

ELSA TRAINEESHIPS HANDBOOK



elsa

The European Law Students' Association

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2. Foreword

My Dearest Officers,

I am glad to present you the ELSA Traineeships Handbook 2021/2022.

This document has been created in the term 2009/2010 and updated every year in order to allow the Officers of the Professional Development area to be aware of the most important information related to the Flagship Project ELSA Traineeships (former known as STEP – Student Trainee Exchange Programme).

The first time I read this Handbook, I have found in it a lot of inspiration and useful tips that helped me in my day by day work as a Local and National Officer. I hope that will be the same for you and I wish you to achieve all the goals you settled for a successful term together!

I would like to take the chance to say thank you to the amazing ELSA Traineeships Team for the effort and the tireless work.

If you need any clarification or further information, please do not hesitate to reach me. Nothing makes this experience more fulfilling than the concrete chance to help each and all of you.

Sincerely yours,

Susanna

Susanna Mendicino

Vice President in charge of Professional Development
International Board of ELSA 2021/2022



3. Glossary

DB	International Council Meeting Decision Book
EF	Evaluation Form
EI	ELSA International
ET	ELSA Traineeships
IB	International Board
ICM	International Council Meeting
IFP	International Focus Programme
JH	Job Hunting
ISM	International Strategy Meeting
ITM	International Training Meeting
LB	Local Board
LG	Local Group
NB	National Board
NG	National Group
OYOP	One Year Operational Plan
PD	Professional Development
SAF	Student Application Form
SH	Student Hunting
SOS	STEP Online System
SSO	Statutes and Standing Orders
TA	Traineeship Agreement
Pre-TEF	Pre-Traineeship Evaluation Form
Post-TEF	Post-Traineeship Evaluation Form
TN	Traineeship
TNP	Traineeship Provider
TPI	Traineeship Provider's Interface
TSF	Traineeship Specification Form
VP	Vice President

4. ELSA

ELSA, the European Law Students' Association, is the world's largest independent law students' association. It is an international, independent, non-political, non-profit organization established in 1981 by and for law students and young lawyers. ELSA offers law students and aspiring legal professionals across the 44 member countries the perfect platform to develop their interpersonal, academic and professional skills, and create a diverse network of like-minded individuals.

Vision

A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity.

Purpose

To contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers.

Means

- To provide opportunities for law students and young lawyers to learn about other cultures and legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific co-operation;
- To assist law students and young lawyers to be internationally minded and professionally skilled;
- To encourage law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society.

5. ELSA Traineeships

5.1. ELSA Traineeships in a nutshell

ELSA's activities fall into three Key Areas, namely (1) Seminars and Conferences; (2) Academic Activities; and (3) **Professional Development** which is responsible for one of the flagship projects of ELSA: **ELSA Traineeships**.

ELSA Traineeships is the traineeships programme of ELSA that offers bi-annually opportunities for ELSA members to gain first-hand legal work experience at a variety of organisations (*inter alia* law firms, companies, banks, universities, public and private institutions, and courts) in different jurisdictions in and even outside of Europe. Recently, ELSA Traineeships has also enacted the possibility to partake in such experiences in a remote manner.

Consequently, the traineeships programme complements the general recruitment schemes of organisations by providing them candidates matching their specific needs and interests. ELSA Traineeships programme is internationally harmonised, i.e. all Local Groups (**LGs**), National

Groups (**NGs**) , and ELSA International (**EI**) follow the [ELSA Traineeships Calendar](#) and conform to the same regulations concerning e.g. quality standards.

5.2. The structure of ELSA Traineeships

Each ELSA Traineeships calendar year starts on the first day of August and finishes on the last day of July., and it is divided into two periods known as the **Cycles**. Each Cycle consists of the following parts:

5.2.1. Job Hunting (JH)

JH refers to the acquisition of new Traineeship Providers (**TNPs**) and the maintenance thereof as part of the programme. JH is conducted throughout the year on local, national and international levels. There is one **JH Deadline** per Cycle (see below).

5.2.2. Student Hunting (SH)

SH refers to the promotion of ELSA Traineeships to both law students and young lawyers, and the encouragement of applications. SH is conducted on local, national and international levels. There is one **External SH Deadline** and one **Internal SH Deadline** per Cycle (see below).

5.2.3. Matching

Matching refers to the process of verifying applications and pre-selecting those applications which meet the criteria set by the respective TNPs. Matching is conducted by EI. There is one **Matching Deadline** per Cycle (see below).

5.2.4. Selection

Selection refers to the ranking of the matched applicants, and the final selection of the applicants to whom the traineeship offer shall be sent. Selection is conducted by TNPs on the Traineeship Providers' Interface (**TPI**). There is one **Selection Results Deadline** per Cycle (see below).

5.2.5. Reception

Reception refers to the preparation for the trainees' arrival and the integration of the trainees during their traineeships. Reception is conducted by the Hosting Group, i.e. the ELSA Group in charge of the communication with the TNP. In line with the recent implementation of Remote Traineeships, EI has also introduced [Quality Standards](#) for on-site and digital reception.

5.2.6. Evaluation

Evaluation refers to (1) the initial expression of the expectations of the future trainee through the [Pre-Traineeship Evaluation Form](#) (Pre-TEF) and (2) the final rating and evaluation of the of the experience by both trainees through the [Post-Traineeship Evaluation Form](#) (Post-TEF) and TNPs through the [TNP Evaluation Form](#). The Hosting Group is responsible for reminding the respective TNPs and trainees to fill in the final evaluation forms, whilst EI is responsible for sharing the Pre-TEFs with the selected applicants EI sends certificates directly to trainees and TNPs who have completed both evaluation.

5.3. ELSA Traineeships Calendar

The programme structure is strictly defined in the [ELSA Traineeships Calendar](#). The Calendar is published by EI at the beginning of each term, and it sets the deadlines which shall be respected by Officers on every level across the ELSA Network.

5.3.1. JH Deadline

The date by which each [Traineeship Specification Form](#) (TSF) must be submitted to EI in order for the respective TNP to take part in the-Cycle.

5.3.2. Countdown and Launch

An international marketing campaign coordinated by EI throughout the week before the Launch, i.e. the date when all ELSA traineeships are published and the Student Application Form (SAF) becomes available on the ELSA Traineeships website.

5.3.3. ELSA Traineeships Promotion

ELSA International coordinates a promotion campaign for both Student Hunting Periods. It has the aim to showcase general information regarding the traineeships programme as well as experiences and testimonials from trainees, Traineeship Providers and events at the local and national level. The schedule and guidelines for the marketing campaign are shared by EI before each Launch.

5.3.4. External SH Deadline

The date by which the SAFs must be submitted online.

5.3.5. Internal SH Deadline

The date by which local and national Professional Development Officers must have verified and approved all applications by their respective ELSA members in the SOS.

5.3.6. Matching

The period during which EI shortlists the applications meeting the requirements specified by TNPs. After Matching is completed, a list of qualified applicants is provided by EI to the TNPs, available in the TPI.

5.3.7. Selection Results Deadline

The date by which TNPs must have completed the final selection of applicants to whom they wish to send a traineeship offer. EI notifies directly the applicants about the selection results via email.

5.3.8. Earliest Traineeship Start

The date of the earliest possible start of traineeships. Traineeships may start flexibly any time after this date.

5.4. Communication tools

5.4.1. Professional Development mailing list

The Professional Development mailing list (ELSA-STEP@listserv.elsa.org) reaches the inbox of each local, national and EI PD Officer. To subscribe to the mailing list, simply send an email to the VP PD of EI (professionaldevelopment@elsa.org). Generally, only national Officers write to the list, and thus local Officers wanting to reach out to the list should approach their respective national Officer first.

Be cautious when responding to a message sent from the list – your reply is sent to everyone on the list as default. Avoid attaching large files to your emails and rather provide a link to any documents, if possible.

Examples when to use the Professional Development mailing list:

- Introducing yourself to the other PD Officers;
- Disseminating your NGs autumn and spring activity reports before the ICMs;
- Sharing events available to international participants in your country; and
- Discussing proposals before an ICM.

5.4.2. Facebook

The [ELSA Professional Development Team Facebook group](#) is open for all local and national PD Officers. The group is used to post PD-related reminders, information, and more informal content. However, please avoid contacting the Vice President for Professional Development of ELSA International on Facebook, and rather resort to sending the message on Slack or via email to avoid your message being unattended.

Moreover, whenever EI shares a publication on Facebook (and other social media alike), make sure to share the post with your ELSA network!

6. Job Hunting (JH)

JH refers to the acquisition of new and the maintenance of old TNPs which are promoted on the ELSA Traineeships website twice a year when the application period is open. JH is conducted on all levels by Officers throughout the year. Ideally, JH starts as soon as you start your term in office as this may help you to establish good professional relations with the TNPs. All the JH documents are available under the [Professional Development section of ELSA Officers Portal](#).

Due to the recent circumstances and challenges presented by the outbreak of the novel COVID-19 virus, remote ELSA Traineeships were introduced as a means of continuing the traineeship Programme in a socially responsible way. You may refer to the new [Annex for Online Traineeships](#) for further information and guidelines.

6.1. New TNPs

6.1.1. Scope of search

ELSA Traineeships must be offered in a law-related area, yet the TNPs do not have to be law firms. The general rule is that the TNP must be able to provide legal work of some kind to a trainee.

Officers can freely contact organisations which are located in their respective territory. If you wish to approach an “**international contact**”, i.e. law firms situated in five (5) or more countries with over 100 legal professionals (as stated on their website), or other organisations active in more than five (5) countries, you must first request for the permission of EI (see the “External relations” part of the DB).

Please note that NGs must contact EI through the [Contact Approval Form](#) when they want to approach an **international contact** ! And vice-versa, EI must contact the NG when it wants to approach that NG’s **national contact**. Similarly, if you wish to approach an organisation located in another country, you must first request for the permission of the NG in that country or EI.

6.1.2. Tips

- Check what types of ELSA Traineeships have been offered previously in other countries;
- Contact your local/national ELSA alumni;
- Check with which organisations your ELSA Group is already collaborating/partnering;
- Use personal contacts of your own and the members of your ELSA Group;
- Get support from your university (a recommendation from a professor for ELSA is valuable and persuasive in JH); and

- Check different legal directories (e.g. Legal 500, Chambers & Partners, Martindale-Hubbell International Law Directory) and LinkedIn for inspiration who to contact.

6.1.3. JH contact database

Creating and maintaining a database of organisations and contacts is strongly encouraged for proper and sustainable knowledge management purposes.

- The database could be created on the national level and shared with all the LGs.
- The information included in the database should cover *inter alia* whether the organisation has been contacted already (when, by whom, what was the outcome), the area in which the organisation is active, etc.
- It is beneficial to collaborate with the President in creating and maintaining the database to avoid unnecessary collusion in external relations strategy. Moreover, when the President is negotiating partnership packages, note that ELSA Traineeships can be incorporated therein.
- The Secretary General can assist in gathering information about your alumni network.

6.1.4. Approaching a prospective TNP

As the representative of ELSA, you enter negotiations with prospective TNPs as an equal (cf. B2-B2), having something of added value to offer to them.

- Do your research! Familiarise yourself with the organisation's history, work, expertise, and method of recruiting its staff (interns in particular). This enables you to personalise the contact and directly draw the organisation's attention to the reasons why getting a trainee will be so beneficial to them specifically.
- ELSA Traineeships have the potential for establishing wider future cooperation between the organisation and ELSA (e.g. judging a moot court competition, providing a lecture at an ELSA Winter or Summer Law School, etc.). Thus, it may be a good idea to model your approach with this in mind, reflecting the organisation's interests on the basis of your ground research.
- There are various options regarding who to contact from an organisation. If you have a personal contact, approach them directly or ask them who is the best suited person to approach. Alternatively, look for the contacts in charge of the human resources and recruitment, or the managers of the given organisation/department.

6.1.5. Email

For the first email to a prospective TNP (see below sample email):

- Prepare a short description about ELSA Traineeships and ELSA (our reach and diversity, facts and figures, prestigious partnerships, etc.);
- Explain how the organisation's role as a TNP would look like;
- You can attach informative promotional material to the email in order to cover the basics more efficiently (collaborate with the Marketeer to create a strategy and promotional materials to grasp the attention of the prospective TNPs even more effectively);
- Use a formal tone and keep it concise – organisations generally grant only a glance to unsolicited emails like these, so you must work to catch their attention;
- Avoid using abbreviations and mass campaigns as much as possible (serial emails frequently end up in the junk folder automatically).

Having a follow-up strategy is crucial, since the organisations do not often respond to the first email. For example, it is recommended to call the organisation some workdays after your first contact.

6.1.6. Phone call

A phone call might be more efficient and effective than an email, and beneficial when you are seeking for the right person to approach at the organisation.

- If you have sent an email before, referring thereto creates a good ground to proceed.
- During the call, try to arrange a personal meeting or get permission to send further information via email as a follow-up.
- Preparing a script to sell ELSA Traineeships and ELSA before the call is a good idea, as you should aim to keep the call again as concise and professional as possible.

6.1.7. Personal meeting

Have in mind what you want to get out of the meeting – the goal of a personal meeting should be to close the deal and fill out the TSF with the organisation.

- You represent ELSA, a professional and prestigious Network, so dress up and prepare accordingly!
- Have some promotional materials with you at the meeting, including e.g. your business card and brochures of your Group's events of interest to the organisation.
- Consider taking your fellow board member (e.g. the President, the Marketeer) or a member from your Professional Development team to the meeting with you.

Below is a **sample email** for reference:

<i>Title</i>	E.g. “Interns from the European Law Students’ Association”
<i>Introduction</i>	<p>Dear Mr./Ms. _____,</p> <p>My name is _____ and I am the Vice President in charge of the legal recruitment and traineeship programme of the European Law Students’ Association in _____.</p> <p>I am contacting [<u>name of the organisation</u>] since you actively work with [<u>the area of activity, e.g. human rights advocacy and medium-length projects in different jurisdictions</u>]. I am confident that your organisation would substantially benefit from a greater exposure to ELSA members.</p> <p>ELSA is the world’s largest independent association for law students and young lawyers. We are present in 44 countries and reach over 55,000 members at more than 300 universities in Europe. Although non-political, ELSA stands for human rights and cultural diversity, and campaigns internationally for causes such as the rule of law.</p>
<i>Body</i>	<p>One of the most popular initiatives of ELSA is ELSA Traineeships whereby we provide organisations like yours for free with a streamlined recruitment method for the best talent in accordance with your needs and preferences. You will view only the applications of the candidates fulfilling your requirements which you specify simply by filling the Traineeship Specification Form.</p> <p>There are two intakes for organisations per year, the next deadline approaching in [<u>amount of time</u>] on [<u>the JH deadline</u>] . [<i>You can explain the time-line more in detail here.</i>]</p>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<p>How does this all sound to you? For further information, please do not hesitate to contact me – I am happy to discuss matters further with you. Attached to this email you can find more information about ELSA Traineeships and its benefits. I look forward to hearing from you soon and wish you a great rest of the day!</p>

6.2. Arguments

6.2.1. The benefits of becoming an ELSA Traineeship Provider

- Visibility and access to the ELSA Network of an active and aware-minded future generation of legal professionals from 44 different NGs by being advertised on the ELSA Traineeships website (featuring their logo and description);
- A streamlined recruitment tool customised to the needs and preferences specified by the TNP (the TNP may be very specific and e.g. require a certain language skill or expertise in a certain field of law);
- Only the best applications fulfilling the specifications of the TNP are short-listed by ELSA and presented to the TNP;
- Internationality of the ELSA Traineeships trainees provide many benefits, as cultural exchange is crucial for any organisation to endure rapid globalisation;
- Participating in ELSA Traineeships is completely free – there is no fee for being featured as a TNP on the ELSA Traineeships website twice a year;
- The TNP may interview or test the short-listed applicants before deciding on the final selection and the traineeship offers; etc.

6.2.2. Frequently heard arguments against ELSA Traineeships

“We are not a law firm” / “we do not do any legal work”

- ELSA Traineeships do not have to be purely legal. Trainees may be recruited for general support work or even a specific project (e.g. researching about data privacy compliance, analysing different strategies, etc.).
- Check for examples of similar “non-law” organisations which have engaged in ELSA Traineeships successfully.
- If the organisation does not seem to be able to provide any law-related work, try not to lose the contact nevertheless as they might be interested in cooperating with ELSA in the future.

“Our company is too small to offer any meaningful work for an intern”

- Check for examples of similar “small” organisations which have engaged in ET successfully.
- Emphasise how getting a trainee is very beneficial since it is very resource-efficient and enables the organisation to expand their portfolio.

“We have our own internal recruitment system which works perfectly well”

- ELSA Traineeships reduces the administrative burden of organisations, and thus it can be a valuable supplement to the organisation’s own recruitment system.
- ET reaches talent from 44 NG’s and even beyond, thus expanding and diversifying the pool of qualified candidates to recruit.
- ET promotion makes the organisation’s brand and work known across the ELSA Network.

“Having a trainee creates more losses than benefits”

- Identifying the right tasks right from the beginning brings benefits both ways, and this is where your initial research about the organisation is crucial (create the need for a trainee).

“We are not international” / “we work with national law only”

- An international trainee can diversify the work environment, contributing with more innovative ideas through e.g. comparative legal research.
- The organisation can specify in the TSF the exact legal and language skills they require from a trainee, thus ensuring that the short-listed applicants forwarded by ELSA are fit to handle the line of (even jurisdiction specific) work at the organisation.
- Inquire whether the organisation has any ambition to expand to new markets and networks, as getting a trainee contribute towards the achievement of that objective.
- Some trainees have a special experience and interest in getting acquainted further with the specific jurisdiction and legal culture.

“We cannot pay (more)” / “We have already created the budget for this business year”

- Getting a trainee is a resource-efficient way of recruiting talent, as the procedure is simplified and streamlined for the TNPs’ net benefit.
- The remuneration for a trainee should simply cover the costs of living in the given country (i.e. accommodation, food and/or transport).
- Mention unpaid traineeships as the last resort – emphasise the possibility of providing in-kind payment/fringe benefits where the organisation cannot offer monetary payment.
- In any case, the organisations could include a trainee for the next year’s budget – schedule another meeting in advance of fixing the budget.

“The ELSA Traineeships trainee can just cancel its participation the last minute”

- This is a legitimate concern, but ultimately a normal risk involved in business generally (cf. the internal recruitment system of the organisation faces likely the same risk).
- The trainees need to sign the Traineeship Agreement (**TA**) with the TNP, and if this is done before starting to work, there is a contract to rely on when e.g. claiming for restitution against damages caused by a last minute cancellation as specified in the terms and conditions of the said contractual document. Moreover, the TNP may require the trainee to sign any other contract (conforming to respective law) to safeguard the former against cancellations.
- When ranking the applicants, the TNP should think about creating a waiting list from which ELSA can swiftly notify another candidate in case of a cancellation.

“We cannot be sure if the candidates actually possess the alleged skills and qualities”

- Each application is verified and approved on local, national and international levels.
- TNPs may request for *inter alia* recommendation letters, transcripts, and even a sample of legal writing (by specifying this in the TSF).
- Before confirming their final selection by the Selection Results deadline, TNPs may request for an interview with the short-listed candidates, and/or arrange a test which these candidates must complete (e.g. writing a case summary or an input paper on a given topic within a fixed time-frame).

6.3. Existing TNPs

Take good care of your TNPs – make them feel appreciated!

- Engage TNPs with progress reports and remind them about the upcoming deadlines (this may help minimising the risk of unwanted cancellations by the TNP).
- Keep TNPs informed about ELSA and encourage them to get involved in other projects and events in which they could potentially be interested.
- Provide TNPs with updates about their promotion to the Network (e.g. how many applications were received in the end, etc.).
- Invite them to your NCMs or other events organised by your NG/LG.

At the end of the Cycle (e.g. when the selection is completed, or the Trainee has already arrived to work), slip the question whether the TNP would like to continue receiving trainees in the next Cycle. Remember to request the TNP to fill in the evaluation form (and provide a testimonial e.g. for future marketing purposes).

6.4. Traineeship Specification Form (TSF)

[The Traineeship Specification Form](#) (TSF) is filled in by TNPs. Nevertheless, a PD/ELSA Officer may complete the TSF on behalf of the TNP with an explicit permission to do so. The TSF should be filled in and submitted online by the JH Deadline. On the Officer Portal you can find the online and the printable version of the TSF.

The TSF constitutes a **contract between ELSA and the TNP**. The contract requires the TNP to fulfil a set of specified obligations of due diligence when filling in the TSF (*inter alia* providing a copyright-free images and materials) and in case the TNP chooses to have trainees.

In case the TNP does not fill in the TSF themselves, Officers should make them sign the TNP Contract separately.

6.4.1 Information about the Traineeship

- **Location of the Traineeship:** The Traineeship may take place either “on-site” physically or “remotely.”
- **Starting and ending date** = If the TNP has a flexible timeframe in mind during which it could receive trainees, mark down the earliest and latest dates of this timeframe (“preferred start date”, “preferred end date”). Please remember that the starting date is specified in the ELSA Calendar and that the traineeship **cannot start before that date**.
- **Trainee duration** = If the TNP has a flexible duration in mind, mark down the minimum and maximum length of duration of this scale, indicating the relevant time unit (i.e. week, month).
- **Number of hours per week** = The indicative workload of trainees
- **Number of Trainees you want to take** = The indicative hosting capacity of the TNP during the whole Cycle (not simultaneously necessarily)
- **Payment after deductions** = If the remuneration amount is flexible, mark down the minimum and maximum amounts of this scale, indicating the relevant currency of payment and the time unit (e.g. €100/week).
- **Other benefits** = In-kind payments in fringe benefits, which the TNP should further specify at the bottom of the TSF under “additional information”.

6.4.2. Educational level

The education requirement is a minimum requirement, i.e. where the TNP requests for “graduate bachelor”, undergraduate students are not eligible to apply whereas both graduate bachelor, graduate master, and postgraduate PhD applicants may all apply.

- **Undergraduate** = The applicant has not received his/her first Bachelor's degree yet and is still enrolled in the Bachelor studies by the start date of the Traineeship.
- **Graduate Bachelor** = The applicant has graduated with a Bachelor's degree by the start date of the Traineeship.
- **Graduate Master** = The applicant has graduated with a Master's degree by the start date of the Traineeship.
- **Postgraduate PhD** = The applicant is pursuing or has completed higher education (PhD).

6.4.3. Language skills

The TNP may request under this section for **up to three (3) language skills**. Like the other sections, this one is considered as a mandatory requirement during Matching. Thus, any preferences, which are not strict requirements, should be further elaborated under the “additional information”.

- **Basic** = Cf. A1/A2; the applicant has an overall understanding of the language and can communicate in simple terms, engage in routine tasks, etc.
- **Good** = Cf. B1/B2; the applicant has deeper understanding of the language and can communicate concrete matters and even some analytical and abstract concepts.
- **Fluent** = Cf. C1/C2; the applicant can understand complex communication and communicate with spontaneity and ease, including technical discussions in the field of his/her professional/academic specialisation, with native speakers.

6.4.4. Legal skills

A new limitation was introduced at ICM Baku in 2019. For traineeships requiring undergraduates, the TNP may specify up to two (2) advanced legal skills. Furthermore, the TNP may specify **a total of five (5) legal skills** required. If the TNP requests the possibility of adding more, they should do so in the “Additional Information” section of the TSF.

- **General** = The applicant has completed a basic/introductory course on the subject, and thus is familiar how to navigate the contingent themes of this legal subject.
- **Advanced** = Building on the “general” level, the applicant has deeper knowledge in the subject by having taken an additional course to study the subject, conducted legal research on the topic (e.g. thesis, ELSA Legal Research Group, etc.), completed additional activities on the topic (e.g. work experience, essay competition, moot court, etc.).

7. Student Hunting (SH)

SH comprises of (1) promoting ELSA Traineeships to ELSA members, law students, and young lawyers generally, and (2) verifying the submitted SAFs. Similar to JH, SH runs around the year in terms of promotion, but it intensifies between the Launch and the External SH Deadline.

7.1. ELSA Traineeships promotion

Plan ahead! Create a strong ELSA Traineeships promotion strategy with the Marketeer at the beginning of the term in advance of the most intense SH period.

- **Countdown** = The week before the Launch, EI publishes countdown posters on social media channels to create a hype. Thus, these posts should be shared on national and local levels to spread the message as extensively and effectively as possible.
- **Marketing kit** = EI publishes a zip file with marketing materials (e.g. templates for social media posts and physical copies of promotional material, Facebook cover photos, etc.) around the Launch.
- Organise different events and campaigns on national and local levels to encourage the prospective applicants to apply for the opportunities, e.g. workshops on writing CVs and cover letters.
- Use the testimonials of your ELSA members who had done a traineeship in the past.
- Be creative with the use of social media channels.
- Seek agreements with external platforms to have them post about the ELSA Traineeships opportunities (e.g. university websites, students' portals, career websites, etc.).

7.2. SH frequently asked questions

Officers should be able to answer the questions of the prospective applicants, including the examples listed below.

“I am afraid my application will be rejected since everyone can apply for three Traineeships.”

- Applicants can see the number of applications received for each Traineeship when the applications are open. This way, they may avoid positions that have received already many applications. Also, Officers may provide further information about the “availability” of the Traineeships.
- Applicants should focus on the quality of their application, including the motivation letter, and performing well during the interviews which may be conducted by the Traineeship Provider.

“I am too young/still an undergraduate applicant.”

- Undergraduate students should not be afraid of applying for ELSA Traineeships! A great percentage of the Traineeships are open for undergraduate students, cf. the requisite minimum level of educational level.
- Officers should have some testimonials of previous undergraduate Trainees to display.

“The procedure takes too long.”

- ELSA Traineeships give every applicant the best opportunity from a large pool of Traineeships in and outside of Europe. Thus, our Officers need to follow a serious and professional procedure in order to give fair consideration for each application.
- Moreover, Trainees are given the flexibility to choose the best place to apply and to agree the most convenient time for the period of doing the Traineeship with the Traineeship Provider.

“There is no personal contact with the Traineeship Provider during the process.”

- The Traineeship Providers are known by ELSA and the respective Officers.
- Officers should have at hand testimonials about Traineeship Providers by previous trainees and there is always a possibility of contacting previous trainees for direct feedback.

“I am afraid of living and working abroad for such a long time.”

- Trainees are welcomed by an ELSA Hosting Group in charge of the preparing and helping the Trainees before and throughout their stay.
- This means that the Trainees may get help when looking for housing, getting from the airport to the accommodation, finding Internet access, and so on.
- The Hosting Group organises events for the Trainees and may even invite them to general ELSA events in order to foster mutual understanding between different cultures and to assist the Trainees to get familiarised with the surroundings of the Traineeship.

“I do not have the financial capacity to participate in ELSA Traineeships.”

- All Traineeships, apart from the “pro bono” ones that generally only hire volunteers, are paid to the level that they should cover the general living expenses (i.e. modest accommodation, food) in the respective country of the Traineeship.
- Applicants, however, need to cover the expenses related to *inter alia* their travels and visa but note that ELSA Traineeships enable you to apply for external funding in many cases (e.g. Erasmus+ if your Traineeship is longer than eight weeks in duration)

7.3. SAF, step by step

7.3.1. Membership

- Only ELSA members may apply for ELSA Traineeships.
- Individuals from countries not covered by an ELSA Group may apply to ELSA Traineeships through the External Applicant status subject to the payment of the External Applicant Fee. The Fee is decided at the discretion of EL.
- Local and National Officers must be in contact with the applicants and check their alleged membership in the LG/NG at issue (collaborate with e.g. your Secretary General).

7.3.2. English language

- The SAF must be filled in English in its entirety, including the motivation letter and the CV.
- Any additional documents, as requested by the TNP, may be in another language than English if so specified or appropriate in the circumstances.

7.3.3. Substantial connection

Applicants cannot apply for ELSA Traineeships opportunities hosted in the country of their respective ELSA Group (e.g. a member of ELSA United Kingdom could not apply for an ELSA Traineeships organised in the UK even if the applicant was not a UK citizen), unless:

- If the traineeship is an “international” one (TN code “EI”) and organised in a country where a NG exists, the members of that NG are also eligible to apply for that opportunity (e.g. the Council of Europe traineeships organised in France are available for members of ELSA France as well).
- If the member of a NG is an exchange student or a postgraduate student who studied elsewhere prior, that applicant may apply for ELSA Traineeships opportunities in the country where the NG exists.

7.3.4. Number of applications

- Each applicant may submit one SAF per each Cycle.
- Each applicant may apply for up to three different ELSA Traineeships opportunities per SAF.

7.3.6. Educational background

- The names of the universities written by the applicant will be visible to the TNP directly.
- Ensure that the applicants' study level matches with the minimum requirements of the TNP. It is sufficient that the applicant reaches the required study level by the time of starting at the traineeship (e.g. an undergraduate applying in the spring for a ELSA Traineeships requiring "graduate bachelor" and starting after the applicant's graduation date).

7.3.7. Language/legal skills

- Ensure that the applicants' language/legal skills match with the minimum requirements of the TNP.
- For each language/legal skill claimed by an applicant, local or national Officers must verify the alleged level by collecting certificates or other proof (cf. section below on verification).

7.4. Verification of applications

After the SAF has been submitted by the applicant, the respective local/national Officer can view it in the SOS. Thus, it is important that you actively log into the SOS and keep an eye on the new applications appearing for your review between the Launch and the External SH Deadline.

When there is a new SAF, it needs to be reviewed and accepted by both local and national Officers in the SOS. The local Officer should contact the applicant as soon as possible after noticing the SAF in the SOS, and verify at least the following before approving the SAF:

- **Membership status** = Check that the applicant is actually a member of the LG;
- **Minimum criteria** = Check that the skills that the applicant alleges to possess meet all or most of the minimum requirements of the TNP(s).
- **Study level** = Check that the applicant's educational level by the start date of the traineeships applied for meets the minimum requirements of the TNP(s).
- **Language skills** = Check that the applicant has proof for each skill claimed.
- **Legal skills** = Check that the applicant has proof for each skill claimed. (Be cautious where the applicant claims to be advanced in multiple legal skills.)
- **Motivation letter + CV** = Check that the documents fulfil the necessary stylistic and professional requirements (e.g. political correctness, etc.).

In order to complete the verification process, please refer to the [Verification & Matching Guidelines](#) released by EI before each Cycle.

Once reviewed and approved by the local Officer, the SAF can be reviewed and approved by the national Officer. Only after the national Officer has approved the SAF in the SOS by the Internal SH Deadline, the SAF is forwarded to EI and the TNPs.

The SAF can be altered until the Internal SH Deadline by the respective local/national Officers if necessary (e.g. fixing the language skills, etc.).

7.5. Matching

Matching is conducted by EI after the Internal SH Deadline. During Matching, the applicants meeting the criteria of the TNPs are shortlisted and eventually forwarded to the TNPs to do the final selection.

Once Matching is finalised, the lists of qualified candidates appear in the TPI to which each TNP has their own login details. These login details are sent by EI first to the respective NG which shall forward the details to either the TNP directly or the responsible LG.

7.6. Selection

The final selection of ELSA Traineeships trainees is done by the TNPs independently of EI. The TNPs choose the number of Trainees they wish to receive and rank the candidates in the TPI in the order of preference. Remind the TNPs that they can rank even more candidates than they would like to take, since this way the TNP has a waitlist of candidates securing against any potential cancellations.

The selected applicants are notified via email by EI the latest by the Selection Results deadline.

8. Reception of ELSA Traineeships Trainees

Reception starts the moment an applicant is selected by a TNP and notified thereof by EI, and it continues until the end of the traineeship. Reception can be divided into (1) Trainee Preparation and (2) Trainee Integration. The Officer of the Hosting Group is the main responsible person for Reception, acting as the contact person between the trainees, the Hosting Group, and the TNP. The Officer of the Hosting Group should refer to the [Reception Quality Standards](#) in order to prepare their Reception Strategy and be aware of their responsibilities.

8.1. Preparation

8.1.1. Preparing the trainees

- Get in touch with the trainees and put them in touch with the TNP in order for them to settle the dates of the traineeship and fill out the TA.
- Send the trainees more information about the traineeship, the TNP, the city, the culture generally, etc.
- Maintain communication with the trainees after the initial contact (e.g. email, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, etc.). You can also create a group for the trainees arriving at the same time to your country/city.
- Help the trainees with administrative procedures where necessary (e.g. visa, insurance, work permit, taxes, etc.).
- Help the trainees to look for accommodation where necessary. You may e.g. provide suggestions for budget-friendly options, contact agencies, and go visit places on the trainees' behalf. Inquire whether any member of your ELSA Group would be prepared to host any trainees.
- Prepare some Reception events (e.g. a cultural night), and/or a calendar of social events in which the trainees could participate.
- Prepare a welcome package consisting of e.g. ELSA marketing materials, maps, transportation information, cultural information, etc.

8.1.2. Preparing the TNPs

- Stay in touch with the TNP throughout SH, Selection, and Preparation processes, and provide updates whenever appropriate.
- Maintain a shared calendar/Excel with the TNP about the trainees and their start dates. It is a good idea to share also a reception calendar with the TNP with the events and activities happening during the traineeship period.
- Remind the TNP at least one week before a trainee's first day at work and inquire whether everything is ready and in order for the TNP to receive the trainee.

9. Evaluation

Evaluation refers to the initial collection of the expectations and wishes of the trainee before the ELSA Traineeship begins and the subsequent collection of the final feedback from both the trainees and the TNPs. Receiving evaluations is of crucial importance, since it is a way to ensure that quality keeps on improving. In addition to periodically evaluating the experiences of the Trainee and the TNP already during the traineeship, the Hosting Group should ensure that by the end of the traineeship both parties submit a detailed evaluation of their experiences.

9.1. Evaluation documents

9.1.1. Pre-Traineeship Evaluation Form (Pre-TEF)

- The [Pre-TEF](#) is filled in and submitted by the trainees.
- ELSA International is responsible for reminding the trainees about filling in the Pre-TEF.
- Encourage the trainees to complete the evaluation by reminding them that they will receive an ELSA Traineeship Certificate from EI, and that good testimonials are published on the [ELSA Traineeships website](#).

9.1.2. Post-Traineeship Evaluation Form (Post-TEF)

- The [Post-TEF](#) is filled in and submitted by the trainees.
- The Hosting Group is responsible for reminding the trainees about filling in the Post-TEF.
- Encourage the trainees to complete the evaluation by reminding them that they will receive an ELSA Traineeship Certificate from EI, and that good testimonials are published on the [ELSA Traineeships website](#).

9.1.3. Evaluation Form (EF)

- The [EF](#) is filled in and submitted by the TNPs.
- The Hosting Group is responsible for reminding the TNP about filling in the EF. It may be a good idea to arrange an evaluation meeting in person or over the phone during which the EF could be filled, and the question of continuing as a TNP in the future could be smoothly slipped in.
- Encourage the TNP to complete the evaluation by reminding them that they will receive a Certificate of Appreciation from EI, and that good testimonials are published on the [ELSA Traineeships website](#).

10. Transition

Transition is crucial for smooth knowledge transfer and the maintenance of progress over the years and generations. Thus, transition has to be thoroughly planned, and the preparation goes on throughout the year to ensure that knowledge and the best tricks from each part of the year are properly accounted for.

Transition should start the moment your successor has been elected or appointed until the new term starts. However, you should be prepared to help your successor even after your term ends with any questions that may arise. The [\(STEP\) Transition Toolkit](#) was prepared in order to aid officers in their transition procedures.

The general transition should cover *inter alia*:

- ELSA knowledge (e.g. ELSA Vision, the Strategic Goals, the general tools, etc.);
- Information specific to your ELSA Group (e.g. the activity reports), NCMs, and other specific events;
- Creating the new general OYOP;
- Team Building activities;
- Training of soft skills (e.g. negotiation, project management, strategic planning, etc.)

If you did not receive transition, you can try to alleviate the situation by *inter alia*:

- If you are a local Officer, contacting your national Officer;
- If you are a national Officer, contacting the VP PD of EI or your PD Coach;
- Requesting the Officers of other LGs and NGs for assistance, since there might be someone who has been in your shoes, and since everyone has at some point been completely fresh to ELSA and ELSA Traineeships;
- Going through the materials, email, and the archive of your Group;
- Educating yourself by reading the materials as mentioned in this Handbook.

11. Contacts

11.1. Vice President in charge of Professional Development

Email professionaldevelopment@elsa.org

11.2. ELSA International

Email elsa@elsa.org
Facebook [/elsa.org](https://www.facebook.com/elsa.org)
LinkedIn [/elsa_org](https://www.linkedin.com/company/elsa_org)
Instagram [/elsainternational](https://www.instagram.com/elsainternational)
YouTube [/elsainfo](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsainfo)
Telephone +32 2 646 2626
Address Boulevard Général Jacques 239, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

11.3. Useful information

ET website [/traineeships.elsa.org](https://traineeships.elsa.org)
ELSA website [/elsa.org](https://elsa.org)
ELSA Officers Portal [/officers.elsa.org](https://officers.elsa.org)
STEP Online System [/traineeships.elsa.org/login](https://traineeships.elsa.org/login)
PD Mailing list ELSA-STEP@listserv.elsa.org

Other useful tools :

- [The International Council Meeting Decision Book \(DB\)](#) : The DB is an official record of all the decisions adopted by ELSA at ICMs, and it binds ELSA as a whole from local to national and international levels. *Make sure to read the Professional Development part of the DB!* It includes important regulations concerning the procedure, responsibilities & penalty system.
- [The Statutes and Standing Orders \(SSO\)](#) : the SSO is comparable to the “constitution” of ELSA, laying the foundations and purpose of ELSA (and Professional Development area).
- The [Professional Development section of the ELSA Officers Portal](#) the holy grail of any PD Officer. It contains useful documents statistics, handbooks (e.g. the Calendar, how to upload a TSF, how to approve a SAF, etc.), presentations, and marketing materials.