

# Guidelines on how to use the Learning Agreements for Traineeships

## Between Programme and Partner Countries

### BEFORE THE MOBILITY

#### Administrative data

Before the mobility, it is necessary to fill in page 1 with information on the trainee, the higher education institution(s) and the receiving organisation. The Programme Country institution is always mentioned in this part of the document. Partner Country institutions will appear when the traineeship concerns a Partner Country student and when Programme Country students combine their traineeships with a study period in that institution. If some administrative data is already available to the three parties, there is no need to repeat it in this template.

All parties have to agree on the section to be completed before the mobility.

On page 1, most of the information related to the trainee, the higher education institution(s) [HEI(s)] and the receiving organisation will have to be encoded in Mobility Tool+.

#### Traineeship Programme (Table A)

Please note the template for traineeships combined with a study period includes both a "Study Programme at the Receiving Institution" and "Traineeship Programme at the Receiving Organisation". Learning agreements for incoming or outgoing mobility exclusively for traineeships include only a "Traineeship Programme at the Receiving Organisation".

We will first see the requirements for the "Traineeship Programme at the Receiving Organisation" and after that the requirements regarding the "Study Programme at the Receiving Institution".

##### ➤ Traineeship Programme at the Receiving Organisation

- The Traineeship Programme at the receiving organisation should include the **indicative start and end months** of the agreed traineeship, the traineeship title, as well as the number of working hours per week.
- The detailed programme of the traineeship period should include the **tasks/deliverables** to be carried out by the trainee, with their associated timing.
- If the traineeship can be considered a **Traineeship in digital skills**<sup>1</sup> it should be indicated by checking "yes" in the relevant field.
- The Traineeship Programme should indicate which **knowledge, intellectual and practical skills and competences** (Learning Outcomes) will be acquired by the end of the traineeship, e.g. academic, analytical, communication, decision-making, ICT, innovative and creative, strategic-organisational, and foreign language skills, teamwork, initiative, adaptability, etc.
- The **monitoring plan** should describe how and when the trainee will be monitored during the traineeship by the receiving organisation and the HEI(s).

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<sup>1</sup> **Traineeship in digital skills:** any traineeship will be considered as such when one or more of the following activities are practised by the trainee: digital marketing (e.g. social media management, web analytics); digital graphical, mechanical or architectural design; development of apps, software, scripts, or websites; installation, maintenance and management of IT systems and networks; cybersecurity; data analytics, mining and visualisation; programming and training of robots and artificial intelligence applications. Generic customer support, order fulfilment, data entry or office tasks are not considered in this category.

- The **evaluation plan** should describe the assessment criteria that will be used to evaluate the traineeship and the learning outcomes.
- **Study Programme at the Receiving Institution**
- Mobilities for traineeships combined with a study period include training activities coupled with a study programme which can be consecutive or take place during the same period. There is no minimum number of training hours (neither per week, nor for the full period) and institutions shall decide which is the appropriate volume of the study programme.
- The Learning Agreement must include all the **educational components**<sup>2</sup> to be carried out by the student at the Receiving Institution (in Table A) and the group of educational components that will be replaced in his/her degree by the Sending Institution (in Table B) upon successful completion of the study programme abroad. There is no need to have one-to-one correspondence between the components followed abroad and the ones replaced at the Sending Institution. The aim is that a group of learning outcomes achieved abroad replaces a group of learning outcomes at the Sending Institution. Therefore these Tables A and B must be kept separated and, in case the student follows additional educational components beyond those required for his/her degree programme, these additional credits (or equivalent) must also be listed in the study programme outlined in Table A.
- In case of **thesis research/doctoral work** at the receiving institution, the component "Thesis research" or "Doctoral work" will be included in Table A. If no ECTS credits are provided by the receiving institution, it is sufficient to write "not applicable" in that column. The thesis/doctoral work and the associated workload in ECTS credits will be included in Table B, if relevant for the sending institution.
- The Sending Institution should indicate in Table B the group of educational components counting towards the student's degree that would normally be completed at the Sending Institution and which will be replaced by the Study Programme at the Receiving Institution. The total number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) in Table B should correspond to the total number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) contained in Table A. Any exception to this rule should be clearly stated in an annex of the Learning Agreement and agreed by all parties. Example of justification for a discrepancy in the total number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) between Table A and Table B: the student has already accumulated the number of credits required for his/her degree and does not need some of the credits gained abroad.
- The Sending Institution must foresee which provisions will apply if the student does not successfully complete some of the educational components from his study programme abroad, by providing a web link.

### Language competence

A recommended level of language competence<sup>3</sup> in the main language of work should be agreed with the receiving organisation to ensure a proper integration of the trainee in the organisation.

When the traineeship is combined with a study period, the level of language competence in the main language of instruction should also be agreed upon by the receiving institution.

The level of language competence in the main language of work (and instruction), which the trainee already has or agrees to acquire by the start of the study period, has to be reported in the box provided for that purpose in the Learning Agreement.

The type of support that the HEI(s) or the receiving organisation will provide to the student should also be discussed and agreed upon.

### Commitment of the Sending Institution regarding recognition (Table B)

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<sup>2</sup> An "educational component" is a self-contained and formal structured learning experience that features learning outcomes, credits and forms of assessment. Examples of educational components are: a course, module, seminar, laboratory work, practical work, preparation/research for a thesis, mobility window or free electives.

<sup>3</sup> **Level of language competence:** a description of the European Language Levels (CEFR) is available at: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>

The sending HEI commits to recognise the learning outcomes acquired by the trainee upon satisfactory completion of the traineeship. The specific requirements are different depending on whether the sending HEI is a country taking part in the Bologna Process or in a Partner Country that is not part of the Bologna Process. In addition, the commitments regarding recognition are higher when the traineeship is part of the student curriculum (i.e. it counts towards the degree) than when it is a voluntary traineeship (i.e. it is not obligatory to complete the degree).

➤ **Traineeships embedded in the curriculum**

It will be necessary to use ECTS credits for the recognition of traineeships of short cycle, bachelor and master students from countries that are part of the Bologna Process. ECTS will be used for the recognition of traineeships by doctoral candidates if relevant for the sending institution. HEIs from Partner countries where ECTS credits are not in place will use an equivalent system, in that case the term "ECTS" needs to be replaced in all tables by the name of the equivalent system and a web link to an explanation to the system should be added.

It will also be necessary to indicate on which basis a grade will be provided.

The sending institution will record the traineeship in the trainee's Transcript of Records. In addition, when the sending institution is based in a country taking part in the Bologna Process, the institution will also record the traineeship in the Diploma Supplement (or equivalent) of the trainee.

The traineeship may as well be recorded in the Europass Mobility Document, which is to be filled in by the hosting and the sending organisation.

➤ **Voluntary traineeships**

The sending institution decides whether it will be taking similar actions as those requested for traineeships embedded in the curriculum. This is recommended to ensure a more enriching opportunity for the trainee. The only mandatory requirement is for HEIs based in a country taking part in the Bologna Process when they organise traineeships for their own students; in that case they will always have to record the traineeship in the Diploma Supplement (or equivalent) of the trainee. The three templates available include the relevant options for each case.

## **Accident insurance**

It is highly recommended that either the Programme Country HEI or the receiving organisation provide insurance coverage to the trainee, and fill in the information in Table B or C accordingly. The trainee must be covered at least by an accident insurance (damages caused to the trainee at the workplace) and by a liability insurance (damages caused by the trainee at the workplace). If neither the Programme Country HEI nor the receiving organisation provide this insurance coverage, it will have to be covered by the trainee. To this effect, the student grant agreement must highlight what is mandatory or recommended in terms of insurance and it must state who is responsible for taking the mandatory insurance.

## **Receiving organisation (Table C)**

The receiving organisation should provide appropriate support, including mentoring, supervision and equipment, to the trainee. If the receiving organisation plans to provide financial support and/or a contribution in kind for the trainee on top of the Erasmus+ grant, it should specify which will be its amount and/or in what it will consist.

The receiving organisation commits to issue a Traineeship Certificate (table D of the template) within 5 weeks after the end of the traineeship.

## **Signing the Learning Agreement**

All parties must sign the Learning Agreement before the start of the mobility. It is not compulsory to circulate papers with original signatures, scanned copies of signatures or digital signatures may be accepted, depending on the national legislation or institutional regulations.

### DURING THE MOBILITY

#### **Exceptional Changes to the Traineeship / Study and Traineeship Programme (Tables A2 & B2)**

If it is necessary to make any changes to the planned activities, the Table A describing the Traineeship Programme should be kept unchanged and changes should be described in Table A2. Both tables should be kept together in all communications.

This also applies in the case of combined mobilities where the initial Table A describing the Study Programme should be kept unchanged and modifications should be described and justified in Table A2. A separate table (Table B2) is available to reflect any eventual changes to planned recognition of the study programme.

When changes to the traineeship programme arise, they should be agreed as soon as possible with the HEI(s) and the receiving organisation. The same applies to changes to the study programme in case of combined mobilities.

When the change concerns an extension of the duration, the request can be made by the trainee at the latest one month before the foreseen end date.

#### **Changes of the Responsible person(s)**

In case of changes of the responsible person(s), the information below should be inserted by the HEI(s) or receiving organisation, where applicable.

<b>Changes of the Responsible person(s)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Position</b>
New Responsible person at the Programme Country Institution			
New Responsible person at the Partner Country Institution (where applicable)			
New Supervisor at the receiving organisation			

#### **Confirming the Changes**

All parties must approve the changes to the Learning Agreement. The European Commission would like to limit the use of paper for exchanging documents as much as possible. That is why it is accepted that information is exchanged electronically, e.g. via email, scanned or digital signatures, etc. without the need of a paper signature. However, if national legislations or institutional regulations require paper signatures, a signature box can be added where needed.

## AFTER THE MOBILITY

Please note the template for traineeships combined with a study period includes both a "Traineeship Certificate" by the receiving organisation and "Transcript of Records" by the receiving and the sending institution linked to the study programme.

We will first see the requirements for the "Traineeship Certificate by the receiving organisation" and after that the requirements regarding the two "Transcripts of Records".

### ➤ **Traineeship Certificate by the receiving organisation (Table D)**

- After the mobility, the receiving organisation should send a Traineeship Certificate to the trainee and Sending Institution, normally within five weeks after successful completion of the traineeship. It can be provided electronically or through any other means accessible to the trainee and the Sending Institution.
- The Traineeship Certificate will contain at least the information in Table D.
- The actual start and end dates of the traineeship programme should be included according to the following definitions:
  - The **start date** of the traineeship period is the first day the trainee has been present at the receiving organisation to carry out his/her traineeship. For example, this could be the first day of work, a welcoming event organised by the receiving organisation, an information session for trainees with special needs, a language and intercultural course organised either by the receiving organisation or other organisations (if the Sending Institution considers it relevant for the mobility).
  - The **end date** of the traineeship period is the last day the trainee has been present at the receiving organisation to carry out his/her traineeship, not his actual date of departure.

### ➤ **Transcript of Records and Recognition<sup>4</sup>**

- The Sending Institution should recognise the traineeship according to the provisions in Table B. If applicable, the Sending Institution should provide the Transcript of Records to the trainee or record the results in a database (or other means) accessible to the student, normally five weeks after receiving the Traineeship Certificate, without further requirements than those agreed upon before the mobility.
- The Transcript of Records will contain at least the information that the Sending Institution committed to provide before the mobility in the Learning Agreement, i.e. the number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) awarded and the grade given (which can be expressed in the form of pass/fail).
- In the case of traineeships combined with a study period, the Transcript of Records will also take into account the study period abroad. To this effect, the Receiving Institution should send a Transcript of Records (Table C) to the student and to the Sending Institution within a period stipulated in the Inter-Institutional Agreement (normally within five weeks after publication/proclamation of the student's results at the Receiving Institution). Similar provisions apply as to traineeships in terms of the actual start and end dates. Following the receipt of the Transcript of Records, the Sending Institution should recognise the academic outcomes successfully completed. It should award the total number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) contained in Table B (and, if applicable, B2) and count them towards the student's degree, without the need for the student to take any further courses or exams. Where applicable, the Sending Institution will convert the grades received by the student abroad, taking into account the grade distribution information from the Receiving Institution (for higher education institutions from Programme Countries, see the methodology described in the ECTS Users' Guide<sup>5</sup>). The European Commission encourages institutions to use the EGRACONS<sup>6</sup> tool for this purpose.

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<sup>4</sup> **Recognition:** all the credits that the trainee has earned during the mobility and that were specified in the final version of the Learning Agreement (Table B of the official template) are recognised by the Sending Institution, according to its commitment before the mobility and without further requirements than those agreed upon before the mobility.

<sup>5</sup> ECTS Users' Guide: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/ects\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/ects_en.htm)

<sup>6</sup> EGRACONS Grade Conversion Tool: <https://tool.egracons.eu/>

- The Sending Institution will provide a Transcript of Records (Table D) to the student or record the results in a database or any other means accessible to the student, normally within five weeks after having received the transcript of the Receiving Institution.
- The student will be able to report on the recognition by the Sending Institution via the on-line EU survey or a complementary online survey.

### Diploma Supplement

In the case of HEIs based in countries part of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the information contained in the Traineeship Certificate from the receiving organisation should also be included in the Diploma Supplement (or equivalent) of the trainee upon his or her graduation.

It is also recommended to record the traineeship in the trainee's Europass Mobility Document, especially if the student is from a Partner Country where the Diploma Supplement is not applicable.

### Steps to fill in the Learning Agreement for Traineeships

#### Before the mobility

Provide **traineeship programme**.  
If combined with study period, provide **study programme** and plan recognition.

**Commitment** of the three or four parties with original / scanned/ digital signatures.

#### During the mobility

If modifications **are needed**:  
An agreement by the three or four parties on the changes is possible via email/digital signatures.

#### After the mobility

**The Receiving Organisation** provides a Traineeship Certificate to the trainee and sending institution within 5 weeks.

**The Sending Institution** recognises the traineeship and registers it according to its commitments before the mobility.

If combined with study period, **the Receiving Institution** provides a Transcript of Records to the student and Sending Institution normally within 5 weeks after publication of the results.