



Call for Short-Term Visit Applications at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission: Competence Centre on Behavioural Insights (CCBI)

Background

The **Joint Research Centre of the European Commission: Competence Centre on Behavioural Insights (CCBI)** and the **Department of Economics and Management** of the University of Trento have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of behavioural sciences and design for policy, and facilitate the hosting of **postgraduate students** during unpaid short-term visits (minimum 3 months) at the JRC in Brussels.

The Department of Economics and Management will identify a short list of potential students who can apply in the next months. The UniTrento selection does not guarantee approval from JRC: JRC will personally select the students, based on the short list provided by the University of Trento.

Position offered: two positions

In case of acceptance from JRC, the visit will be recognized as a compulsory internship (full-time). The selection and the internship will be managed by the Department of Economics and Management.

The visit is organized in the context of the EU Policy lab of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission: Competence Centre on Behavioural Insights (CCBI) and the Design for Policy team:

- The CCBI supports policymaking by providing evidence on human behaviour, with activities including running own behavioural research, providing expert assistance to other departments of the European Commission (EC) - to embed behavioural evidence into policymaking – and building EC capacity on behavioural insights.
- The Design for Policy team applies design tools and methods to improve and innovate evidence-based policymaking. The activities include running own research and experimental design projects, providing expert assistance and process design and facilitation to other departments of the European Commission – and building EC capacity on design.

Article 1 – Eligibility criteria

The current call for selection aims at selecting the best applicants among the 2-year students of the Master's Degree in Behavioural and Applied Economics who could take part in the visiting period at

JRC in Brussels. The JRC will then organize another selection based on the short list provided by the University of Trento.

In order to be eligible, the applicant:

- must be enrolled in the 2nd year of the Master's Degree in Behavioural and Applied Economics of the University of Trento for the a.y. 2025-26;
- must be a national of one of the Member States of the European Union;
- should be fluent in English;
- should have a good knowledge of Behavioural Economics and Public Policy topics.

Article 2 – Aim, context, duration

In the context of higher studies, the visiting student scheme aims to provide an understanding:

- of public policies benefiting from behavioural insights or design tools and methods;
- of the way in which policy needs are translated into research questions, are framed, and eventually translated into a specific project;
- of the methodological phases of a behavioural project or of a design for policy project (i.e., problem exploration, system mapping, actors and landscape mapping, interviewing and sense making, visualization of systems and interactions, problem framing and scoping, definition of insights, ideation, prototyping, testing, and reporting).

The scheme aims to enable the visiting student to acquire practical experience and knowledge on behavioural insights or design for policy while working in a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic environment.

The visiting student will be assigned to the **EU Policy Lab: Foresight, Design & Behavioural Insights** (Unit S.1) in the Innovation in Science and Policymaking Directorate covering the following agreed period that goes **from a minimum of 3 months** in the period March - July 2026.

In **Annex I**, you will find the ongoing or forthcoming studies of the JRC.

Article 3 – Tasks, functions and duties at JRC

The visiting students will:



- contribute to the work of the Unit/Team by applying the specific skills linked to their educational and university background.
- acquire specialised knowledge and practical experience of EU policies and mission, rules, procedures and activities of the Unit, in particular to what concerns the use of behavioural insights or design in policymaking.
- participate in meetings of different levels and collaborate in analysis, organisational, information, drafting, documentation, and logistic tasks of value to the service and to the visiting student.

The visiting students will collaborate in high-level research, administrative, and logistical tasks, such as:

- for behavioural insights: literature reviews, the definition of experimental protocols, data analysis and interpretation, co-drafting of reports (excluding responsibility for financial management and official negotiations and representation);
- for design for policy: running own research and experimental design projects, providing expert assistance and process design and facilitation to other departments of the European Commission – and building EC capacity on design

The visiting student will be guided by a supervisor from the Department of Economics and Management and from a representative of EU-JRC and must comply with the instructions and duties of each Institution.

Article 4 - Expenses and funding

The visiting student is not entitled to any remuneration or allowances from the EC-JRC and will be responsible for all expenses related to the visit.

The student can not apply for any scholarship of the University of Trento (ex. Erasmus, etc...) due to incompatibility.

Article 5 – Application and selection

Interested applicants must send the following documents to bea@unitn.it by **October 10th, 2025**:

- updated Curriculum Vitae in English;
- Motivation letter in English, where the candidate outlines the possible application of behavioral insights to shape public policies for sustainable development, and the reasons why they are interested in one of the projects listed in Annex I

- Any other document (paper, research project, ...) related to the research topic of the JRC that can enhance your application.

The UniTrento selection will consider:

- GPA average
- CV
- Motivation letter
- Other documents

The selection from the University of Trento will be done by the evaluation Committee. The evaluation Committee consists of Prof. Matteo Ploner, Prof. Roberto Gabriele, and Dr. Lorenza Zuccatti.

The JRC will organize another selection based on the short list of the University of Trento in two steps based on:

1. **Applicant's evaluation Interview** upon general and technical knowledge, and personal traits that could ease teamwork.

Article 6 - Processing of personal data

The University of Trento will process the personal data provided in relation to this Call in accordance with the [information notice on the processing of personal data](#) provided separately and in compliance with the relevant laws. The JRC-EC shall process personal data in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

CCBI Projects – 2025-2026

Which ongoing or forthcoming studies could visiting students be asked to contribute to?

The CCBI has several ongoing and planned studies. Below you can find:

- a short description of the projects which may benefit from support by a visiting student;
- the type of task(s) foreseen;
- the period in which support is needed.

1. Disaster resilience work stream:

- This project includes two studies, one a survey study on using communication to increase citizens' crisis preparedness, the other a virtual reality experiment exploring the susceptibility to misinformation during a simulated flood event.
- The survey study was designed in the summer of 2025. The student could help with the data analysis dependent on the timing of the traineeship.
- The VR study is already designed, and no further input can be provided. However, a visiting student could potentially support data analysis, depending on the time and length of the traineeship
- Survey study: Q2 – Q2 of 2026
- VR study: Q3 - Q2 of 2026.

2. Behavioural barriers to energy efficiency investments among EU firms

- This study aims at identifying the potential behavioural barriers to firms' investment in energy-efficient technologies and behavioural leverages to solve them. We are interested in 1) how much the firms have introduced practices to change their employees' behaviour to save energy in the workplace, including information campaigns, social norms, and workfrom-home arrangements and; 2) executives' willingness to apply for hypothetical national programs supporting investments in energy efficiency and how specific features of these programs can leverage certain behavioural factors to promote the adoption and diffusion of good practices. The project will take the form of a survey to firm executives in a certain number of EU countries and with a variety of firms depending on their sector, size and energy-intensity.



- Help may be needed during the analysis of the collected evidence, and promotion of the results of the study.

3. Education:

- Project 1: What promotes student mobility in the EU? This project uses a massive dataset from the Erasmus+ program to investigate the factors influencing student mobility in the EU.

Trainees working on this project are expected to come up with research questions and use the available data to address them. Experience in statistical programs, e.g., R or Python, is a plus.

- Project 2: Is there a bias in teaching? This project uses a large dataset of college syllabi from thousands of universities and across several fields to investigate potential biases in teaching higher education.

Trainees working on this project are expected to come up with research questions and use the available data to address them. Experience in statistical programs, e.g., R or Python, is a plus.

- Project 3: Are digital platforms friends or foes? A study on the link between digital media and academic achievement. The project is based on survey data that will be collected in the end of 2024. Before data collection, trainees are expected to work with official statistics from OECD and other sources on digital skills and to get familiar with the literature. After data has been collected, they are expected to come up with research questions and use the available data to address them. Experience in statistical programs, e.g., R or Python, is a plus.

- Project 4: AI in education. Can we safely integrate AI chatbots in university courses? How should universities invest in this integration? Analysis from a Discrete Choice Experiment.

4. Generative AI, the market for news, and polarization:

- Project 1: When people use AI to look up information, how does it affect both how accurate their findings are and how firmly they hold their beliefs? To find out, we gather data from an online platform where participants switch between asking an AI chatbot questions and working through standard survey items on EU policy. By looking at each person's results with and without AI help—tracking correct recall, how confident they feel, and their willingness to consider opposing views—we explore whether AI softens entrenched opinions or, on the contrary, pushes people further into their own ideological corners.

- Project 2: How does assistance from generative AI during writing processes influence the persuasiveness of arguments? To answer this question, the project assembles a rich, multilingual corpus of argumentative texts produced both with and without AI assistance.



Professional authors work in a controlled writing environment where every draft, revision request, and AI suggestion is timestamped and stored. Each finished text is analysed for its rhetorical devices and framing intensity. Persuasiveness, trustworthiness, and influence on cognitive biases are measured through a survey in which participants review the argumentative texts, randomizing disclosure on AI adoption, and update their beliefs on specific EU issues. Experience in text analytics is a plus for the trainee.

5. Biodiversity: setting a behavioural research agenda in line with future biodiversity policies

- This project aims to create a platform for open dialogue between behavioural scientists, natural scientists, and EU policymakers to explore behavioural research opportunities and integrate BI into biodiversity policymaking. Aligning the behavioural research agenda with the policy priorities of relevant DGs will lay the foundation for providing human behaviour evidence to support biodiversity policy.
- The project is exploratory and interdisciplinary, involving behavioural scientists, natural scientists and foresight experts. It has several workstreams: A literature review of behavioural science applied to biodiversity and an analysis of EU media discourse will feed into a DELPHI survey, assessing convergence between behavioural and natural scientists on research priorities. These findings will inform a final workshop with policymakers and scientists.
- Several possibilities:
 - o Making sense of all the outputs from the different workstreams
 - o Organising/facilitating the workshop
 - o Analysing the workshop outputs (qualitative)
 - o Writing reports

6. Increasing support and stakeholder engagement with nature credits

- The project aims to map and understand all stakeholders and their decision-making drivers to support and engage in voluntary nature credit markets. Stakeholders include businesses, investors, farmers, foresters, fishers and sea landowners. Ultimately, it aims to inform upcoming policies on nature credits. More specifically, the goals are to:
 - o Understand stakeholders' preferences regarding credit attributes, policy design, and market mechanisms;
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- o Assess support and acceptability of nature credits across key dimensions such as flexibility, verification, and credibility;
- o Identify behavioural drivers and barriers influencing stakeholders' willingness to participate to nature credits markets (both demand and supply side).
- o Develop interventions to increase nature credits uptake across all stakeholders.

Help can be used in 2026 for

- o Build a behavioural systems map based on a detailed methodology
- o Help organise and facilitate a working session with experts
- o Design the survey to stakeholders

7. Implementation of EU green policies in Member States

- The project aims to explore behavioural and systemic aspects at critical stages of the implementation process of EU green policies and provide country-specific recommendations on interventions that could mitigate barriers to implementation.
- The project is interdisciplinary, involving Foresight, Design for Policy and Behavioural Insights. It has several workstreams feeding one another, including literature review, behavioural systems mapping, surveys, interviews and possibly experiments with public administrations in particular.
- Help can be used in 2025 and 2026 for
 - o Organising and/or conducting interviews with public administration workers
 - o Data analysis (observational study on what is correlated with good timing and success of implementation)
 - o Gathering a set of relevant stakeholders who could take part in our workshops
 - o Extracting relevant information from literature review and data analysis to feed into the behavioural systems map
 - o Workshops and focus groups organisation and facilitation
 - o The building of the behavioural systems maps
 - o Writing reports

8. Behavioural public administration

- Behavioural Public Administration (BPA) is the predominantly inward-looking utilisation of behavioural insights in political and administrative settings. It studies the cognitive aspects of administrative processes, including biases and discriminations by bureaucrats, the interaction between public



authorities and citizens, and applies a behavioural science lens to the administrative side of public service failure.

- This project aims to establish an exchange between the (academic) field of BPA and the work of the Commission. On the one hand, it seeks to promote BPA's usefulness and methods inhouse by synthesising existing literature and insights for capacity building. On the other hand, it aims to communicate the needs of a large-scale public administration in implementing the outputs of the BPA research landscape in real-world settings.
- Help can be used in late 2025 and 2026 for
 - o Writing literature reviews on different sub-fields of academic behavioural public administration work and describing the state-of-the-art in the use of BPA by public administrations globally (first half of the year)
 - o Preparing a workshop between (EU) policymakers, science for policy JRC colleagues, and academics (second half of the year)

9. Behavioural factors influencing science funding allocation

- 2026:
 - o This project involves working with the ERC grants data or a similar dataset to explore possible biases and pitfalls in the rules for allocating grants for basic science.
 - o It also involves designing an online survey to conduct a Discrete Choice Experiment, examining the impact of possible alternatives (e.g., lottery assignment) on grant applications.
 - o What we look for:
 - A good understanding of utility models or statistical analysis is a plus.
 - Interest in the “science of science” or peer review systems in science, as well as a basic understanding of scientific grants, is a plus.
 - Help is needed in literature search and review, survey preparation, and design

10. Europeans' view on nuclear energy

- This project focuses on understanding public perceptions of nuclear energy by examining perceived risks, costs, and benefits associated with nuclear power plants, as well as related policy preferences. The study uses a randomized online survey to be administered to representative samples in selected EU countries, allowing testing impact of different types of communication messages on these perceptions.
- As the design and data collection should be completed by then, a visiting student could possibly engage in
 - o cleaning and analysing data,



- o co-drafting an internal report and an academic publication (including a review of relevant literature),
- o contributing to presentations.

11. Migration

- Project 1: There are several types of policies which could partly mitigate a demographic crisis, including open migration policies, pro-natalist policies, active labour market policies.

Even if effective, they may be unpopular. In this project, a randomised online survey is used to find out if making participants aware of the severity of the demographic crisis that Europe is currently experiencing makes them more willing to support such policies.

- Project 2: How do children's views on migrants and migration depend on their exposure to classmates coming from other countries? In this project, a quasi-experimental approach will be taken to answer this question. Classes will be matched in pairs being similar on all (observable) dimensions but one: the presence of a foreign student. In-person surveys will then be conducted to elicit their perceptions and opinions.

- Again, in either case, a visiting student could possibly engage in
 - o cleaning and analysing data,
 - o co-drafting an internal report and an academic publication (including a review of relevant literature),
 - o contributing to presentations.

12. Eco-anxiety

- The project will investigate how climate change impacts mental well-being and develop recommendations for novel strategies to bolster resilience in individuals and communities facing climate anxiety. The planned work includes an interdisciplinary literature review, expert consultations, and the publication of a policy brief. The project will review evidence from environmental psychology and behavioural economics on the spread of climate anxiety throughout the population, its increasing occurrence in the last few decades, and how people perceive and cope with climate anxiety. Further, the project plans to collect some survey data on climate anxiety with experts working in the fields (e.g., policymakers, researchers, etc.). Next, we will organise an expert workshop (inviting psychologists, climate adaptation experts, and policymakers) to identify key psychological mechanisms associated with climate anxiety (e.g., feelings of helplessness, risk perceptions) and promising intervention ideas.
- Potential avenues for contributions of visiting students



- o Literature review and co-drafting of an academic publication on it
- o Contributing to designing the survey and data analysis
- o Contributing to organising workshop
- o Contributing to the co-drafting of a policy brief on the insights of the project