



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY  
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

EMA/116263/2024  
Executive Director

## Decision of the Executive Director

### On rules governing the traineeship programme at the EMA

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HAVING REGARD to Regulation (EC) No 726/04 establishing the European Medicines Agency and Regulation (EU) 2018/1718 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 as regards the location of its seat,

WHEREAS it is necessary to draw up rules to govern the traineeship programme organised by the Agency,  
HAS ADOPTED the following rules:

#### **Article 1 – Objectives of the traineeship programme**

The objectives of the Agency's traineeship programme are to provide recent university graduates with:

1. opportunities to perform tasks that are predominantly in the interest of their training and principally serving to increase their knowledge and to gain relevant experience.
2. a unique and first-hand insight into the work of the Agency as an EU body and its role in the evaluation and supervision of medicinal products throughout the European Union.
3. the opportunity to contribute to the Agency's mission in a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic environment, contributing to the development of mutual understanding, trust and tolerance.

Through the traineeship programme:

1. The Agency benefits from access to the latest theoretical and technical knowledge that trainees can apply through practical assignments under a mentor's supervision.
2. The Agency benefits from the input of trainees, who can give a fresh point of view and up-to-date academic knowledge, which will enhance the everyday work of the Agency.
3. Trainees will experience first-hand EU procedures and work culture of an EU body making them better prepared to collaborate and co-operate with the Agency in the future.
4. The Agency creates long-term "goodwill ambassadors" for the Union ideas and values both within the European Union and outside.

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5. The Agency creates opportunities for *'reverse mentoring'* and learning of the Agency staff, allowing the organization to adjust to a new workforce entering job market.

## **Article 2 - Status of the trainees**

A traineeship is an education and training programme<sup>1</sup>, which is not intended to establish an employment relationship between the trainee and the Agency. Trainees are not to be considered as Temporary or Contract agents under the Staff Regulations. Access to employment within the European Medicines Agency is only possible as a Temporary or Contract agent through open selection procedures advertised on the [EMA Careers Portal](#).

Furthermore, a traineeship does not qualify as an employment contract within the meaning of Section 7:610 of the Dutch Civil Code, nor do the parties intend it as such.

## **Article 3 - Duration of the programme**

Traineeship periods last for ten months equal to the academic year. There is one annual intake with a start date of 1 October each year and ending on 31 July (of the following year). There may also be a second intake with a start date of 1 March and ending on 31 December (of the same year). In principle, there is no possibility to delay or defer the start or end date of the traineeship.

## **Article 4 – Eligibility criteria**

To be eligible to apply for the Agency's traineeship programme, candidates must:

1. Be EU or EEA nationals.
2. Be recent university graduates (up to 12 months after graduation) **or** university students on an Erasmus + or a similar programme **or** Master's students (provided they have fully finalised a previous degree) **or** PhD student<sup>2</sup>.

In line with the placement where traineeship is to be performed, trainees may be required to hold a specific degree.

3. Have a thorough knowledge of English (at least level C1) and good knowledge of other official EU language (at least B2) of the [Common European Framework for Languages](#).

## **Article 5 – Application and Selection process<sup>3</sup>**

1. The application and selection process are strictly confidential. Applications must be made only via the [EMA Careers Portal](#). Any other applications will not be considered, such as CVs sent by email, profiles on LinkedIn or similar. Applications are also possible through official programmes (e.g. Erasmus+) with which the Agency signs appropriate agreements.
2. If an application is unsuccessful, the candidate may re-apply for a subsequent traineeship programme, provided they are still eligible.
3. Candidates will be shortlisted for assessment based on their educational background, qualifications, competencies and motivation.

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<sup>1</sup> The size of the programme and number of traineeship opportunities may vary from year to year subject to budget availability.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> More details are described at [EMA Careers website](#).

4. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for one remote interview which may be carried out in combination with further assessments.
5. All candidates will be informed about the outcome of their application.
6. Candidates that accepted the offer for one traineeship placement, will be excluded from selection for other placements.

#### **Article 6 – Equal opportunities**

All trainees are considered and selected without distinction as to race or ethnic origin, political, philosophical, or religious beliefs, age or disability, gender or sexual orientation and without reference to their marital status or family situation.

#### **Article 7 –Data protection**

EMA respects the privacy of its trainees and processes applicants' personal data as required by [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1725](#). This applies particularly to the **confidentiality and security** of such data. **The personal information that the Agency requests from trainees in the context of the traineeship programme is processed in line with [the Privacy Statement for Selection and Recruitment](#).**

#### **Article 8 – Registration with the Dutch authorities**

1. As stated in the Seat Agreement ([Agreement between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the European Medicines Agency on the hosting of the European Medicines Agency](#)), the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) shall register trainees through the Agency and issue identity cards. The MFA will issue a Burger Service Number (BSN) for trainees who have not previously resided, been employed, or recorded in the Netherlands.
2. Trainees are advised to register with their local municipality.

#### **Article 9 - Traineeship patterns, working hours and teleworking**

When engaging with the Agency, trainees must choose between the following patterns:

1. Full-time (40 hours per week); **or**
2. Part-time 80% (32 hours) combined with university studies; **or**
3. Part-time 50% (20 hours) combined with university studies.

Trainees are allowed to work remotely:

1. from their residence in the Netherlands **up to 40% of working time** (applied weekly) under the condition 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;
2. from outside The Netherlands up 10 days during the traineeship period, with an understanding that travel costs will be covered by trainees themselves and in alignment with the above-mentioned conditions/agreements.

## **Article 10- Traineeship agreement**

1. Traineeships are offered for a period of ten months. The traineeship ends after a period of ten months.
2. The Agency and the trainee have the right to terminate the traineeship prematurely, giving one-month notice, if such circumstances arise that the other party cannot reasonably be expected to allow the traineeship to continue. This shall be the case – but is not limited to – in situations in which the trainee’s mentor reports poor performance or insufficient knowledge for the proper execution of the duties, the trainee acts in violation of the EMA traineeship rules or the trainee is no longer able to perform the duties. Notice must be served in writing to the Traineeship Coordinator via the trainee’s mentor.
3. The Agency is entitled to terminate the traineeship with immediate effect if there is a reason for doing so, which shall– but not exclusively be the case - in instances of unauthorised absences, unacceptable and deviant behaviour, integrity issues, theft, fraud, aggression, violence, refusing – without good reason – to carry out the necessary duties related to the traineeship and seriously lacking the skills required for the traineeship.

## **Article 11 - Absences**

1. The Agency’s working hours and official holidays apply to trainees by analogy.
2. Full-time trainees are entitled to two days off per month. This entitlement is reduced pro rata to part-time trainees. Untaken days off are not paid in lieu. EMA holidays cannot be exchanged with working days.
3. Trainees may be granted additional days off for family reasons, religious reasons, exams, participation in recruitment procedures/job interviews and elections. A certificate justifying the reason for the additional day off will be required.
4. Leave requests should respect the specific goals of the trainee and the traineeship as such and need to be approved by the mentor concerned.
5. In case of sickness, trainees must immediately notify their mentor.
6. Trainees will be entitled to take a maximum of 10 working days’ sick leave. Sick leave in excess of these 10 days will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
7. A trainee who is pregnant shall be granted maximum of 100 calendar days off, during which period they shall continue receiving the stipend as set out in Article 12 of these rules. This period shall start no earlier than 6 weeks before the expected due date as shown in the medical certificate and cannot go beyond the duration of the traineeship agreement.

## **Article 12 - Traineeship maintenance stipend**

1. Trainees are awarded a monthly maintenance stipend which is aimed at compensating all trainee’s expenses while engaged with the Agency. The stipend is all inclusive and is intended to cover expenses such as accommodation, local commuting costs, food, and the double cost of housing due to trainees’ temporary stay in the Netherlands. If not mentioned otherwise in this decision, the Agency does not provide any additional payments outside of the monthly stipend. The amount of the stipend corresponds to 30% of AD5 step 1 (or 50 % or 80% of that amount for part-time trainees) as defined each year by the European Commission and weighted using

the correction coefficient for the Netherlands<sup>4</sup>. The amount is fixed to the values in place on 1 July of the year in which the traineeship intake started. The amount is published on the [EMA Careers Portal](#).

2. In case of termination of the traineeship without notice, the trainee will be required to reimburse that part of the stipend, which he/she may have received, relating to the period after the termination date.
3. Upon presentation of the proper medical justification, disabled trainees may receive a supplement to their stipend equal to a maximum of 50% of the amount of the stipend due to additional costs they may have to make.
4. Trainees are not considered as staff of the Agency. Their stipend is not a salary and should not be taxable for income tax<sup>5</sup>. For the same reason, maintenance stipends awarded to trainees are not subject to the special tax regulations applying to officials and other servants of the European Union.
5. The Agency is not responsible for any stipends or allowances of a like nature that the trainee may receive from other sources than the Agency, for which the trainee will bear all associated tax consequences.

#### **Article 13 - Travel expenses at the beginning and end of the traineeship programme**

1. Trainees residing further than 50 km away from the seat of the Agency (i.e. Amsterdam, The Netherlands) before the start of the traineeship, are entitled to a contribution to the travel expenses incurred at the beginning and end of the traineeship. The postal address used in the traineeship agreement shall be the place considered for that purpose. Once the traineeship has been awarded, this place cannot be changed.
2. The contribution is paid after joining the Agency. In case of termination of the placement without notice, the contribution will not be due and will be recovered if already paid.
3. The contribution to travel expenses for the inward journey and for the outward journey is established in the form of a unique flat-rate payment based on the shortest distance between the place indicated in the traineeship agreement and the seat of the Agency as shown in the table below. The kilometric distance is established by using FreeMapTools ([www.freemaptools.com/how-far-is-it-between.htm](http://www.freemaptools.com/how-far-is-it-between.htm)). This tool is using the single direct linear distance ('as the crow flies') and the distance is not doubled for the purpose of establishing the contribution.

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<sup>4</sup> In case of decrease of AD5 salary as a results of salary scale revision, the stipend will not be negatively adjusted.

<sup>5</sup> Email response from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs ('Taxation question regarding trainees -clarification needed' of 24/10/2019)

| Distance between place of recruitment and Amsterdam (km) | Amount in Euro of the unique flat rate payment/contribution |
|--|---|
| <50  | 0   |
| 50-150   | 100   |
| 151-500  | 200   |
| 501-1000   | 400   |
| 1001-2000  | 600   |
| 2001-3000  | 800   |
| over 3000  | 1000  |

## **Article 14 – Insurances**

1. During the traineeship programme, trainees are only personally insured against the risk of accidents and death under the Agency’s liability insurance.
2. The Agency does not provide private health insurance. Trainees are responsible for taking out health insurance covering the Netherlands, for registering with their local General Practitioner (GP) or making other private arrangements.
3. The employer’s contribution to social security is not applicable, since trainees are not staff members of the Agency.

## **Article 15– Roles, obligations and responsibilities**

### **15.1. Mentors**

1. Each trainee is assigned a mentor to guide, supervise and closely follow the trainee during his/her traineeship.
2. The mentor helps the trainee to get familiar with the Agency and to grow professionally by setting individual learning goals, providing training, monitoring the trainee’s tasks, supervising the trainee’s presentation at the end of the traineeship and serving as a contact person for questions.
3. The mentor must immediately notify their line manager and the Traineeship Coordinator of any significant issues or incidents occurring during the traineeship (in particular professional incompetence, unauthorised absences, sickness, accidents, bad behaviour or interruption of the traineeship), which come to his/her attention, or of which the trainee has informed him/her.

### **15.2. Trainees**

#### **Before the start of the programme**

Prior to commencing the traineeship, successful candidates must provide the following documents:

1. A copy of their passport/ID card.
2. A copy of their most recently obtained qualification.
3. Signed traineeship offer.
4. If the traineeship is combined with an Erasmus + or a similar programme or a PhD, an official declaration from the relevant university or authorities (stating dates and subject of study).

5. Trainees are required to make a public declaration of interests before starting their traineeship. In line with the ['Implementing rules concerning the handling of declared interests of employees of the European Medicines Agency'](#), trainees at the Agency are not permitted to hold on starting the traineeship or seek to acquire during their traineeship at the Agency direct financial interests in a pharmaceutical company or own a current patent for a medicinal product. All such direct interests must be disposed of prior to the start of the traineeship and documentary evidence that the shares have been sold shall be submitted to the Agency.

### **During the programme**

3. In line with the confidentiality agreement that every trainee signs prior the start of their traineeship, trainees must exercise the greatest discretion regarding facts and information that come to their knowledge during the course of their traineeship. They must not, in any manner whatsoever, disclose to any unauthorised person any document or information not already made public. The Agency reserves its right to terminate the traineeship and to pursue any person who does not respect this obligation. Trainees will continue to be bound by this obligation after the end of their traineeship.
4. Trainees shall be required to comply with the instructions given by their mentors and, generally, by the Agency. They must also comply with the rules governing the traineeship programme.
5. Trainees must take part in all activities and training courses organised for them.
6. Trainees must consult their mentor, or, if unavailable, the Traineeship Coordinator, if they would like to carry out additional/different tasks or if they would like to attend Agency events/learning opportunities in addition to the agreed training programme.
7. Trainees may attend meetings on subjects of interest to their training (unless these meetings are restricted or confidential), receive documentation and participate in the work of the Division/Department subject to the guidance of their mentor.
8. Trainees must not have any professional connections with third parties, which might be incompatible with their traineeship (i.e. must not work for lobbyists, legal attachés, etc.), and they are not permitted to exercise any other gainful or non-gainful employment during the period of the traineeship, which may adversely affect the tasks assigned during the traineeship. If a conflict of interest should arise during their assignment, trainees should immediately report this to their mentor and to the Traineeship Coordinator in writing.
9. Trainees are strictly forbidden from having any contacts with the Press regarding any matter dealing with the work of the Agency and must report any approaches by the media to the Press Office without delay.
10. Trainees must not, either alone or with others, publish or cause to be published any matter dealing with the work of the Agency without the written permission of the relevant entities. The Traineeship Coordinator will provide specific instructions on how to obtain such permission and should receive a copy of those permissions together with a copy of any publication (including thesis) or article published. Such permission should be subject to the conditions in force for all Agency staff.

### **At the end of the programme**

11. At the end of their traineeship programme, trainees must prepare a presentation on their activities and learning during the training period.
12. Trainees receive a certificate testifying their traineeship in the Agency. Upon request, trainees may also receive a recommendation letter from their mentor.

### **15.3. Traineeship Coordinator**

The Traineeship Coordinator is responsible for:

1. organising the traineeship programme, including organization of selection procedures;
2. being the point of contact for trainees, mentors and managers;
3. providing advice to trainees, mentors and managers, as required;
4. ensuring that deadlines are kept;
5. reviewing the traineeship rules and related documents as required;
6. further enhancing the programme in line with lessons learned.

### **Article 16 – External Programmes**

The Agency may engage with various traineeship programmes (e.g. Erasmus, Carl Schmidt). For that purpose, the Agency will sign appropriate agreements. The provisions of these decision will apply.

### **Article 17 - Final provisions**

These rules take effect on 21 March 2024 and replace the Executive Decision on rules governing the traineeship programme at the EMA (EMA/203755/2023), dated 2 May 2023.

Amsterdam,

Emer Cooke  
Executive Director