not an eligibility criterion. Thus, all candidates who fulfil the eligibility criteria (regardless of age) are welcome to apply for the traineeship programme.

2.6 What language requirement is there for the EFSA Traineeship? Do I have to provide a certification?

Having a good knowledge of English (minimum level: B2 according to [CEFR](#)) is one of the eligibility criteria to be qualified for EFSA Traineeship. You are required to indicate your level in your application form without attaching any certificates. The language skills in English are assessed during the online interview.

2.7 Is work experience necessary? What kind of work experience may I declare in the application form?

Work experience is not considered an eligibility criterion, but it can be an asset.

You can declare all types of work experience, also holiday or student jobs, as well as activities carried out on a casual basis.

2.8 I have applied for a traineeship call but I have not been selected. Can I apply again for the next call?

Yes. It is necessary, however, to submit a new application form.

3. Application

3.1 What is the application deadline?

The deadline is available in the relevant call.

3.2 How can I apply for a traineeship at EFSA?

You can apply to our call through the online recruitment tool found on the [EFSA Careers](#) page.

3.3 Are spontaneous applications considered?



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

3.4 How do I know when a call is open for application?

From the main [EFSA Careers page](#), you will be able to access different career sections, where you can browse specific job opportunities. On this page, you will also be able to sign up for job alerts and receive email updates whenever a new professional opportunity matching your selected interests is posted.

3.5 Can I choose areas of interest for my traineeship?

Yes, you can specify – in order of preference – two areas of interest that will be the basis for your application screening. In addition, you will be able to elaborate on your choice, providing examples on relevant knowledge, experience, and qualifications. For detailed information about the main activities of our departments and units, you can consult the [EFSA Organisational Structure](#) and [EFSA at a glance](#), on EFSA's website.

3.6 Do I need to send any supporting documents when applying?

No, you should not send any supporting documents when you submit your electronic application form. Supporting documents will be requested only if you are offered a traineeship at a later stage.

3.7 Should I contact EFSA to check the status of my application?

No, there is no need to contact EFSA to check the status of your application. You will be informed if you have been selected for a traineeship at EFSA.

3.8 In case I am not selected this year, can I reapply next year? Will this have an impact on the outcome of my next application?

Yes, if you are not selected for the EFSA Traineeship program this year, you are welcome to reapply for the next call. However, it is important to note that you will need to submit a new application form for each application cycle. Reapplying in subsequent years will not have a negative impact on the success of your application. Each application is evaluated based on its own merits, and we encourage candidates to continue pursuing opportunities with EFSA.

4. Selection process

EFSA applies a policy of equal opportunities and accepts applications without bias on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, religion or belief, political or any other opinions, membership of a national minority, property, birth or sexual orientation. The selection is made based on the eligibility criteria and of the candidates' qualifications, with due regard to an appropriate balance of nationality and gender.

4.1 What are the steps of the selection procedure?

1. Candidates apply electronically via the online recruitment tool (selecting 2 areas of interest in order of their preferences). Candidates can update or withdraw their applications at any time until the closure of the call.
2. Applications are screened against the eligibility criteria defined in the Traineeship Call.



3. Eligible candidates will be screened by EFSA's units, considering the candidates' preferences indicated in the application and their competencies. EFSA may also use online tools to assess the specific skills of eligible candidates.
4. Shortlisted candidates are required to undergo a further assessment, in the form of an online interview, to evaluate their suitability for a role and discuss mutual expectations.
5. As a result of the previous assessment, candidates can be selected, rejected, or placed in a reserve list for future positions.
6. Successful candidates will receive a traineeship placement offer, with a start date, the unit they will be placed in, the duration of their traineeship (up to 12 months), and the list of documents to be submitted.
7. Successful candidates must ensure timely submission of all requested supporting documents as outlined in the traineeship placement offer. Failure to provide these documents by the specified deadline may result in the revocation of the offer.

Please note that EFSA Units can contact trainees placed in a reserve list at any time during the traineeship period, owing either to the last-minute withdrawal of a candidate or early termination of the traineeship.

4.2 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. There is no guarantee that you will be selected again.

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

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

4.4 When does the traineeship start?

Successful candidates will receive a traineeship offer, with a starting date, the unit they will be placed in, the duration of their traineeship (up to 12 months), and the list of documents to be submitted before the start date. The start date is always the first working day of the month. During the interview, the candidate can express their preferred start date, in case there are two or more intakes.

5. Financial aspects

5.1 Do I get paid?

Yes. Trainees receive a monthly maintenance grant corresponding to 25% of AD5 step 1 and weighted using the correction coefficient for Italy. The amount of the grant shall be decided by the Appointing Authority on a yearly basis, on the basis of budget availability. The amount of the basic grant shall be indicated in the traineeship call. In addition, trainees also receive a contribution to their travel expenses at the beginning and the end of their traineeship, should they travel at least 200 km from the place of recruitment to the seat of the agency.

5.2 What does the traineeship stipend include?

The monthly grant covers your expenses. The only additional payment you might receive from the Agency is the travel contribution.



5.3 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 distance in kilometers between your place of residence, as stated in the placement offer, and Parma. It is only paid if your place of recruitment is further than 200 km from EFSA. No change to the place of residence shall be granted, once the placement offer has been sent.

6. Working at EFSA

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

Working hours EFSA are between 9:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday (one hour lunch break to be taken after 12:00 and return from your break no later than 14:30). The normal working week is 40 hours. Eight hours counts as a full working day and four hours a half day.

6.2 Can I telework?

Yes, trainees are allowed to telework from their residence in Parma or from a place within three hours' travel from EFSA. Trainees must work from the office at least two days a week and have the right to come daily on a voluntary basis.

6.3 Does EFSA provide medical insurance coverage for trainees?

No, each trainee should take care of their medical insurance. Medical insurance coverage is compulsory for the entire duration of your traineeship period. Proof of this insurance will be requested prior to the start of the traineeship (e.g. [S1 form](#)). Trainees are responsible for taking out health insurance covering Italy, for registering with their local General Practitioner (GP), or making other private arrangements.

During the traineeship, the trainee is personally insured against the risk of accidents according to the EFSA insurance policy.

6.4 Does EFSA provide relocation support for trainees?

No, but we do provide accommodation advice and guidance. Should you need support with any administrative and practical questions in interacting with local/necessary administrative services (e.g. interpreting requirements, explaining templates, guidance on compilation of forms) you may take advantage of the Helpdesk Line made available by EFSA's relocation services company.

6.5 Does EFSA have an equal opportunities policy?

EFSA is an equal opportunities employer and refrains from any form of discrimination based on any grounds, including disability. We uphold the following principles and work towards the following objectives:

- ✓ **increasing diversity** in the talent pool and ensuring selected trainees are representative of the diverse EU citizens we serve
- ✓ putting special measures in place to **maximise equal opportunities**, treatment and access for all candidates regardless of their sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, membership of a national minority, disability, age or sexual orientation



- ✓ **respecting inclusion** in selection procedures and providing all candidates with an equal opportunity to fully demonstrate their competencies by identifying and eliminating blocking factors, possible biases, and risks of discrimination
- ✓ promoting equal opportunities and engaging with various stakeholder groups and expert organisations to reach out to more diverse talent pools
- ✓ paying the utmost attention to eliminating all forms of discrimination during the traineeship

Moreover, regarding disability, EFSA applies the same policy as the European Commission, ranging from granting special adjustments in its selection procedures to providing reasonable accommodation to enable the successful candidate to perform the functions of their assigned role. The same general principles apply in the context of the traineeship at EFSA.

In addition, it is stipulated that, upon presentation of the proper justification, disabled trainees may receive a **supplement up to a maximum of 50%** of the amount of their grant.

6.6 What is the One Health Approach?

One Health is defined as an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimise the health of people, animals, and ecosystems. EFSA, and the sister agencies which provide scientific advice on the environment, public health, and food safety, have published a [joint statement](#) to express their common commitment to support the One Health agenda in Europe.

6.7 How can I connect with EFSA and my new colleagues on social media?

There are specific Facebook groups for trainees, created and moderated by trainees.

- [European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\) – Trainees](#)

EFSA also has profiles on the following social media platforms:

- www.linkedin.com/company/efsa
- www.youtube.com/user/EFSACHannel
- [European Food Safety Authority \(@efsa.europa.eu\) — Bluesky](#)
- [European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\) | WhatsApp Channel](#)
- www.pinterest.com/EFSAEu

Make sure to follow us in order to stay up to date with the latest information! Also, remember to update your LinkedIn profile with your professional experience at EFSA to expand your network and to get connected with your new colleagues.
