



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

**Purpose:** 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.

**Background:** The processes described in this Administrative Decision are based on the outcome of consultations with the Advisory Forum, the National Focal Points for Training (NFPs for Training) and the Training Site Forum, being the operational contact points within the Coordinating Competent Bodies framework. At its meeting on 15–16 November 2016, the Management Board also supported the processes described in this document. In 2019, an external evaluation of the Fellowship Programme was conducted.

**Description:** This Administrative Decision governs the EU-track of the ECDC Fellowship Programme, field epidemiology path (EPIET) and public health microbiology path (EUPHEM), Cohort 2021.



**Administrative Decision by the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) on Rules governing the EU-track of the ECDC Fellowship Programme, field epidemiology path (EPIET) and public health microbiology path (EUPHEM)**

*Article 1 – General provisions*

1.1. Scope

This decision governs the EU-track of the ECDC Fellowship Programme, with its field epidemiology path (EPIET) and public health microbiology path (EUPHEM). It applies to fellows as of Cohort 2021.

1.2. Legal basis

The legal basis of this Administrative Decision lies in Article 9 (6) and Article 5 (3) 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 order to assist Member States and the Commission to have sufficient numbers of trained specialists, in particular in epidemiological surveillance and field investigations, and to have a capability to define health measures to control disease outbreaks.'

Article 5 (3) '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.'

1.3. Organisation and objectives

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.

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 Decision 1082/2013/EU;

- 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-bordered 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 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.

EPIET and EUPHEM are complementary paths in field epidemiology and public health microbiology, respectively. Both paths recruit fellows in one of two tracks, the EU and/ or the Member State (MS) track. In the EU-track, fellows train in a country other than their country/ies of citizenship, whereas in the MS-track, they remain in their country of citizenship/residency.

This Administrative Decision governs the EU-track of the ECDC Fellowship Programme.

#### 1.4. Assignment of the fellows

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 activities related to the core competencies of their respective path. The progress of the fellows is monitored by supervisors and scientific coordinators. The scientific coordinators review all of the fellows' outputs during their two-year training programme.

During the two-year training programme, all fellows work towards a number of common learning outcomes in the following key competency areas:

- Public health surveillance
- Outbreak investigation
- Applied public health research
- Public health microbiology and laboratory investigations
- Public health management and communication
- Training and teaching

Biostatistical analysis. In addition, EPIET fellows develop further competencies in advanced statistics and EUPHEM fellows in bio risk and laboratory quality management.

### Article 2 - Eligibility and selection criteria of candidates

#### 2.1. 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) of at least 3 years attested by a diploma<sup>1</sup> in medicine, public health, epidemiology, veterinary medicine, nursing, biology, microbiology, pharmacology, biomedicine or other health and social sciences, at the level of graduate diploma, Masters' degree or equivalent; and
2. At least one (1) year of work experience in public health or applied epidemiology.

Specific eligibility requirements for EUPHEM Path:

1. Post-secondary education attested by a diploma<sup>3</sup> in medicine, biology, microbiology, veterinary medicine, pharmacology, or biomedicine, at the level of graduate diploma, Masters' degree or equivalent; 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).

## 2.2. Selection criteria

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

Professional skills and experiences

- Proven experience in public health and/or epidemiology (EPIET)
- Good scientific background in microbiology, and skilled in microbiological techniques (EUPHEM)
- Good scientific background in epidemiology, and a basic knowledge of biostatistics (EPIET)
- Good computer skills used for microbiological and/or epidemiological analysis

Personal characteristics/interpersonal skills

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

Advantageous criteria

- Previous experience in public health and/or epidemiology (EUPHEM)
- Ability to undertake independent work, demonstrating logical, analytical and innovative thinking.
- Experience of international activities and multicultural awareness
- Understanding the public health regulatory framework and requirements in the Member States.

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

### Article 3 - Selection procedure

#### 3.1. 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.

Candidates selected and assigned to a particular training site cannot postpone the start of fellowship to the subsequent year under any circumstances.

#### Part 1: Pre-selection process

##### 3.1.1 Expression of interest from the Member States

Every year, ECDC sends an invitation to the NFPs for Training 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 national training sites interested in training a fellow in the ECDC Fellowship Programme, both for the EU-track and the MS-track. 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 sites<sup>2</sup> are eligible to train a fellow in the upcoming cohort.

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.

##### 3.1.2 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 fixed number of EU-track fellowship posts for each path are assigned, with proportion between the paths based on guidance from the Advisory Forum and the NFPs for Training. For planning purposes, the proportion has been stable throughout the years, following consultation with the Advisory Forum and the NFPs for Training. 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. For each path, priority will be allocated to Member States that have not hosted an EU-track fellow in that path in the previous cohort, according to the rotation scheme in place since 2012. Member States that have not been allocated a fellow will be put on a waiting list for that cohort, according to their rank in the rotation scheme. However if the allocated post for each path will not be filled by Expression of Interest from the Member States the post could be given to the other path.
- 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

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<sup>2</sup> An acknowledged training site is a training site that has a) trained a fellow within the last three years or b) has been visited and approved in the last three years or c) has had a successful training site appraisal no later than December in the year of the Call.

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 an MS-track fellow in the same path that year
  - 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 in the rotation scheme, ECDC will also consider the capacity needs of the countries and allocate unassigned posts based on the number of alumni currently working in the Member State.
- After the fellowship posts for the two paths have been allocated to the Member States according to the above criteria, the results, including the allocated fellowship posts and waiting list/s, will be shared with all the Member States.

## Part 2: Selection process

### 3.2.1. 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.

### 3.2.2. 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 senior 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 have an alternate. In case an alternate is not available, the chair of the Selection Committee may decide to only have a Selection Committee with a minimum of three (3) members. The Selection Committee should preferably have members representing geographical distribution of the Member States and rotate to avoid having the same members in the committee for several consecutive years.

### 3.2.3. First round - eligibility check by ECDC

The ECDC Fellowship Faculty Office (FFO) and the Selection Committee members review the CVs, letters of motivation and online registration information of all candidates for eligibility.

In parallel, the FFO sends application documents from candidates to the NFPs for Training of the relevant EU/EEA Member State(s) for their review.

### 3.2.4. Second round – scoring, ranking, and selection by the selection committees with invited input from the NFPs for Training

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

The final short list of candidates for the face-to-face interview is established in two steps:

#### 3.2.4.1. A Selection Committee teleconference to define the shortlist for telephone or video interviews with candidates (first shortlist).

Each Selection Committee discusses individual applicants' scores during a teleconference and ranks the candidates, taking into account the scores. In parallel with the Selection Committee, the relevant NFPs for Training are invited to rank the eligible candidates from their countries. In the first shortlist, the Selection Committee strives to include candidates from each Member State, provided the candidate has reached a minimum score agreed by the Selection Committee.

If the Selection Committee shortlist contains a candidate that is not the one being ranked first by the NFP for Training of the relevant Member State, the chair of the Selection Committee will discuss with the respective NFP for Training, providing the possibility of including both (first ranked by the Selection Committee and the NFP for Training) in the shortlist for the telephone interview. If no candidate from a Member State achieves the minimum score, the chair of the Selection Committee will notify the NFP for Training of that Member State.

Top-ranked candidates are shortlisted and invited for a telephone or video interview with the Selection Committee. The number of shortlisted candidates will be sufficient in relation to the number of available fellowship posts for the respective path in that year and will allow to include a waiting list to be drawn upon in case a candidate does not accept the invitation for the phone interview.

3.2.4.2. Shortlist for face-to-face interviews (second shortlist). Following the telephone- or video interviews with the shortlisted candidates, each Selection Committee creates a second shortlist of candidates to be invited to face-to-face interviews (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 does not accept the invitation for the face-to-face interview. In this step, the Selection Committee strives to include candidates from different geographical area of EU/EEA to promote equity of trained professionals from different Member States. The number of invited candidates from one Member State cannot be more than 20% of the total shortlisted candidates invited for the face-to-face interviews, separately for each EPIET and EUPHEM path.-

The FFO informs all candidates of the results of the telephone interviews via e-mail.

Shortlisted candidates are invited to provide a ranked list of their preferred training sites from the list of available training sites for that cohort (see 3.2.5.2).

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

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

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.

3.2.5. Third round – face-to-face interviews and placement of fellows

The FFO organises face-to-face<sup>3</sup> interviews with the shortlisted candidates and the selection committees as a first step, and later with the available training site representatives as a second step.

ECDC will invite as many training site representatives from Member States as there are fellowship posts available for the current cohort and path. A runner-up list of training sites will be created based

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<sup>3</sup> Presential or virtual.

on the prioritisation described under 3.1.2, in case a Member State/training site withdraws or no candidate can be placed.

3.2.5.1. First step (face-to-face interviews). During the face-to-face interviews, each Selection Committee interviews using a standardised list of questions and scores the candidates. The selection committees present a final shortlist that will go on to the second step of the selection process. In this first step, the selection committees will determine if any of the candidates fail to meet the minimum requirements for the fellowship programme according to the selection criteria. These candidates are then informed of the selection committees' decision and do not progress to the second step.

3.2.5.2. Second step (Information Market). At the 'Information Market', the candidates can meet with the representatives of the training sites. The FFO pre-schedules individual interviews with as many of the candidates' preferred sites as possible. During the 'Information Market', candidates are able to sign up for interview slots with training sites they have not previously ranked.

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. Each candidate can rank up to three training sites in each level (1-3). The training site representatives will use the same method for ranking their preferred candidates: up to three candidates can be ranked in each level (1-3). Here again, 1 represents the preferred candidate(s) and 3 the less-preferred candidate.

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.

3.2.5.3. Third step (final placement): 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 taking into account the scores of the candidates, placement preferences expressed by candidates and training sites.

The criteria apply in the following order:

To maximise the geographical representation, if more than 20% of the total selected candidates share the same country of citizenship, the higher scores among those will have preference for the placement.

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.

The selection committees produce a report proposing the names of candidates for that year's cohort to the Director of ECDC. The Director takes the final decision on the selection of candidates based on the placement proposal resulting from the third step and the reports of the selection committees. Candidates that have not been placed with an available training site will constitute the waiting list.

### 3.2.6. 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 final composition of the year's cohort is announced when all parties have accepted their respective offers.



### 3.2.7. 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](mailto: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](#).

#### *Article 4 - 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 training site will provide individual supervision meetings for the fellow for an average of at least four hours per week during the fellowship. The training site will grant the fellow access to supervised field activities, to datasets and vital records 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, provides guidance to fellows and assist supervisors on how to best develop the required field epidemiology and public health microbiology competencies.

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.

#### *Article 5 - 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 this 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.

### Article 6 - Rights and duties of fellows

#### 6.1. 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.

#### 6.2. 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.

#### 6.3. Obligatory training activities

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

#### 6.4. 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.

#### 6.5. 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 10 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.

#### 6.6. Publications

Fellows must not, either alone or with others, publish or cause to be published any material dealing with the work of their training site without the prior written permission of their supervisor and frontline coordinators. Work carried out jointly with ECDC experts requires approval by the Head of Fellowship Programme and clearance by the Chief Scientist of ECDC. 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), Solna, Sweden' or 'ECDC fellowship Programme, Public Health Microbiology path (EUPHEM), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Solna, 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 Head of Fellowship Programme ). The publication may not pose a conflict of interest or negatively affect the achievement of the Fellowship objectives in any way.

#### 6.7. Regular progress reports

Fellows must update their supervisors and the scientific coordinators on their activities during the training period on a monthly basis, using the format proposed by the scientific coordinator's team.

#### 6.8. 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).

### Article 7 - Absences

#### 7.1. 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. Fellows cannot take holidays during mandatory 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 EPIET/EUPHEM 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.

#### 7.2. Sickness

In the event of sickness, fellows must notify the supervisor immediately and obtain 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 mandatory fellowship activity.

### 7.3. 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 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 the Head of Fellowship Programme and FFO in accordance with the national law, but at least 30 days in advance.

### 7.4. 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).

### 7.5. 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.

## Article 8 - Financial provisions and working conditions

8.1. 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 site.

8.2. 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 8.4 below will be formalised in the employment contract between the fellow and their employer.

8.3. 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 path. 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 (maximum total of EUR 4 000 for fellows without family obligations or EUR 6 000 for fellows with family obligations, divided into two instalments, one at the beginning when taking up the fellowship and one at the end of the fellowship)<sup>4</sup>. Eligible moving costs include removal of household goods and transportation costs for

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

the fellow and family members from any place within the EU to the place of employment and from place of employment to any place within EU, at the beginning and end of the fellowship respectively.

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 for the first year of the fellowship.

Training sites, together with the fellow, will estimate the amount of the budget for removal and languages. This should be indicated in the respective specific grant agreements (SGA). Any actual (incurred) amounts above the budgeted amount will not be eligible.

8.4. 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.)

8.5. 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.

#### Article 9 - Place of fellowship

9.1. The placement of the fellow will be at the training site<sup>5</sup>.

9.2. Fellows are required to participate in EPIET/EUPHEM training modules and courses and may occasionally be deployed to Member States for projects with an EU dimension, and to international assignments outside the EU. The Head of Fellowship Programme or by delegation an assigned scientific coordinator will indicate which training activities are obligatory and which are optional.

#### Article 10 – Projects tackling EU cross-border health threats and International assignments

10.1. 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 participate in assignments following requests by a third party. ECDC may also suggest mobilisation of fellows to respond to a request for assistance to support outbreak response.

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

10.3. 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 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 mandatory activity of the fellowship.

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<sup>5</sup> See Article 5

10.4. 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 of this coverage before the assignment.

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

10.6. 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.

#### Article 11 - Tax arrangements

11.1. 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.

11.2. 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. If fellows receive tax returns they should be immediately communicated to the employer, who will deduct the amount of the tax return from the net salary.

#### Article 12 - Interruption and termination of the fellowship and consequences

12.1. 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.

12.2. If a fellow wishes to terminate his/her fellowship earlier than the date specified in the offer letter from ECDC, 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 this request within 10 working days. Where appropriate, the training site will reimburse ECDC for any amount unduly paid.

12.3. 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 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5, 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.

12.4. Notwithstanding the exceptions detailed in Articles 12.1, 12.2, and 12.3 above, the fellowship employment contract shall end upon expiry of the period for which it was awarded.

Article 13 - Final provisions

13.1. These rules will enter into force on the day following their signature. They take effect from July 2020

Implementation of these rules may be defined in work instructions.

Signed in Solna, Sweden

05/08/2020

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Andrea Ammon

Director

Signed by: Mike Catchpole

Andrea Ammon  
Director