



Digital Opportunity TRAINEESHIPS

Developing digital skills abroad

Digital Opportunity Traineeships – an EU-funded training initiative – aims to help companies fill vacancies with digitally competent candidates.

Digital skills are not only required in the ICT sector, but increasingly across all sectors. Knowledge of cybersecurity, data analytics and machine learning for example are needed in fields as diverse as banking and manufacturing, farming and health. A computer-literate workforce is also vital to maintain Europe's global competitiveness in a fast-changing world.

Knowledge of digital skills also improves the life opportunities of citizens. For students and recent graduates, temporary work placements could provide a unique chance to develop digital skills at a faster pace than could be achieved through formal education, and increase their employability. To this end, the EUR 10 million the 'Digital Opportunity Traineeships' initiative will provide working experience in the digital field to up to 6 000 university students and recent graduates in 2018-20.

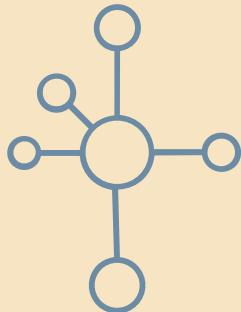
WHY NOW?

Some 37% of the labour force – which includes farmers, marketing specialists, bank employees and factory workers – currently lack sufficient digital skills, despite an ever-increasing need for them. Around 40% of enterprises, many of them SMEs, report that they have difficulty to recruit ICT specialists. As a result, there are at least 350 000 open vacancies due to a mismatch between the skills candidates have and the actual skills required by employers. This supply-and-demand gap is expected to grow in all sectors of the economy.

The Digital Opportunity Traineeships project will tackle this economic and social challenge by tapping into the dynamism of the private sector. Since many educational systems are still in a process of modernisation and adding digital education and development to their curricula, the digital skills gained on the job have never been more important.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The initiative, which is funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme and implemented through highly successful Erasmus+ Programme, will enable participants to gain valuable work experience through traineeships with businesses abroad. These cross-border traineeships will be made available to students from all disciplines keen to develop their digital skills.



The European Commission is interested in engaging companies – from SMEs to large corporations – that have the capacity to train students on the job, but do not necessarily have the resources or time to organise internships programmes on their own. No matter their size, many companies are struggling to find people with the right skills on the job market.

Companies can publish their offers on the platforms [Drop'pin@EURES](#) or [ErasmusIntern](#) or advertise them through direct contacts with university career or international relations offices. Students and recent graduates can then apply for placements through their universities, according to procedures established by their university for Erasmus+ traineeships.

Once on their traineeships, successful candidates will develop their digital skills via training and practice. This can include app development and software; installation, maintenance and management of IT systems and networks; cybersecurity; data analytics, artificial intelligence applications; programming languages; search engine optimisation (SEO) and digital marketing.

Students will receive an average allowance of EUR 500 per month via the initiative, but the precise amount will depend on the sending and receiving countries.

BACKGROUND

The Digital Opportunity Traineeships initiative builds on concerted European Commission efforts to tackle the skills gap and address high levels of youth unemployment. This follows key communications published by the European Commission, including '[A new Skills Agenda for Europe](#)' (June 2016), and '[Towards a European Education Area by 2025](#)'. These present a number of actions and initiatives with the ambition to tackle the skills deficit in Europe.



Secondly, the [**Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition**](#), the flagship initiative in the [**New Skills Agenda**](#) dedicated to the development of digital skills, was launched in December 2016. This brings together Member States, companies, social partners, non-profit organisations and education providers who take action to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe.



- ▶ <http://bit.ly/DigitalOpportunities>
- ▶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/opportunities>
- ▶ <https://erasmusintern.org/>
- ▶ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities_en

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