



# EASO Training Curriculum

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European Asylum Support Office

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*Learning is an experience. Everything else is just information.*

Albert Einstein

# Introduction to the EASO Training Curriculum

Having its legal basis in Article 6 <sup>(1)</sup> of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Regulation (Regulation No 439/2010), EASO's Training Curriculum is a support tool offering Member States the possibility to enhance their capacity and quality within their national asylum services. It is also a tool intended to strengthen practical cooperation among Member States whilst effectively contributing to the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (henceforth 'CEAS') as it has been established in the Hague programme and subsequently in the Stockholm programme. EASO adopted a Training Strategy ([www.easo.europa.eu](http://www.easo.europa.eu)) with the aim of outlining the principles and procedures that will guide EASO in implementing its training mandate as provided for in Article 6 of its founding Regulation (EU) No 439/2010:

*The Support Office shall establish and develop training available to members of all national administrations and courts and tribunals, and national services responsible for asylum matters in the Member States (...). The Support Office shall develop such training in close cooperation with Member States' asylum authorities and, where relevant, take advantage of expertise of academic institutions and other relevant organisations (...). The training offered shall be of high quality and shall identify key principles and best practices with a view to greater convergence of administrative methods and decisions and legal practice, in full respect of the independence of national courts and tribunals.*

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<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office, OJ L132, 29.5.2010.

## What is the EASO Training Curriculum?

- A common training system designed mainly for case officers and other asylum practitioners throughout the EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland (EU+ States).
- A training system consisting of a number of interactive modules covering the entire field of international protection and developed within the framework of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the Common European Asylum System's legal instruments and other relevant international and European law.
- Developed by expert teams from different EU+ States with the support of EASO's Reference Group.
- Based on a blended-learning methodology, enabling both theoretical and practical approaches to training by combining an e-learning method and face-to-face sessions. The training material is based on case studies and promotes good practices in the field of international protection.
- A train-the-trainer methodology is adopted to support the development of skills, knowledge and competencies of trainers, who upon completion of a training module will be able to train personnel in national administrations, creating a multiplier effect.
- The training material is developed in English and EU+ States have the possibility of translating the material into their national languages.



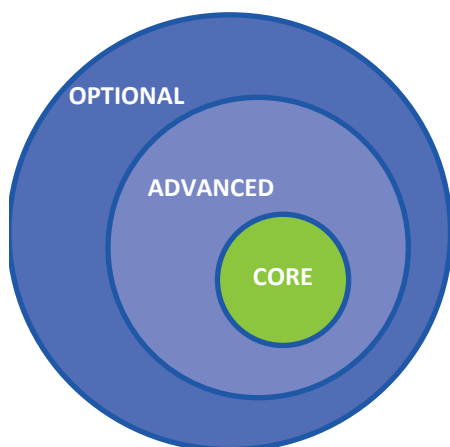
# Who can make use of the EASO Training Curriculum?

- The Curriculum is mainly to be used across the EU as a permanent support tool. However, it can be further used on an *ad hoc* basis in the framework of emergency or special support in response to specific situations.
- The Curriculum targets mainly asylum authorities in the EU+ States. However other stakeholders may also benefit from the Curriculum, such as other relevant national authorities in EU+ States, EU agencies, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), academia, relevant civil society organisations and third countries as per the EASO External Action Strategy <sup>(?)</sup>. Access to training activities is granted on a case-by-case basis and is subject to the needs of EU+ States and the availability of human and financial resources.
- In order to provide the recommendation for the use of the EASO Training Curriculum, EASO developed a **Learning Path** with a set of core, advanced and optional modules. The core modules provide trainees with the same fundamental training, creating a common level playing field for a particular target group. Modules within the advanced and optional categories help the user to increase the level of specialisation.
- So far, five target groups have been recognised: case officers (a primary target group for EASO training modules), managers of asylum units, policy officers, country of origin information (COI) researchers and reception officers. A specific Learning Path was developed for the target group of case officers, and core modules for the other four target groups were identified.

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(?) <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-External-Action-Strategy.pdf>

# Learning Path for Case Officers



## CORE MODULES

- Inclusion
- Interview Techniques
- Evidence Assessment

## ADVANCED MODULES

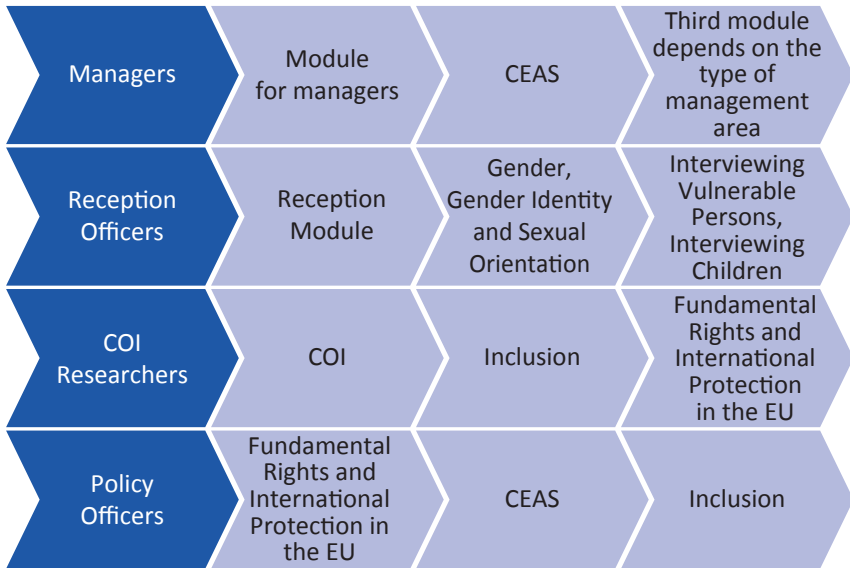
- Interviewing Vulnerable Persons
- Interviewing Children
- Country of Origin Information
- Common European Asylum System
- Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU
- Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
- Exclusion

## OPTIONAL MODULES

- End of Protection
- Asylum Procedures Directive
- Dublin III Regulation
- Reception
- Module for Managers

- Introduction to Didactics

## Core modules for other target groups



## How is the use of the EASO Training Curriculum monitored?

- EASO developed a specific mechanism: the EASO Training Cockpit that monitors and evaluates the implementation of EASO training activities at EU+ States as well as national level.
- The Training Cockpit provides a toolbox for statistical data collection and quantitative data analysis and offers a visual overview of the implementation of EASO training tools. The Cockpit also supports Member States in the process of setting up and maintaining their national training targets towards EASO Training.
- EASO publishes on an annual basis a Training Report on the implementation of the EASO Training Curriculum at EU+ States as well as national level.

## How can I obtain further information on the EASO Training Curriculum?

If you are interested in getting to know more about the EASO Training Curriculum, kindly contact [\*\*training@easo.europa.eu\*\*](mailto:training@easo.europa.eu)

# List of modules of the EASO Training Curriculum

- Inclusion
- Interview Techniques
- Evidence Assessment
- Interviewing Vulnerable Persons
- Interviewing Children
- Country of Origin Information
- Common European Asylum System
- Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU
- Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
- Exclusion
- End of Protection
- Asylum Procedure Directive
- Dublin III Regulation
- Reception
- Module for Managers
- Introduction to Didactics.

Modules of the EASO Training Curriculum are complemented by a Trainers' Manual and a Training Handbook. The Trainers' Manual is designed to assist trainers in delivering train-the-trainer and national training sessions. The Training Handbook is an additional tool developed for certain modules and serves as a reference tool for those who have already completed the training module. It also accompanies asylum practitioners in the course of their daily work by providing a summary of the key elements of the training material.

## Inclusion Module

The Inclusion module provides training on the interpretation and application of the 1951 Geneva Convention and its relation to the EU Qualification Directive.

This module presents, through a structured and interactive method, the refugee definition and the grounds for subsidiary protection. It further explains key terms such as: persecution in relation to both the UNHCR handbook and the Qualification Directive; the Convention grounds, that is race, religion, nationality, political opinion and a particular social group; the nexus between persecution (well-founded fear) and the Convention grounds; the key principle of *non-refoulement* and other important elements to the qualification as a refugee or a beneficiary of subsidiary protection.

By the end of the training, participants will have gained knowledge of key terms and an opportunity to apply these concepts through the use of real case studies.



## Interview Techniques Module

The interview with the applicant for international protection is one of the key elements in the asylum procedure. The information acquired through the personal interview would in most cases play a principal role in the examination of the application. The aim of this module is to assist case officers to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to conduct personal interviews in a professional manner.

This module covers theoretical aspects and relevant legislation from a very practical perspective. It promotes the use of a structured dialogic communication method of interviewing and guides the participant through its stages, from appropriate preparation to the activities that may be necessary following the interview. The interactive training method also provides opportunities to practice different interviewing skills in specific case scenarios.

Further specialised knowledge on the subject of interviewing can be acquired through the modules on ‘Interviewing Children’ and ‘Interviewing Vulnerable Persons’.

## Evidence Assessment Module

This module focuses on the process of evidence assessment as the primary method of establishing the material facts of an individual case through gathering, examining and comparing available pieces of evidence.

It starts from the premise that cases should be treated alike and in a fair and consistent manner. In the module’s core is a structured evidence assessment approach that could minimise the risk of subjectivity in individual cases. The module provides participants with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to apply this structured approach in practice. It guides them through the steps of collecting information, credibility assessment and risk assessment and assists them in acquiring further knowledge and skills for drafting the relevant elements of a decision. The module covers theoretical aspects and relevant legislation from a practical perspective and provides the opportunity to learn through applying these in specific case scenarios.



## Interviewing Vulnerable Persons Module

There is an inherent vulnerability in the status of the applicant for international protection. However, the individual circumstances of some applicants make them especially vulnerable in the process of determining their need for international protection. Medical conditions and traumatic experiences, which occurred in the country of origin, during the flight or even in the host country, can all influence the amount and quality of information the applicant is able to provide during the personal interview. It is crucial for case officers to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to identify and address the special procedural needs of such applicants.

This advanced module builds on the ‘Interview Techniques’ module. It follows the same structured dialogic communication method of interviewing while highlighting the specific elements to take into consideration in an interview with an applicant with special needs. Furthermore, the module assists the participants in acquiring advanced knowledge on vulnerability and mental and physical impairments and provides advice on addressing difficult situations as well as the on interviewer’s own needs.



## Interviewing Children Module

Specific skills and knowledge are required when interviewing children, since a child’s perception of the environment and their memory and sense of time are considerably different from that of an adult. It is therefore crucial that case officers are fully aware of these differences when conducting a personal interview with a child.

This module highlights the principle of the best interest of the child, which must be of primary consideration in actions concerning children.

The objective of this module is to provide the participants with knowledge and skills in children’s development stages and in how to assess the information given by a child, as well as specific techniques for interviewing children.

This module is also built on the structured interview method presented in the core ‘Interview Techniques’ module. It aims to help case officers acquire skills to perform personal interviews in a sensitive and empathic manner while taking due consideration of the child’s age and maturity, cultural variances and effects of trauma and/or distress.

## Country of Origin Information Module

Country of origin information (COI) is factual information regarding the country of origin of an international protection applicant and is used by case workers and other stakeholders to assess claims for international protection.

It encompasses a wide range of information related to the country of an applicant, such as legal framework, cultural and societal spheres, political context, geography, humanitarian conditions, human rights practices or security situation.

COI plays an essential role in determining the eligibility for international protection at different stages of the procedure (in preparing or conducting the interview, but also in the decision-making process). COI may also serve as a basis for policy development.

The main objective of this module is to provide participants with an understanding of the essential role of COI and its limits, as well as to learn about COI questions, sources, research and production. Trainees have the opportunity to explore research strategies and skills, types of sources and source assessment.

Participants are also familiarised with COI quality standards and trained on how to apply these standards in COI research and production.

## Common European Asylum System Module

This module provides an overview of the CEAS by focusing on both legal and practical developments in the area of international protection within the EU. It aims to raise awareness among case officers and other practitioners in the field of asylum in order to enable the development of a common understanding of their role as the core actors in the implementation of the CEAS as well as to allow a bottom-up approach in rendering it successful. It also provides trainees with tools that are available in the process of implementing the CEAS.

## Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU Module <sup>(3)</sup>

The module on Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU presents these rights from the perspective of an asylum procedure. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is at the core of this course. The relevant provisions of the Charter are introduced and explained to the trainees in the framework

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<sup>(3)</sup> The module is expected to be finalised by June 2016.

of the consecutive phases of the asylum processes and reception. They are presented from both a legal and a practical point of view with a clear focus on the most recent developments, such as relevant jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the EU.

The module targets practitioners in the asylum process and reception, including case officers, legal officers, COI experts, reception officers and other personnel working at different stages of the asylum process. The module is also dedicated to border guards and policy makers. Both experienced and newly recruited staff can benefit from the training.

The module has been developed in close cooperation with the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex). It is available for common use to all three agencies.

## **Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Module**

The Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation (Gender and SOGI) module is aimed at providing case officers with enough awareness, skills and knowledge to assess an international protection claim based on these issues in a gender and SOGI-sensitive manner.

In the procedure for international protection we have to make sure that people are not disadvantaged because of their gender and SOGI. Research has established that where gender and/or SOGI are concerned, procedures for international protection need improvement in all stages of the procedure in several countries.

Although the total number of gender-related applications is much higher than that of SOGI-related cases, the module tries to give equal attention to both on their own and also when they overlap. The focus has been put on the concepts and aspects that can be more challenging for case officers when facing a claim for international protection based on gender and/or SOGI.

## **Exclusion Module**

The Exclusion module offers the opportunity for case officers to specialise in assessing and applying the exclusion clauses of Article 1 and Sections D, E and F of the 1951 Geneva Convention, also reflected in the EU Qualification Directive. Trainees learn how the application of the exclusion clause is further influenced

by international law, domestic legislation, policies, operational practice and domestic or international jurisprudence, such as those of the Court of Justice of the EU, the European Court of Human Rights, UNHCR guidance and guidance of other important organisations or authors.

Trainees acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to apply the provisions rigorously, albeit restrictively, taking into account the relevant burden and standard of proof in cases of exclusion.



## End of Protection Module

This module offers the case worker the opportunity to specialise in applying revocation and cessation clauses as well as to familiarise themselves with other circumstances which may lead to an end of protection situation, such as refusal to renew status. Trainees also learn how to interpret the conditions that lead to the end of protection as laid down in the Qualification Directive.

Upon completion of this module, trainees will be able to understand different ways in which protection ends as well as to prepare and write decisions on the topic.

## Asylum Procedures Directive Module

The Asylum Procedures Directive (APD) module provides a route map to be followed by all asylum officials whose work is related to such aspects of international protection, such as access to procedure, processing of applications for international protection or decision-making. It provides trainees with knowledge and practical examples on the common principles, guarantees and obligations on the part of applicants as well as national administrations, which all Member States shall have implemented in their national asylum procedures in accordance with the APD. In this module, trainees will find a thorough explanation of such complex issues as access to the procedure, admissibility, right to legal assistance and representation, decision-making, effective remedies and special procedures.

## Dublin III Regulation Module

This module provides participants with knowledge and skills of fundamental issues concerning the application of the Dublin III Regulation and the way it operates. Trainees are also provided with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Eurodac database and the electronic network 'DubliNet'. Besides acquiring knowledge of the purpose and content of the regulation, participants learn how to apply specific aspects of it, such as family reunification or guarantees for unaccompanied minors.

By the end of this module, trainees will have acquired the skills and knowledge required for the application of the binding Dublin III Regulation within a framework that respects other international human rights instruments.

The module on Dublin III Regulation is an advanced learning module. The trainees are advised to follow firstly the modules on Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU before following this module.

## Reception Module

The reception module targets practitioners who are in direct contact with applicants for international protection in the reception context, irrespective of their

employer (the state, a non-governmental organisation, a private contractor, a municipality, etc.). The training is in line with the provisions of the Reception Conditions Directive. During this training, trainees study the international and European legal framework within which the current Reception Conditions Directive was adopted. They learn about the various phases in the reception process, including the identification of special needs of applicants for international protection and working with vulnerable groups. Additionally, trainees are introduced to the role of the reception officer and are taught a wide range of skills that can help them in their daily work.

## Module for Managers

The Module for Managers covers different aspects related to the day-to-day duties of a manager working in the field of international protection. Covering both theoretical and practical knowledge, this module aims to help managers in this particular area to develop competencies which will assist them in ensuring that their departments provide good quality standards in an efficient way and in line with international and EU legal requirements.

The core target group for this specific module is the managers working with asylum case officers, for instance heads of asylum units, team leaders in asylum units and other managers within the field of international protection.

Other groups that could possibly benefit from the module are heads of reception units and team leaders in reception units.

## Introduction to Didactics

Until 2015, the EASO's 'train the trainers' session, specific to each module of the Curriculum, included one day of 'Introduction to didactic methods' in the overall face-to-face programme. This training was generic and mostly based on practical exercises.

From 2016, however, as requested by the Member States, this training is enhanced with a preliminary online component of about 12 hours. The aim of this module is to prepare the participants in the EASO train-the-trainers' sessions to become national trainers using EASO modules. To that end, the expected learning outcomes of the online component are that participants should be able firstly to prepare training adapted to their audience by applying different methodologies and principles; and secondly to consider proper methods for addressing specific challenges that trainers could face during their training. The face-to-face programme will be focused on a mini-training session that participants will have to give on a specific topic of the module.

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