



# Frequently asked questions on traineeships at the European Court of Auditors

## 1. General information about traineeships at the European Court of Auditors (ECA)

- (1) What sort of traineeship does the ECA offer?** – The ECA offers four types of traineeship: (1) standard traineeships, (2) traineeships in the field of artificial intelligence, (3) Positive Action Programme traineeships for trainees with a disability, and (4) traineeships for auditors from supreme audit institutions (SAIs) of candidate countries for accession to the EU.
- (2) What areas of work do traineeships cover?** – Trainees may be assigned to: the Presidency, audit (audit chambers and the Directorate of Audit Quality Control), or the Secretariat-General. View the [ECA's organisational chart](#) for more information.
- (3) What is the role and function of each chamber in the ECA?** – Each of the five audit chambers conducts audits in different areas: Chamber I – sustainable use of natural resources, Chamber II – investment for cohesion, growth, and inclusion, Chamber III – external action, security, and justice, Chamber IV – regulation of markets and competitive economy, and Chamber V – financing and administering the Union. View the [ECA's organisational chart](#) for more information.
- (4) How are trainees assigned to projects, and do they have any input regarding the type of work?** – In their application (for standard traineeships and Positive Action Programme traineeships), candidates can express their interest to work in certain areas of the ECA's activities (up to three) and list them in order of preference. During the selection process (interview), trainees receive information on the tasks they would be expected to perform if selected. Once recruited, trainees remain in close contact with their traineeship supervisor throughout their traineeship to agree on any tasks they should perform.

- (5) Where are the traineeships based?** – Traineeships take place in the ECA’s buildings in Luxembourg (12, rue Alcide De Gasperi, L-1615 Luxembourg).
- (6) Is there an age limit for applying?** – No. There is no age limit to apply for a traineeship at the ECA.
- (7) How and where can trainees find accommodation if they are selected?** – The ECA does not provide trainees with accommodation. However, we will provide them with a guide which contains useful information on several topics, including accommodation.
- (8) Are trainees insured by the ECA?** – The ECA provides trainees with accident insurance. Health insurance may be arranged through the ECA if trainees cannot make any provisions for their own healthcare. In such cases, trainees must pay a third of the insurance premium, except for those trainees who are part of the Positive Action Programme. The ECA will cover the full cost for these trainees.
- (9) Are trainees covered by the European Health Insurance card (EHIC)?** – Yes. However, you will need to check the validity of the card with your national authorities. If the EHIC does not cover the entire traineeship, the ECA can provide trainees with health insurance, for which they must pay one third of the insurance premium (€17.11/month, which is deducted from the allowance at source).
- (10) Is it possible for trainees to decide the duration of their traineeship?** – No. The ECA decides the duration of the traineeship. Traineeships (standard and Positive Action Programme) usually last 6 months. However, depending on the needs of the service, a traineeship may last between 3 and 6 months.
- (11) Is it possible to do a traineeship that is shorter than 3 months?** – No.
- (12) Is it possible to do a 3-month traineeship during the summer break?** –No.
- (13) How flexible is the starting date?** – Traineeships (standard and Positive Action Programme) normally start either on 1 April or on 1 October. However, in very exceptional cases, the ECA may request a traineeship to start later.
- (14) Can a traineeship be extended?** – Yes, but only if the initial duration is less than 6 months. The maximum duration of both standard and Positive Action Programme traineeships is 6 months.
- (15) Where do trainees pay tax?** – Traineeship allowances are not subject to the special tax arrangements of EU officials. The trainee is therefore responsible for complying with the tax obligations in their country of tax residence.

- (16) Is the monthly allowance gross or net?** – The allowance is transferred to the trainee’s account in full, but is not subject to the special tax arrangements of EU officials (see question 15).
- (17) What happens if a trainee is selected and wants to come to Luxembourg with their family? Would they receive any benefits?** – No. Trainees do not receive any additional benefits or allowances.
- (18) Do trainees have to register their move to Luxembourg?** – Yes. It is mandatory for all trainees to register with the municipality (*Commune*) where they are resident. For more information, visit [guichet.lu](http://guichet.lu).
- (19) What are the trainees’ leave entitlements?** – Trainees are entitled to 2 days of leave per month of traineeship and they also have the same official and public holidays as ECA staff.
- (20) Can trainees accumulate leave days for later use?** – Yes, but the days of leave must be used during the traineeship. Trainees do not receive any benefits linked to unused leave days after their traineeship has ended.
- (21) Does the ECA reimburse travel expenses?** – Yes. Trainees are entitled to a reimbursement of the travel expenses at the beginning and at the end of their traineeship (see Article 12 of [Decision No 56-2024](#)).
- (22) What length should the motivational text in the application be?** – The maximum length of candidates’ motivational text is 3 000 characters.
- (23) Do candidates need to provide a CV and a letter of motivation?** – No. Candidates must provide all of the relevant information in the online application form directly.
- (24) Do candidates need any prior experience in the field they apply for?** – No. Work experience is not compulsory to apply for a traineeship.
- (25) What is meant by “areas of interest” on the online application form?** – These are areas of the ECA’s activity where trainees would like to work.
- (26) What kind of academic background is the ECA looking for?** – The trainees selected can have academic qualifications in many different fields, such as law, international relations, humanities, audit, economics, finance, translation, communication, public administration, IT, data science, etc.
- (27) What languages do candidates need to speak?** – Candidates must have knowledge of at least two official EU languages. As French and English are the ECA’s working languages, a minimum of C1 level in understanding, speaking and writing in **either** of those two languages is required.

- (28) Is C1 English proficiency and a mother tongue language sufficient to apply?** – Yes, if a candidate’s mother tongue language is an official EU language.
- (29) In which languages can candidates submit an application?** –The application form is available in English and French.
- (30) Can candidates who are Masters/PhD students apply?** – Yes. If candidates have completed at least a standard 3-year higher education degree (corresponding to a full bachelor’s degree or equivalent) or at least 4 semesters of university studies in an area of interest to the ECA, they are eligible to apply.
- (31) Do candidates need to have a full university degree to apply?** – No. Before the application deadline, candidates need to have completed at least 4 semesters of university studies in an area of interest to the ECA or hold a 3-year higher education degree (bachelor’s degree).
- (32) If candidates will finish their undergraduate (bachelor’s degree) studies after the application period has closed, but before the traineeship starts, can they apply?** – Yes, if they have completed at least 4 semesters of university studies in an area of interest to the ECA.
- (33) Do candidates need prior knowledge of auditing?** – No. The ECA accepts candidates from different backgrounds.
- (34) How many trainees are accepted for each session?** – All together, around 30 to 35 trainees are selected for all types of traineeships per session.
- (35) How many applications does the ECA receive?** – The ECA receives several thousand applications every year.
- (36) Can candidates apply for traineeships at other EU institutions and agencies at the same time?** – Yes, candidates may apply for other traineeships. However, if they receive multiple offers, they can only accept one of them. If a candidate has already benefited from a traineeship in any EU institution, body or agency (whether paid or unpaid), they will not be eligible for a traineeship at the ECA.
- (37) If candidates decline a traineeship offer, can they apply again for the next session?** – Yes. However, candidates who withdraw less than two weeks before their traineeship is due to start shall be excluded from applying for a traineeship at the ECA in the subsequent two-year period. The ECA may agree to waive this rule in duly substantiated cases.

## 2. Working conditions

- (38) Can trainees work from home?** – Yes. Trainees may telework from their place of assignment for up to 4 days a month. They cannot telework for more than 2 consecutive days.
- (39) What are the working hours?** – The ECA offers flexible working hours. The normal working week is 40 hours over five eight-hour days. As a general rule, staff at the ECA use the interval between 8.00 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. to perform their tasks. They must be available (in the office or online) during core hours, from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, and from 2.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. The same applies to trainees.
- (40) What kind of facilities are there at the ECA?** – The ECA has a canteen, two cafeterias, a gym, a library, a medical service, a multisport court and more.
- (41) Does the ECA organise social activities or events for colleagues and trainees?** – Yes. As part of its TraineeECA programme, the ECA offers a wide range of specific activities and events for trainees. In addition, trainees may join other activities, organised by and for ECA staff (e.g. the football team or the choir).
- (42) Can trainees go on mission?** – Yes, in exceptional cases trainees may accompany ECA staff on missions.
- (43) How closely do trainees work with other trainees?** – Some trainees work together more closely than others (e.g. if they work in the same directorate or share an office). In any case, all trainees usually start on the same day and become a close-knit group through various training and social activities.
- (44) Where can you eat lunch at the ECA?** – The ECA facilities include a canteen and two cafeterias. It is also possible to bring food from home and use one of the many kitchenettes in our buildings. The ECA is located in the centre of the European quarter in Kirchberg within easy walking distance of a wide range of restaurants, cafés, and shops.

## 3. Standard traineeships

- (45) What is the application process for a standard traineeship?** – Candidates must complete the application form on our [website](#). We do not accept applications sent through any other means.
- (46) Where is the online application form?** – The application form is on our website – or simply click [here](#).

**(47) When do the applications open?** – For the session starting in April, applications open on 1 October and close on 30 November. For the session starting in October, application open on 1 April and close on 31 May.

**(48) How long does a standard traineeship last?** – Standard traineeships at the ECA generally last 6 months.

**(49) Is the standard traineeship paid, and if so, how much is the salary?** – Trainees under the standard traineeships receive a monthly allowance of €1 600 and trainees with disabilities receive a monthly allowance of €2 000.

**(50) What are the eligibility criteria for standard traineeships?** – To be eligible for a standard traineeship at the ECA applicants must:

(1) be a national of one of the member states of the European Union

(2) by the closing date for applications, have completed at least a standard 3-year higher education degree, corresponding to a complete bachelor's cycle or equivalent, or have completed at least 4 semesters of university study in an area of interest to the ECA at a higher-education establishment;

(3) have expressed an interest in receiving practical training relating to one of the ECA's areas of activity;

(4) have never benefited from a traineeship (paid or unpaid) at any EU institution, body or agency;

(5) have a thorough knowledge of one official EU language and a satisfactory knowledge of at least one other official EU language; as English and French are the ECA's working languages, a sound knowledge of one of these languages (minimum level C1 in understanding, speaking and writing) is required;

(6) have never been employed by any EU institution, body, or agency as: a member of the temporary staff, contract staff or employment agency staff, a seconded national expert, or an assistant to a Member of the European Parliament.

**(51) Can candidates from EU candidate countries apply?** – No, for standard traineeships, applicants must be EU member state nationals.

## **4. Positive Action Programme for trainees with disabilities**

**(52) How do candidates apply under the Positive Action Programme?** – Candidates must apply using the form on the ECA's [website](#). We do not accept applications

sent through any other means. During the application process candidates will be asked to provide proof of their disability (see question 57 below).

**(53) Where is the online application form?** – Candidates can access the form on the ECA’s website, or simply click [here](#).

**(54) When do applications open?** – For the session starting in April, applications open on 1 October and close on 30 November. For the session starting in October, applications open on 1 April and close on 31 May.

**(55) What are the eligibility criteria for the Positive Action Programme?** – To be eligible for a traineeship under the Positive Action Programme at the ECA, candidates must:

- (1) be a national of one of the member states of the European Union;
- (2) by the closing date for applications, have completed at least a standard 3-year higher education degree, corresponding to a complete bachelor’s cycle or equivalent, or have completed at least 4 semesters of university study in an area of interest to the ECA at a higher-education establishment;
- (3) have expressed an interest in receiving practical training relating to one of the ECA’s areas of activity;
- (4) have never benefited from a traineeship (paid or unpaid) at any EU institution, body or agency;
- (5) have a thorough knowledge of one official EU language and a satisfactory knowledge of at least one other official EU language; as English and French are the ECA’s working languages, a sound knowledge of one of these languages (minimum level C1 in understanding, speaking and writing) is required;
- (6) have never been employed by any EU institution, body, or agency as: a member of the temporary staff, contract staff or employment agency staff, a seconded national expert, or an assistant to a Member of the European Parliament.

Candidates must also submit proof of their disability<sup>1</sup> to the ECA’s Medical Service. This proof may take the form of an official document confirming the disability issued by a national authority, or a doctor’s certificate, issued within the last 6 months. If it is the latter, the certificate must state the condition which is

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<sup>1</sup> According to the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

considered to be a disability, and explain how it may cause long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment, which may hinder full and effective participation in society.

**(56) Can candidates apply simultaneously for both standard and Positive Action Programme traineeships at the ECA?** – Yes.

**(57) Do Positive Action Programme candidates need to provide certain documents along with their application to be eligible for the Positive Action Programme?** – Yes. candidates must submit proof of their disability, which can either take the form of an official document from a national authority or a recent doctor's certificate (issued within the last 6 months).

**(58) Does the ECA offer any workplace accommodation for trainees under the Positive Action Programme?** – Yes. If selected, the ECA will work with Positive Action Programme trainees to ensure that they have any necessary workplace accommodations such as software, hardware, or ergonomic equipment.

**(59) If candidates are selected under the Positive Action Programme, do they have to find their own accommodation?** – Yes. Trainees are responsible for finding and arranging accommodation themselves. However, we will provide them with a guide which contains useful information on several topics, including accommodation.

**(60) How long does the traineeship under the Positive Action Programme last?** – Traineeships under the Positive Action Programme generally last for 6 months.

**(61) Is the traineeship under the Positive Action Programme paid, and if so, how much?** – Trainees under the Positive Action Programme receive a monthly allowance of €2 000.

## 5. Traineeships in the area of artificial intelligence (AI)

**(62)** Information on traineeships in the area of AI will be published in due time before applications open. It is not currently possible to apply for this type of traineeship at the ECA.

## 6. Selection procedure

**(63) How are trainees selected?** – After the deadline for applications, each directorate selects its trainees for the next traineeship session. The selection procedure involves three stages: eligibility checks, pre-selection and interviews.



- (64) Are applications reviewed on a rolling basis or only after the deadline?** – Applications are reviewed after the application deadline.
- (65) When do candidates find out if they have been successful?** – Successful candidates will be contacted 2 months before the traineeship start date. Unsuccessful candidates will be contacted 1 month before the traineeship start date.
- (66) How are candidates informed about the results of the selection procedure?** – Candidates will receive an email.
- (67) Does the ECA contact both successful and unsuccessful candidates about the results?** – Yes.
- (68) Do candidates have to send proof of their language skills?** – No. Candidates' language skills will be tested during the selection process.
- (69) Do candidates need to send any supporting documents?** – Successful candidates must provide a copy of their passport or national identity card, diplomas, criminal record, a medical certificate, the declaration of the absence of conflict interest (provided by the ECA) and a health insurance form. They will also be asked to bring originals with them to the ECA when they start their traineeship.