



Administrative Decision – ECDC/AD/2023/23

Administrative Decision on 'Rules governing the EU-track of the ECDC Fellowship Programme, field epidemiology path (EPIET) and public health microbiology path (EUPHEM)' Cohort 2024

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Related documents

List of relevant standards, legislation and documents	Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.
List of relevant ECDC documents	Manual for the ECDC Fellowship Programme EPIET and EUPHEM paths, Cohort 2024 Annexes to the Fellowship Manual for Cohort 2024

Abbreviations and definitions

EAN	Alumni Network
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EEA	European Economic Area
EPIET	Epidemiology Path of the ECDC Fellowship programme, formerly known as European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training
EU	European Union
EUPHEM	Public Health Microbiology Path of the ECDC Fellowship Programme, formerly known as European Public Health Microbiology Training Programme
FFO	Fellowship Faculty Office
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
MS	Member State
NFPTs	National Focal Points for Training
SGA	Specific Grant Agreement

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1. Introduction

ECDC shall support and coordinate training programmes to assist Member States and the European Commission to have sufficient numbers of trained specialists in epidemiological surveillance and field investigations, and to have a capability to control disease outbreaks.

The ECDC Fellowship Programme is a two-year competency-based training programme with two paths: the field epidemiology path (EPIET) and the public health microbiology path (EUPHEM). Both provide training and practical experience in intervention epidemiology at the national and/or regional centres for surveillance and control of communicable diseases and in laboratories with public health functions, acknowledged as collaborative training sites in the European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) Member States.

In the EU-track, fellows are placed in one of the EPIET or EUPHEM training sites outside of their country/ies of citizenship. Under the professional supervision of the training supervisor/s based at the training site, the fellows carry out field assignments and other activities related to the core competencies. The progress of the fellows is monitored by supervisors and scientific coordinators. The scientific coordinators review all the fellows' outputs during their two-year training programme.

This Administrative Decision governs the EU-track of the ECDC Fellowship Programme, field epidemiology path (EPIET) and public health microbiology path (EUPHEM), Cohort 2024.

The legal basis of this Administrative Decision lies in Article 9 (6), Article 5 (8) and Article 11a (1) of Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (the ECDC Founding Regulation):

Article 9 (6) 'The Centre shall, as appropriate, support and coordinate training programmes, in particular in relation to epidemiological surveillance, field investigations, preparedness and prevention, response to public health emergencies, public health research and risk communication. Those programmes shall take into consideration the need for training to be kept up-to-date, take into account the training needs of Member States and shall respect the principle of proportionality.'

Article 5 (8) 'By encouraging cooperation between expert and reference laboratories, the Centre shall foster the development of sufficient capacity within the Community for the diagnosis, detection, identification and characterisation of infectious agents which may threaten public health. The Centre shall maintain and extend such cooperation and support the implementation of quality assurance schemes.'

Article 11a 'Support for international and field preparedness and response' (1) The Centre shall establish a EU Health Task Force and ensure that there is a permanent capacity and an enhanced emergency capacity to mobilise and use it. The EU Health Task Force shall provide assistance with regard to requests for prevention, preparedness and response planning, local responses to outbreaks of communicable diseases and after-action reviews in Member States and in third countries, in cooperation with the WHO. The EU Health Task Force shall include the Centre's staff and experts from Member States, fellowship programmes and international and non-profit organisations.

During the two-year training programme, all fellows work towards a number of common learning outcomes, with specified levels for the EPIET and EUPHEM paths within the key competency domains, specified in the ECDC Fellowship Manual.

2. Scope and applicability

The objectives of the Fellowship Programme are the following:

- To contribute to strengthening the prevention, preparedness, surveillance and control of infectious diseases and other cross-border health threats or issues of public health concern in the EU/EEA Member States and at EU level, supporting the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371.
- To contribute to enhancing response capacities for effective field investigation and communicable disease control at European, national and community level to meet public health threats, in particular for the EU response to cross-border threats to health.
- To contribute to strengthening the European and global network of public health professionals through the use of state-of-the-art, shared standards and methods, good practices and common public health objectives.
- To contribute to knowledge transfers and capacity building within and between Member States.
- To facilitate innovative inter-disciplinary and multi-sector cooperation and communication to achieve the above objectives while adjusting to emerging needs.
- To contribute to the reduction of disparity across Europe in the prevention, preparedness, surveillance, and control of communicable diseases.

The Fellowship Programme is part of ECDC's efforts to strengthen the public health workforce in the EU/EEA and benefits significantly from the contribution of EU/EEA Member States in terms of training resources. Member States provide training sites, supervision of the fellows and expert facilitation for EPIET/EUPHEM training modules and are therefore key stakeholders in the programme.

In the EU-track, fellows are trained in a country other than their country/ies of citizenship, whereas in the MS-track, they remain in their country of citizenship/residency. A candidate for the EU-track with multiple countries of citizenship, must choose only one country to be ranked and scored by.

3. Governance

The ECDC Fellowship programme is governed by the ECDC governance mechanism which includes the National Focal Points for Training (NFPTs) and the Training Site Forum, being the operational contact points within the Coordinating Competent Bodies framework.

4. Eligibility and selection criteria of candidates

4.1. Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for the ECDC Fellowship Programme, candidates for both paths need to fulfil the following set of formal requirements:

- Have a thorough knowledge (minimum B2) of at least two official languages of the EU/EEA, one of which shall be English.
- Be a national of a Member State of the EU/EEA; and
- Be entitled to her or his full rights as a citizen.

In addition, depending on the path they apply for, candidates need to fulfil the following formal requirements:

Specific eligibility requirements for EPIET path:

1. Completed post-secondary education (university studies) attested by a diploma¹ in medicine, public health, epidemiology, veterinary medicine, nursing, biology, microbiology, pharmacology, biomedicine, bioinformatics or other health and social sciences, at the level of Masters' degree or equivalent²; and
2. At least two (2) years of work experience in public health or applied epidemiology. (Work during a PhD could count as work experience if it is in applied public health/epidemiology.)

Specific eligibility requirements for EUPHEM Path:

1. Post-secondary education attested by a diploma¹ in medicine, biology, microbiology, veterinary medicine, pharmacology, bioinformatics or biomedicine, at the level of graduate diploma, Masters' degree or equivalent²; and
2. At least three (3) years of work experience in microbiology; or a PhD degree in microbiology or equivalent (e.g. clinical microbiology specialisation, veterinary medicine specialisations, or a specialisation in any microbiology field).

4.2. Selection criteria

Fellows are selected based on criteria relating to professional and personal characteristics/interpersonal skills and the possibility to benefit from the programme. References to EPIET or EUPHEM in parenthesis below refer to the path that these skills and experience are most relevant for.

Professional skills and experiences

- Experience in public health and/or epidemiology (EPIET)
- Scientific background in microbiology, and skilled in microbiological techniques and softwares (EUPHEM)
- Scientific background in epidemiology, and a basic knowledge of biostatistics, including skills in epidemiological/biostatistical analysis and software (EPIET)

Personal characteristics/interpersonal skills

- Strong commitment to field epidemiology (EPIET)/public health microbiology (EUPHEM) in the EU/EEA
- Good organisational skills
- Ability to work in interdisciplinary teams, manage a broad range of responsibilities and competing priorities
- Good command of scientific writing and oral communication in English.

Advantageous criteria

- Experience in public health and/or epidemiology, including skills in epidemiological/biostatistical analysis and software (EUPHEM)
- Ability to undertake independent work, demonstrating logical, analytical and innovative thinking
- Experience of international activities and multicultural awareness

¹ Only diplomas and certificates awarded in Member States of the EU/EEA, or equivalent certificates issued by authorities in an EU Member State shall be considered.

² Time invested towards a Master's degree doesn't count as work experience

- Understanding the public health regulatory framework and requirements in the Member States

5. Selection procedure

5.1. Application

Applications should be made in accordance with the procedures established by ECDC (see below). All necessary instructions are published on ECDC's website in the section 'Call for Applications'. All applications are to be submitted within the deadline stated in the Call for Applications.

Part 1: Pre-selection process

5.1.1 Expression of interest from the Member States

Every year, ECDC sends an invitation to the NFPT requesting their expressions of interest to train EU- and MS-track fellows in the cohort of the following year. In this "Call for Expressions of Interest" ECDC asks the Member States to propose training sites interested in training a fellow in the ECDC Fellowship Programme, both for the EU-track and the MS-track. NFPTs should channel to ECDC expressions of interest from all acknowledged training sites, and potential training sites which need to apply to have a site appraisal. This is done by submitting a response form by the deadline stated in the invitation.

The Member State will inform ECDC about the sites interested in being a training site for the next cohort, as well as how many fellows they are willing and have capacity to train in each of the fellowship paths (EPIET/EUPHEM) and tracks (EU/MS). Note that only acknowledged training sites³ are eligible to train a fellow in the upcoming cohort, but the Member States can request to have a site appraised to become an acknowledged training site, in preparation to host a fellow.

In the first round of allocations of fellowship posts for EU- and MS-track for each path, no country will receive more than one post for each path. Prioritisations for EPIET and EUPHEM are independent from one another. Hence, Member States need to prioritise between EU- and MS-tracks for each path separately. This principle is to ensure that the number and geographical range of countries hosting fellows is maximised.

5.1.2 Number and allocation of fellowship posts

Based on financial resources available, ECDC will decide on the total number of fellowship posts each year and assign them to each track and path using the following principles:

- Each year a certain number of EU-track fellowship posts for each path are assigned. For planning purposes, the number of posts has been stable throughout the years, following consultation with the Advisory Forum and the NFPTs. The number of EU-track fellowship posts for each path is announced in the Call for Expressions of Interest to host a fellow, targeting the Training Sites.
- Allocation of the fellowship posts for the two paths among the Member States is carried out independently of one other. However, if the allocated post(s) for each path will not be filled by the Expression of Interest from the Member States, the post(s) could be given to the other path.
- For each path, priority will be given to Member States that have not hosted an EU-track fellow in that path in the previous cohort. Further prioritisation is based on the cumulative historical number

³ An acknowledged training site is a training site that has a) trained a fellow within the last three years or b) has been visited (the site visit may be virtual) and approved in the last three years or c) has had a successful training site appraisal no later than March in the year the cohort begins.

of EU-track fellows trained by the Member State in that path. Member States that have not been allocated a fellow will be put on a waiting list for that cohort.

- If the assigned number of EU-track fellowship posts in either of the two paths exceeds the number of countries expressing an interest to host fellows in that path, the remaining posts will be distributed among the countries that expressed an interest in training more than one fellow according to the following priority order:
 - First, to countries that have not been assigned a MS-track fellow in the same path that year
 - Second, to training sites without a fellow that may risk losing their acknowledgement regardless of path
 - Further prioritisation is based on the cumulative historical number of EU-track fellows trained by the Member State in that path (ranked from lower to higher numbers)
 - Finally, in the event of a tied ranking, ECDC will also consider the capacity needs of the countries and allocate unassigned posts
- The allocation results will be shared with all the Member States.

Part 2: Selection process

5.2.1. Call for applications

Candidates are selected through an annual 'Call for applications', in accordance with this Administrative Decision. The call is advertised on ECDC's website, together with all necessary instructions for application and information on the Fellowship Programme. Each candidate shall submit a curriculum vitae (CV) and a letter of motivation.

5.2.2. Selection committees

Two ECDC selection committees (one for each of the two paths), appointed by ECDC's Director, are responsible for selecting the fellows. The selection committees will be chaired by the Head of Fellowship Programme. This function may be delegated to another staff member within ECDC. The respective selection committees include the Head of Fellowship Programme, one scientific coordinator, one representative of the ECDC Fellowship Training Site Forum, one representative of the National Focal Points for Training who is familiar with the ECDC Fellowship Programme and has a scientific background related to the respective path, and one representative of the alumni network (EAN). Each representative should preferably have an alternate. The chair of the Selection Committee may decide to only have a Selection Committee with a minimum of three (3) members. This The Selection Committee should preferably have members with a balanced geographical representation of the Member States, and a rotation should be ensured to avoid having members sitting in the committee for several consecutive years.

5.2.3. First round – Scoring of eligible candidates and Shortlist with invited input from the NFPTs.

The ECDC Fellowship Faculty Office (FFO), in coordination with the Chair of the Selection Committees reviews the CVs, letters of motivation and online registration of all candidates for eligibility.

The FFO sends application documents from candidates to the Selection Committee, marking those candidates that are ineligible.

Each Selection Committee member will review and score all eligible candidates by a given deadline, based on the list of pre-defined selection criteria.

The FFO sends the applications of the eligible candidates to the NFPTs of the relevant EU/EEA Member State(s) for their review and scoring. The NFPTs review only the application documents of the candidates from their own countries.

Each Selection Committee decides on the candidates to be interviewed, taking into account the scores of the NFPTs. The Selection Committee strives to include candidates from each Member State, provided the candidate fulfils the selection criteria (with a minimum of 60% in each criteria).

If the candidate ranked by a Member State as number one, does not reach the minimum score, the chair of the Selection Committee will notify and clarify with the NFPT of that Member State.

Top-ranked candidates are invited for a virtual interview with the Selection Committee. The number of candidates should be sufficient in relation to the number of available fellowship posts for the respective path in that year and should allow to include a waiting list to be drawn upon in case a candidate declines the invitation for the virtual interview. The candidates will also be required to do a written test prior to the interview.

Candidates who applied to both paths of the fellowship and who are invited for the virtual interview of both paths, will be required to select only one of the paths for the virtual interview when they reply to the invitation.

5.2.4. Second round - Virtual interview with the Selection Committee and shortlist for training site market.

Each Selection Committee interviews and scores the candidates based on a standardised list of questions and the written test.

If any of the candidates selected for virtual interviews and written test is unable to attend or declines, a replacement is selected from the waiting list and invited to the virtual interviews.

Following the virtual interviews with the candidates, each Selection Committee creates a shortlist of candidates to be invited to the training site market (third round), whereby the number of candidates to be invited is again sufficient in relation to the number of available fellowship posts for the respective path in that year. This allows the Selection Committee to include a waiting list to be drawn upon in case a candidate declines the invitation for the training site market. The Selection Committee strives to include candidates from different geographical areas of EU/EEA to promote equal access to trained professionals from different Member States. The aim is that the number of invited candidates from one Member State should not be more than 20% of the total shortlisted candidates invited for the virtual interviews, separately for the EPIET and EUPHEM paths.

The shortlist for the Training Site market will include only candidates that the selection committees consider suitable for the Fellowship Programme, and the list will be presented in alphabetical order. The candidates with the highest performance in the selection process (as many as available posts for each path) will be indicated to the training sites without disclosing the specific scores.

ECDC informs all candidates of the outcome of the virtual interviews via e-mail.

Shortlisted candidates are invited to provide a list of their preferred training sites from the list of available training sites for that cohort (see 5.2.5).

If at any stage of the process it becomes evident that a candidate is ineligible, his/her application will no longer be considered and the candidate will be informed of the rejection.

5.2.5. Third round – Training Site Market and placement of fellows.

Third Round, first step - ECDC will invite at least as many training site representatives from Member States as there are fellowship posts available for the current cohort and path to the Training Site Market. A runner-up list of training sites will be created based on the prioritisation described under 5.1.2, in case a Member State/training site withdraws, or no candidate can be placed.

The runner-up training sites will not participate in the training site market but should be available to receive a candidate from the shortlist/waiting list.

FFO pre-schedules individual interviews with as many candidates and sites as possible for the Training Site Market. At the Training Site Market, the candidates meet with the training site representatives.

After the interviews are concluded, both the candidates and the training site representatives will express their preferences by ranking. There will be three levels of ranking (1-3) for candidates, where 1 represents the preferred site(s) and 3 the less-preferred site(s). Each candidate can rank up to four training sites in each level (1-3). The training site representatives will use the same method for ranking their preferred candidates but will only be able to rank up to three candidates in each level (1-3).

If a candidate is not willing to go to a specific training site, he/she should not rank that training site at all. The same is valid for the training site representatives if they do not want to host a specific candidate.

Third round, second step - Placement of fellows. After collating all the rankings from candidates and training sites, each Selection Committee will map out matches between the ranking of the candidates and sites. The selection committees strive to assign candidates to training sites considering the scores of the candidates and placement preferences expressed by candidates and training sites.

The assignment of places will be done by the order of the scores of the candidates and the following criteria will apply:

1. A 1-1 match between candidate and training site has priority over 1-2 and 2-1 matches.
2. In case of 1-2 or 2-1 matches, the training site preference prevails.
3. For all the other matches, the preference of the candidates with higher scores prevails.

While applying the above criteria, if more than 20% of the total shortlisted candidates share the same country of citizenship, possible matches of candidates from other countries should be explored first, to maximise the geographical representation in the Cohort.

The selection committees produce a report proposing the names of candidates for that year's cohort to the ECDC Director, who takes the final decision on the selection of candidates. Candidates that have not been placed with an available training site will constitute the waiting list.

5.2.6. Notifications and acceptance

ECDC notifies successful candidates by e-mail, with a deadline for accepting or rejecting the offer and confirming the dates of the fellowship period. Candidates who are on the waiting list will also be notified about their status by ECDC. If a candidate rejects or does not reply to the offer within the deadline, the next suitable candidate on the waiting list will be informed and will have to accept or reject the offer by the deadline indicated in the e-mail. The selected candidates should be assigned to a particular

training site and cannot postpone the start of fellowship to the subsequent Cohort. The final composition of the year's cohort is announced when all parties have accepted their respective offers.

5.2.7. Protection of personal data

Any personal data collected by ECDC will be processed solely for the purposes of the selection process and performance, management and follow-up of the ECDC training activities in accordance with [Regulation \(EU\) n. 2018/1725](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. The details on the processing of the personal data for the selection process can be found [here](#) and for the performance, management and follow-up of the ECDC fellowship [here](#). Data subjects have the right to access and rectify their personal data at any moment. For more information on personal data protection and related documents, reference is made to the ECDC website. Queries or requests concerning the processing of personal data may be addressed to the relevant ECDC data controller or the Data Protection Officer (dpo@ecdc.europa.eu).

Fellows are advised to contact their relevant training site for advice on personal data retained by the training site and its respective retention, processing and distribution.

Data subjects have the right of recourse to the [European Data Protection Supervisor](#).

6. Organisation

Fellows are placed at one of the training sites under the responsibility of a main supervisor, experienced in applied epidemiology (EPIET) or public health microbiology (EUPHEM). The supervisor must guide and closely monitor the fellow during his/her fellowship, acting as his/her mentor. An assigned co-supervisor will assist the main supervisor in scientific and practical issues. In addition to the main and the co-supervisors, a team of project supervisors shall be available to work closely with the fellow. For the EUPHEM fellows a dedicated epidemiology supervisor shall be assigned to support and supervise fellows with epidemiological competencies and facilitate the link between field epidemiology and public health microbiology. For EPIET fellows, where relevant, a microbiology supervisor should be assigned to support the fellow with microbiological content in her/his projects. The supervision time to be provided by the training site to the fellow should be, on average, a minimum of four (4) hours per week.

The training site shall grant the fellow access to supervised field activities and datasets in order to achieve the objectives of the training.

A team of scientific coordinators, based at ECDC and in Member States, and led by the Head of Fellowship Programme, shall provide guidance to fellows and assist supervisors on how to best develop the required field epidemiology and public health microbiology competencies, while promoting interdisciplinary work that equips them with tools and methods for collaborative practice.

The supervisor must immediately notify the Head of Fellowship Programme of any significant incidents occurring during the fellowship (in particular professional incompetence, prolonged absences, sicknesses, accidents, unprofessional behaviour, or interruption of the fellowship), which come to his/her attention, or of which the fellow informs him/her. Similarly, the Head of Fellowship Programme must be informed by the Training Site Representative if any incidents arise that affect the availability of the supervisor, such as prolonged absences.

7. Contracts and agreements

Fellows will sign an employment contract with the employer, and the place of employment will be the training site. Under a framework partnership agreement, a specific grant agreement will be signed between the relevant partner and ECDC, detailing the arrangements for hosting the fellow.

In cases where the training site is not the employer of the fellow, it is up to the parties involved to develop an agreement that will guarantee compliance of all parties to the rules laid down in the present Administrative Decision and in the training site agreement.

The training site shall reserve funding for travel within the country to perform duties related to the fellow's activities, including, but not restricted to, outbreak investigations. The training site may assign the fellow to perform training activities at other institutes or send fellows to another training site in other Member States if this is required to meet the training objectives within the timeframe of the fellowship.

8. Rights and duties of fellows

8.1. Duration of the fellowship

The fellowship is a full-time, 'learning-by-doing' programme and the training period lasts 24 months. Fellows who end the fellowship before 23 months will not be eligible for the EPIET/EUPHEM diploma.

Under certain circumstances, such as in case of serious illness, pregnancy, birth or adoption of a child, fellowship periods may be extended beyond the maximum length laid down in this Decision subject to (1) terms and conditions of the employment contract and (2) availability of funds at ECDC to cover the cost of salaries and participation in the EPIET/EUPHEM activities. The fellow shall inform the main supervisor, the Head of Fellowship Programme and FFO as soon as possible of the reasons and need for leave, keeping the Fellowship Programme and the training site informed of expected duration of leave and return date.

The aim of any potential prolongation is to achieve the minimum period of 23 months training. Under such circumstances, the extension will be approved by ECDC and the training site on a case-by-case basis.

8.2. Compliance with instructions and regulations

Fellows shall comply with the instructions given by their training site supervisors as well as with the present Administrative Decision. Fellows must respect the rules of the training site in accordance with their employment contract and national legislation.

8.3. Compulsory training activities

Fellows must take part in all compulsory activities organised under the auspice of the Fellowship Programme, respecting the timetables and schedules laid down by ECDC.

8.4. Confidentiality

Fellows must treat in strict confidentiality, facts and information that come to their knowledge during the course of their training. They must not disclose to any unauthorised person any document or information not already in the public domain. They will continue to be bound by this obligation even after expiry of their employment contract.

8.5. Conflict of interests

In this context, a conflict of interest exists when a fellow undertakes an activity which may conflict, or reasonably be perceived by a third party as conflicting with the interests of ECDC or the European Union, including anything which calls the independence and transparency of ECDC into question. If a conflict of interest should arise during their assignment, fellows should immediately report this to their supervisor and to the Head of Fellowship Programme. In the event that an international assignment for a fellow is proposed (see Article 12 on international assignments), the fellow shall complete a declaration of interest, which the supervisor and Head of Fellowship Programme shall review in order to determine whether there are any conflicting interests hindering the international assignment. Completed declarations shall be filed for reference.

Fellows are not permitted to enter into gainful employment, provide consultancy services, participate in other training activities or any activities, which may adversely affect the work assigned to them during the fellowship period.

Scientific coordinators and all actors in the Fellowship Programme are also required to ensure that they act independently of third-party interests in all aspects of their work.

8.6. Publications

Fellows must not, either alone or with others, publish or contribute to publishing any material dealing with the work of their training site without the prior written permission of their supervisor and frontline coordinators. Approved publications of EPIET and EUPHEM fellows need to include the affiliation of their respective paths, either 'ECDC Fellowship Programme, Field Epidemiology path (EPIET), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Stockholm, Sweden' or 'ECDC Fellowship Programme, Public Health Microbiology path (EUPHEM), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Stockholm, Sweden'.

Publications resulting from work not related to the training objectives under the fellowship or as a result of previous work, require prior permission from the frontline scientific coordinator. The publication may not pose a conflict of interest or negatively affect the achievement of the fellowship objectives in any way, and in case of any doubt, the frontline scientific coordinator should contact the Head of Fellowship Programme for decision.

8.7. Regular progress reports

Fellows must update their supervisors and their frontline scientific coordinators on their activities during the training period on a monthly basis, using the format proposed by ECDC.

8.8. Diploma

Fellows who have completed the minimum required fellowship period of 23 months and achieved all training objectives in accordance with the ECDC Fellowship Manual will receive the ECDC Fellowship Programme diploma, with reference to the specific path (EPIET or EUPHEM).

9. Absences

9.1. Holidays

Fellows should keep the same reporting working hours, have the same public holidays and entitlements to annual leave as the other staff at their training site. However, fellows cannot take holidays during compulsory training activities such as the Introductory Course, modules, and during ESCAIDE. ECDC will not reimburse to their partners monetary payments for holidays that have not been taken by the fellows.

The training site supervisors and scientific coordinators ensure that the above rules are respected. Leave requests should comply with the service needs of the training site and must be approved by the training site supervisor.

9.2. Sickness

In the event of sickness, fellows must notify the supervisor immediately and present a medical certificate according to the rules of the training site. In case of prolonged sickness, the Head of Fellowship Programme as well as the FFO must be informed, especially if the sick leave has implications which might prevent the fellow from participating in modules or any other compulsory fellowship activity.

Fellows must notify the training site supervisor and confirm their communicated return date from sick leave to the Head of Fellowship Programme and FFO.

9.3. Pregnancy and birth or adoption of a child

In the event of pregnancy and birth or adoption, fellows must notify the supervisor and the Head of Fellowship Programme as soon as possible and produce a medical certificate or the appropriate documentation for the training site and FFO.

In the event of pregnancy and birth or adoption, fellows are entitled to maternity or paternity leave according to the rules of the employer and within the duration of the framework partnership agreement (FPA) signed with ECDC. The training period may be extended in order to ensure the minimum length of 23 months to be eligible for the diploma.

During the above-mentioned leave period, the fellow is entitled to the benefits as foreseen in his/her employment contract. ECDC may cover salaries during this period only if these costs are mandatory, not covered by the social security system and provided that a specific grant agreement (SGA) is in place.

Fellows must notify the training site supervisor and confirm their communicated return date to the Head of Fellowship Programme and FFO in accordance with the national law, but at least 30 days in advance.

9.4. Absence without justification and notice

When fellows are absent without justification, the main supervisor of the training site will inform the Head of Fellowship Programme in order for decisions regarding consequences to be coordinated in terms of the FPA (ECDC) and employment contract (training site).

9.5. Exceptional leave

In the event of severe illness or death of close family members and in exceptional circumstances, fellows may be granted additional days of leave according to the employment rules of the training site.

10. Financial provisions and working conditions

10.1. In general, ECDC will only enter into framework partnership agreements with partners who are able to guarantee salary and ancillary agreed costs for the entire duration of the fellowship period, in relation to the fellows placed at their training site.

10.2. Whilst framework partnership agreements express the clear intention of ECDC to support the Fellowship Programme for each fellow for two years, ECDC can only sign specific grant agreements for

a maximum of 12 months with the training sites. Under the framework partnership agreement, ECDC nevertheless requires training sites to sign employment contracts with fellows for 24 months, prior to the start of the fellowship. All financial commitments foreseen in Article 10.4 below will be formalised in the employment contract between the fellow and their employer.

10.3. Fellows will receive a net salary from the employer equivalent to up to 24 months x (EUR 2 200 + correction factor), according to the duration of their fellowship. The maximum of 24 months applies to both EPIET and EUPHEM paths. The salary will be paid in monthly instalments and according to the employment legislation of the Member State.

In addition, fellows are eligible for the reimbursement of moving costs. Eligible moving costs include removal of household goods and transportation costs for the fellow and family members from any place within the EU/EEA to the place of employment and from place of employment to any place within EU/EEA, at the beginning and end of the fellowship respectively.

Based on the training site's conditions, fellows without family obligations are entitled to a maximum lump sum of EUR 2 500 whereas fellows with family obligations are entitled to a maximum lump sum of EUR 3 500⁴. Presuming that moving costs have been incurred, the lump sum will be divided into two equal instalments, one at the beginning when taking up the fellowship and one at the end of the fellowship. The fellow and the training site shall confirm that the moving costs were incurred

Language courses are reimbursed up to a maximum total of EUR 1 500. These are restricted to courses that teach the language of the country of training and need to be taken during the first year of the fellowship.

10.4. It is the responsibility of the fellows to check the package of mandatory secondary provisions (e.g. social security, pension, health insurance, etc.) that applies to them, as per the legislation covering the employment contract.

ECDC will not be liable for any breach of national legislation, either civil or criminal, by either the training site or the fellow. Neither will ECDC be directly liable to the fellows for any payments or reimbursements due to the fellow under their contract of employment with the training site.

ECDC will not reimburse the partner for any non-mandatory payments or benefits granted to the fellow (e.g. supplementary pension funds, additional per diems, overtime payment, etc.).

10.5. Should ECDC incur costs in defending any action resulting from the fellowship within the training site country, it reserves the right to seek legal recompense.

11. Place of fellowship

11.1. The placement of the fellow will be at the training site.⁵

11.2. Fellows are required to participate in training modules and courses organised in one of the EU/EEA Member States and may occasionally be deployed to Member States for projects with an EU dimension, and to international assignments outside the EU. Fellows may take part in elective modules and courses of the fellowship that occasionally take place outside of the EU/EEA Member States.

⁴ In this context, 'family' is defined by the national legislation of the training site country.

⁵ See Article 7

12. Projects tackling EU cross-border health threats and international assignments

12.1. During the fellowship, fellows might be offered opportunities for international assignments/missions by the training site or projects tackling EU cross-border health threats, or fellows might participate in assignments following requests by a third party. As part of the EU Health Task Force, fellows may be assigned tasks or deployed to respond to a request for assistance to support emergency preparedness or response to outbreaks or other public health events.

12.2. The Head of Fellowship Programme, or by delegation a scientific coordinator, reviews the relevant terms of reference and decides whether the proposed assignment is suitable for fellows according to the provisions of the international assignments' standard operating procedures.

12.3. Fellows interested in applying for international assignments, projects tackling EU cross-border health threats, requests by a third party, or provision for assistance to support emergency preparedness or outbreak response, will first seek the approval of their main supervisor to ensure the assignment will not interfere with the training outputs of the fellow. The training site also ensures the assignment is compatible with the fellow's employment contract. International assignments or requests by a third party are not a compulsory activity of the fellowship but represent a positive learning opportunity.

12.4. The party that requests the assignment/mission covers all costs (travel, accommodation, per diems and insurances) and shall provide ECDC and the employer with a copy of the terms and conditions before the assignment.

12.5. The fellow selected to go on an international assignment shall not receive any bonuses or salaries from the requesting party.

12.6. These assignments should offer a clear added-value and not be in conflict with the activities and projects conducted by the fellow at the hosting site of their employment.

13. Tax arrangements

13.1. Salaries paid to the fellows are subject to taxation either in the country of origin of the fellow or the country of employment. It is the responsibility of the fellow to independently ensure declaration of the salary and payment of taxation on the salary received.

13.2. In the context of specific grant agreements with the employer, and the calculation of the net month salary of the fellow, ECDC will only reimburse the employer for the income taxes paid in the country of employment and connected to the fellowship.

14. Interruption and termination of the fellowship and consequences

14.1. At the written request of the fellow, stating the relevant reasons and with proper justification, the training site and ECDC will jointly decide whether or not to accept the interruption of the fellowship. Should the interruption be accepted, the fellowship may be interrupted only once during its entirety for a maximum of one (1) month. The training site shall take steps to suspend the salary, given that during the interruption ECDC will not reimburse any salary costs. The fellow will not be entitled to reimbursement of any travel expenses incurred during the suspension period. In justified cases, the fellow may extend his/her training for a maximum of one (1) month with remuneration, to complete the unfinished part of the training, with the aim of achieving the minimum training period of 23 months.

14.2. If a fellow wishes to terminate his/her fellowship before the full 24 months of fellowship, the fellow must submit a written request to the Head of Fellowship Programme, via his/her main supervisor. The termination request must conform with the national law valid at the training site. ECDC will respond to the Training Site within 10 working days. Where appropriate, the training site will reimburse ECDC for any amount unduly paid.

14.3. Fellows must exercise their duties and behave with integrity, courtesy and consideration. The training site supervisor will inform ECDC of the following situations: if the conduct of the fellow does not prove satisfactory, if the fellow's professional performance or knowledge of the working language is insufficient for the proper execution of his/her duties; if it becomes apparent that the fellow has knowingly made false declarations or provided false statements or documentation at the time of application or during the fellowship period; if the fellow does not comply with Articles 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5, and in cases of unjustified absences. ECDC and the training site will coordinate the consequences in terms of fellowship (ECDC) and employment contract (training site). Any pre-term termination of the employment contract will be subject to the national employment legislation in force.

14.4. Notwithstanding the exceptions detailed in Articles 14.1, 14.2, and 14.3 above, the fellowship employment contract shall end upon expiry of the period for which it was awarded.

15. Final provisions

These rules will enter into force on the day following their signature.

Implementation of these rules may be defined in work instructions.