

THE NATIONAL TRAINEE SCHEME for EU Member States not Members of ESA

(October 2011)

The National Trainee Scheme offers recently graduated university students from the EU countries not yet members of ESA the possibility of gaining practical hands-on experience at ESA in engineering and scientific disciplines related to space applications. It is organised jointly by ESA and national entities, following the signature of a specific agreement. The maximum number of trainees to be sent per year is 5 for European Cooperating States (ECS Agreement) and 3 for other non-ESA EU Members.

Selected candidates receive, for 1 year, on-the-job training under the supervision and guidance of a dedicated tutor at one of the ESA establishments. National Trainees are not members of ESA staff and are directly paid by the corresponding national entity. The salary they receive is comparable to the one paid to ESA Young Graduate Trainees.

This document covers the National Trainee Scheme process from the initiation of the request to the end of the traineeship.

1. Training opportunities

Once a year the national entity sends to the ESA coordinator a call for training opportunities indicating the areas of interest, defined according to the strategic priorities, and in consultation with industry. The number of areas of interest should be in line with the number of trainees (maximum twice this number, to allow for some over-planning at this phase). The ESA coordinator can help in the selection of areas of interest suggesting areas proposed by ESA. In some cases representatives from the national entity may tour ESA sites to learn more about ESA activities and better target their interests. It is to be noted that informal contacts between the national entity and ESA staff can be very useful, but proposals for training opportunities must always be approved by the staff hierarchy and reach the national entity via the ESA coordinator.

The ESA coordinator assigns the requests to the respective ESA technical units and asks them to prepare -if possible- one or more training opportunity proposals in each area, using the corresponding forms (see annex 1). The deadline is usually two weeks. Once completed by the tutor and approved by the Division/Department Head, the ESA coordinator collects the training opportunity proposals and sends them to the national entity by e-mail.

The national entity selects the opportunities considered most suitable, to be published in a web site so that potential candidates can express their interest. It is advisable to publish 50% more opportunities than the intended number of trainees, to ensure that all traineeships are awarded. The opportunities are published in the national entity's web site, linked to the ESA Careers page. Candidates apply to one or more opportunities, sending a

letter of motivation and a CV in Europass format. The deadline for applications is usually one month.

2. Selection of candidates

The national entity receives the applications and performs a pre-selection, short-listing the candidates to be interviewed, on average three candidates for each opportunity. The interview dates are fixed, the schedule is prepared, and the selected candidates are invited. The ESA coordinator may participate in the interviews if requested by the national entity (this is recommended at least for the first round). It is also possible to involve ESA tutors asking them for interview questions for the candidates, but tutors are not present at interviews.

Interviews take place and a recruitment proposal is prepared by the national entity, with a list of training opportunities and the corresponding recommended and back-up candidate(s). At this point it is still possible to have a small over-planning (20%) with respect to the number of traineeships available. The recruitment proposal is sent by e-mail to the ESA coordinator, who distributes the proposals for the individual opportunities to the corresponding tutors.

The tutors evaluate the recommended and backup candidates, contacting them via e-mail or telephone if needed, to determine if they are suitable. The deadline for this evaluation is usually two weeks. The ESA coordinator compiles the results and informs the national entity accordingly. The national entity performs the final selection of ESA-approved candidates.

The national entity contacts the recommended candidates to confirm their interest and availability. If candidates are no longer interested or not available backup candidates are contacted. If candidates are interested but available at a later date the ESA coordinator is informed and contacts the corresponding tutor to determine if a delay in the take-up duty date is possible. When the list of trainee assignments and take-up duty dates is complete, ESA prepares the letters of appointment according to the standard template (see annex 2).

3. Kick-off meeting and signatures

The national entity organises a meeting at its premises, inviting the trainees and the ESA coordinator. During this meeting the national entity presents the programme and the practical administrative details, while the ESA coordinator presents a general view of ESA and its centres. The presentations are followed by individual meetings between the ESA coordinator and the trainees, during which the trainees have the possibility to ask for additional information, and the letters of appointment are signed. If the trainee cannot attend the meeting the letter can be signed remotely and scanned back to the ESA coordinator.

Signed letters are transmitted by the ESA coordinator to the respective ESA centres, and constitute the final confirmation of the trainee's take-up duty date. Trainees may contact

the local HR services if they need assistance with practical matters, in particular accommodation. They may also contact the corresponding tutor to introduce themselves and start preparing the traineeship.

4. Performing the traineeship

On the take-up duty date (or as soon as possible following this date) the tutor welcomes the trainee and details the scope of the work to be performed within the framework of the training opportunity and the general guidelines provided by HR. Training requests may also be discussed.

Although they are not ESA staff members National Trainees are subject to the ESA Staff Rules & Regulations, in particular regarding working hours and leave, being assimilated to Young Graduate Trainees. Their local HR service monitors their leave (30 working days, in addition to the 12 official holidays applicable in the various establishments).

At the end of the traineeship, ESA shall establish, upon request, certificates of the training scheme accomplished on the ESA's premises, with the duration and nature of tasks performed, and, if need be, an assessment of the Trainee performance.

For further information please contact:

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Annex 1 – training opportunity template

Training Opportunity for <Nationality> Trainees

Reference	Specialist Area	Duty Station
	<opportunity title>	<place of work>
<p><u>Overview of the unit missions:</u></p>		
<p><u>Overview of the field of activity proposed:</u></p>		
<p><u>Required Education:</u></p>		

Annex 2 – Letter of appointment template

<Name>
<Address>

Our Ref: <training opportunity reference>

<Place>, <Date>

Dear <title> <last name>,

I have pleasure in informing you that, within the framework of an agreement between ESA and <National Organisation>, it has been decided to offer you a traineeship in our Organisation from <starting date>, for a period of one year, at <duty station>, <country>. All costs related to this traineeship are borne by <National Organisation> under a separate agreement.

You will be assigned to the <office/division> in the <department>, <directorate>.

For questions regarding your stay at <duty station> please contact <contact person> (tel. <contact telephone>, email: <contact e-mail> <HR unit>; while you should contact <supervisor> (tel. <supervisor telephone>, email: <supervisor e-mail> for questions related to your work.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Agency is unable to provide trainees with accident and sickness insurance. You are therefore requested to prove as soon as possible that you are insured against such risks, including those that might arise while at the Agency, or when travelling to your place of work. Failing such proof, we will be obliged to withdraw your traineeship.

You are allowed to take 30 working days of leave per full year of presence. Such leave must be formally approved by your Head of Service and communicated to the Human Resources Service of your establishment.

You are asked to respect Agency regulations during your traineeship and in particular those concerning working hours (flexitime from 07:30 to 19:30, with core periods 09:30 to 11:30 and 14:00 to 16:00, averaging 40 hours per week), loyalty and discretion.

In particular, trainees are required to abstain from all political activities and, more generally, from any public action or statement or publication, especially if such activity, declaration or publication is liable to involve the moral or material responsibility of the Agency.

Trainees must also observe complete discretion with regard to all matters relating to the activities of the Agency. They shall not disclose any unpublished information acquired by them during their period with the Agency unless authorised to do so by the Director



General. This obligation shall continue after their traineeship has ended and they have left the Agency.

Moreover, all intellectual property rights, including copyright and patent rights, in any work produced in the scope of your traineeship shall be the property of the Agency.

On your take up duty day you are kindly requested to present a valid passport or another document indicating your nationality. A temporary badge will be handed to you at the <duty station> gate and a permanent one will be issued shortly after your arrival.

Please report to the <HR service> at 08:30 hours on the day of your taking up duty.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to <duty station> on <starting date>.

I should be grateful if you would confirm your agreement to the terms of this letter, by returning to me one of the two copies after adding the words "Read and Approved" above your dated signature.

Yours sincerely,

<HR service manager>
Head of <HR service>