



# Case Study

**Open Competition**

**EPSO/AST/155/22**

**Security and safety assistants (AST 3) in the following fields:**

- 1. Operational security**
  - 2. Technical security**
  - 3. Occupational health and safety**
- 

**Time allowed: 45 minutes**

---

© European Union, 2023

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of EPSO, Unit 01.001 L107 Floors 2-3/DCS, B-1049 Brussels.

This exercise may only be administered and interpreted by persons trained and authorised by EPSO and only under the conditions stipulated by EPSO.

## ASSIGNMENT

---

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

**This document presents a fictitious scenario. It has been produced solely for the purpose of this exercise. All references to existing countries, international organisations, private companies, departments and their representatives, etc. have been invented purely as examples. Any views expressed should not be taken to represent the opinions of those bodies or persons. When dealing with this assignment, participants should therefore rely solely on the information presented in the exercise and not on any prior expertise in the field.**

For this exercise, you will take on the role of Kim, an Assistant in the Development Unit of the Department for Translation within the European Commission, who has been asked to take a fresh look at the Office Exchange programme. All the necessary information is provided. It comprises a number of emails, reports and other documents that you will have to analyse in order to be able to deal properly with the assignment given to you. This is your first day in your new job.

It is important that you accept the scenario as it is presented. Although in real life you would have access to other sources of information and would be able to consult your colleagues, in this exercise you are limited to the information provided. You are, however, allowed to make logical assumptions where information is missing or incomplete.

This case study is designed to assess the following competencies: Analysis & Problem Solving, Communication, Delivering Quality & Results and Prioritising & Organising. No previous knowledge is required to deal with the assignment.

Your task will be to present solutions to a number of problems based on the information given by various parties (and available for you to read in the following pages). On the day of the Assessment Centre, you will be given a specific task and then 45 minutes to take the test. Make sure you explain the reasoning behind your ideas and include all the information on which you wish to be evaluated.

Please note that it is strictly prohibited to refer to any notes you have prepared in advance or to take notes during this case study.

**Please note:  
today is Wednesday 9 February 20XX  
Last year was 20XX-1, next year will be 20XX+1**

## Abbreviations

---

### ABBREVIATIONS USED

---

<b>DT</b>	Department for Translation
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources Unit
<b>OE</b>	Office Exchange

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

---

## Office Exchange (OE)

### Aims

The OE project aims to increase multicultural exchange at work for assistants at the Department for Translation (DT) by helping them to gain more insight into other working dynamics.

DT assistants work in units organised per language so that, despite working in a multicultural and multilingual organisation, they can find themselves confined on a daily basis to just one language and culture. This project gives assistants the chance to move to another language unit temporarily, while continuing to carry out their regular duties for their home unit.

### Timeline

Following the pilot project conducted between June 20XX-2 and December 20XX-1, another cycle of exchanges will take place from September 20XX to the end of 20XX+1.

### Who can participate?

Assistants from any language unit of the DT can participate. However, because language unit assistants work in teams, an OE should be approved by the manager only if it will not unduly increase the overall workload of the exchange assistant's home unit (sending unit).

### How long does an exchange last?

Assistants can choose the duration of their exchange (six weeks to three months). However, the duration must be agreed with their own manager and the host unit manager.

### Application procedure – who does what?

- Exchange assistant: sends application to Development Unit
- Development Unit: (a) checks the application and (b) looks for available place for the assistant
- Manager of the exchange assistant and manager of the host unit: approve or reject

### Why do we need mentors?

Staff members are asked to volunteer as mentors to ease the integration of exchange assistants into their host units. Merely changing offices and moving to another part of the building is often not enough to help someone break the ice and interact with new colleagues.

### What is expected of exchange assistants and mentors?

The functions and duties of both exchange assistants and mentors remain unchanged, and the same quality and quantity of work is expected of them.

The exchange assistants will not be asked to work for the host unit but may attend host unit meetings as observers and take part in any other activities that might provide an insight into the workings of units other than their own. Even though teleworking is now customary within some language units, exchange assistants will be asked to work in the office during the period of the exchange in order to make their integration into the host unit's team more successful.

### **Wrap-up**

Exchange assistants will be asked to submit a short feedback report at the end of their exchange.



# OE pilot project preliminary evaluation report (extract)

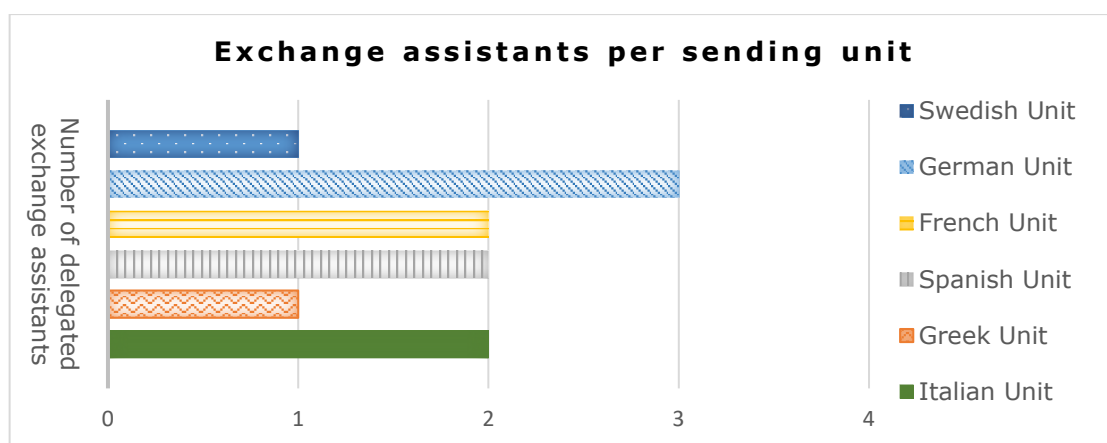
11/01/20XX

## Preparation

A call for expressions of interest, which included instructions for exchange assistants, mentors and managers, was launched in June 20XX-2. An information session was held in July 20XX-2 to provide staff with all other relevant information.

[...]

## Participation



## Observations/Feedback

- Only five language units hosted at least one exchange assistant. However, given the OE's ultimate aim to increase multicultural exchange at the DT, it will be important to involve as many of the 24 language units as possible as hosts in the next round of exchanges.
- The English Unit was very popular, which meant that some requests to move to that unit had to be rejected.
- The majority of host unit managers had a good overall experience during the pilot project and would be happy to host assistants again, if their quality improvement proposals are taken into account.
- The time and effort needed to mentor exchange assistants had been underestimated by the host unit managers when allocating tasks. As a result, the workload of the mentors became too high for them to execute all their tasks on time.
- Some exchange assistants felt that their workloads became heavier during their exchange, which stopped them from integrating properly into their host units.
- Many exchange assistants thought that their host unit seemed unprepared for their arrival, which meant that they found the first few days of their exchange quite difficult.

- Around 54% of exchange assistants did not receive any individual introduction to how things were run in the host unit in their first few days.
- Because no specific structure had been laid down for participant evaluations, the feedback reports received differed widely and did not always contain relevant information.

[...]





MESSAGE

New

Reply

Reply All

Forward

Delete

Move

## OE PILOT PROJECT – MY COMMENTS



From Anna Salinski, Administrator, Development Unit  
Friday 14/01/20XX  
To Helga Dietrich, Manager, Development Unit

Dear Helga,

Because I was responsible for processing all applications for the OE pilot project, I thought that you might be interested in my thoughts:

### 1. Participation in the programme

- Assistants from various units have approached me in the last few months to tell me that their manager was not supportive of their participation in the exchange and even expressed serious doubts about its usefulness.
- If every language unit had to delegate at least one assistant a year to the OE programme, it would guarantee that all assistants get the chance to participate in the exchange, whatever unit they work for.
- Based on the feedback received so far, if exchange assistants want to understand all tasks and processes related to translation, they need to have good knowledge of the host unit language.

### 2. Mentors

- Many exchange assistants complained that no mentor was available when they first arrived in their host units.
- Attendance at the staff information session was rather low.
- Only those who really want to become a mentor should be chosen for that role. We found that motivated mentors did their best to make things a success.

### 3. Application procedure

- Some assistants did not attach the approval of their manager to the application. Therefore, I had to contact the managers for each of those applications, which took a lot of time and energy.
- In many cases, the requested host unit did not want to take on the assistant. In such cases, after checking the application, I contacted several other language units to see if they could take the assistant in question.
- The application procedure needs to be formalised and rationalised as soon as possible, because the next applications have to be processed by 30 June 20XX.

Kind regards,  
**Anna Salinski**



MESSAGE

New

Reply

Reply All

Forward

Delete

Move

## OE PILOT PROJECT – COMMENTS FROM THE ENGLISH UNIT



From Robert Burke, Manager, English Unit  
Thursday 13/01/20XX  
To Anna Salinski, Administrator, Development Unit

Dear Anna,

I would like to share my comments on this project.

Firstly, many people were unable to attend the one and only information session that was held. For example, most of my staff chose not to go because our unit's monthly team meeting (at which we discuss all on-going projects) had already been scheduled to take place at the same time. I realise that holding separate sessions for each language unit would have probably been too difficult and time-consuming to organise, but I do think more effort could have been made to hold a number of sessions, open to everyone.

Secondly, I had to disappoint some highly motivated staff members who were willing to become mentors, because I felt that they were just not ready for that specific role. I am afraid that just wanting to become a mentor is not enough; people also need to have the appropriate skills to be able to fulfil this role properly.

Thirdly, it goes without saying that those who participate in the OE project should learn from the experience and then share the newly acquired knowledge with their colleagues. If an exchange assistant wants only to break up their normal routine, they are more likely to focus on getting to know new people rather than on learning from the host unit. In the end, they will have little to share with their colleagues on returning to their own unit.

That being said, I am not sure whether all the expectations of the people we welcomed into our unit were met. I also felt that they could have been given a greater degree of flexibility in terms of their own duties to help them integrate more easily in our unit.

Finally, managers need to know the exact dates and duration of an exchange in advance in order to be able to work out what is actually feasible, taking the workload into account. In our unit, we maintain an overview of the number of places available at any given moment, which we can check quickly when we receive an exchange request.

Kind regards,

**Robert Burke**



MESSAGE

New

Reply

Reply All

Forward

Delete

Move

## OE PROJECT – INPUT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS



From Mieke Vandamme, Manager, Human Resources Unit (HR)

Wednesday 05/01/20XX

To Helga Dietrich, Manager, Development Unit

Dear Helga,

I would like to share with you my thoughts about the OE. You might find them useful when thinking about the future of this project.

First of all, it is always easier to create an interest in and attract volunteers for a project when information is provided on a more individual basis. For example, when we wanted to find the right people to become social media experts, we organised information sessions in each unit. We kept these sessions short, because people can easily lose attention if they are overwhelmed by too much detailed information.

Secondly, while staff members usually have quite an accurate idea of their own skills and strengths, they are not always best placed to know whether a certain task or role would really suit them. Managers could therefore play a greater role in identifying suitable mentors because they have a better overview of their staff's skills.

Thirdly, I believe that imposing yearly quotas (i.e. each language unit should delegate a fixed number of assistants to the OE per year) would only generate more resistance to the OE: managers might feel that they did not have a say in deciding who deserved to participate in an exchange and when. In fact, managers know their staff members very well and would certainly be able to assess the motivations of an assistant before approving their application for an exchange.

On another note, the feedback that we have heard suggests that most people expected to receive a list from the host unit that clarified what kind of activities they would be involved in there, alongside their current work. Additionally, integration in the host unit will be easier if the newcomer gets to meet all the host unit staff soon after arriving. Exchange assistants often struggle to know exactly who to contact for what in their host unit. Furthermore, mentors need to be there for the exchange assistant throughout the programme, not only at the start.

Finally, HR has always found that feedback is much more relevant if gathered immediately after the programme is over, while things are still fresh in the participants' minds. This is how we gather feedback from all interns (as you know, in the internship programme, DT hosts young graduates for a period of five months twice a year).

Kind regards,

**Mieke Vandamme**



*15 October 20XX-1*

Today is my fifth day as an exchange assistant in the Spanish Unit. What strikes me the most is how work is organised here – it is definitely a far cry from what I am used to in the Italian Unit! For example, the Spanish Unit manager often leaves it to the assistants to split up the work among themselves. In this way, they can easily adjust to individual work schedules, unforeseen events or specific circumstances.

Yesterday, my mentor complained about not knowing in advance how much time he would need to plan for mentoring. But, honestly, I think that it would be difficult to set a clear timeline with accurate time estimates for mentoring. For example, I prefer to have guidance and contact moments more frequently, but I know that others do not need that much support.

I can still hear my manager's voice in my mind: 'I don't know how useful an exchange would be to us. And even if you get to see different ways of working at the host unit, it does not mean that those could also be implemented in our unit.' She is right that each unit has its own characteristics. But hey, I sincerely hope that I learn something useful! In addition, my manager has overlooked what a great experience it can be to participate in such an exchange and to get insight into other working structures. I am more motivated than ever to continue my work at the DT!

I would also like to believe that my 'hosts' appreciate working with me. Back at the Italian Unit, I am the one who quickly fixes difficult formatting issues for everyone. I cannot wait to share my ideas with my Spanish colleagues, should any of them lack such expertise.

This project should definitely continue. In order to attract more sending units, I believe that applying quotas as a temporary solution in the short term would not necessarily be a bad idea – but it should be sufficiently low so that all units can accept it.



MESSAGE

New

Reply

Reply All

Forward

Delete

Move

## OE PILOT PROJECT – THOUGHTS OF THE FRENCH UNIT



From Catherine Moreau, Manager, French Unit  
Friday 07/01/20XX  
To Anna Salinski, Administrator, Development Unit

Dear Anna,

Now that the OE pilot project has come to an end, I would like to share my main comments with you.

Instead of organising just one general information session for all staff members, it would perhaps have been better to inform staff more directly by organising a specific information session in each unit. Moreover, even if staff members are available to attend a general information session, they are less inclined to do so if there is no direct link with their daily work.

I believe that we managers are best placed to assess whether staff members have the skills required to become mentors. I received valuable input from team leaders and other staff members that helped me to make an objective decision in this regard. While I am fully aware that not everyone would make a suitable mentor, I have seen examples in the past where people have been able – through their own hard work and with their management's guidance – to grow into the roles they wished to perform.

Speaking about mentors, I believe that in order to have a better estimate of the time needed for mentoring, the Development Unit could draw up some guidelines for the usual type of activities involved in mentoring, as well as average time estimates, based on the experiences of the mentors in the pilot project.

I noticed a drop in the efficiency of the administration within my own unit when one of my assistants temporarily switched to a different unit. Despite his best intentions, this assistant found it very difficult to keep up with his day-to-day duties. I believe that, in order to reduce the workload of exchange assistants, some of their tasks – such as organising meetings or editing documents – could be assigned to interns. It can be extremely difficult to ensure high-quality and on-time translations when workloads are high. Approving OEs to take place during peak times can therefore lead to frustration. While I do see the value of a project like this, the negative impact on the exchange assistant's colleagues in their 'home' unit must be minimised.

Now, I have to concede that the way in which my unit handled certain aspects of the pilot project was probably not the best. That is why I talked to those who joined us temporarily

to find out exactly what we could improve in the future. Based on their input, I developed a questionnaire designed to give some structure to the input of other assistants that we might host in the future.

Kind regards,

**Catherine Moreau**




## DT INTERNAL DISCUSSION FORUM

> OE PILOT PROJECT – PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF EXCHANGE ASSISTANTS	
<p>Franziska Bardem      05/05/20XX-1</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div> <p>I initially felt resistance from some people in my host unit, but luckily, it disappeared after I got the chance to discuss my objectives with them.</p> <p>I found it more difficult to complete some of my tasks while working away from my home unit. I managed to prepare all incoming and outgoing documents for translation without difficulty, mainly because I was able to follow set procedures and had the flexibility to shuffle some deadlines. Some of my other tasks, however, were often impossible to reschedule. Therefore, I had to cancel my participation in many host unit activities.</p> <p>Furthermore, although my mentor was very enthusiastic, unfortunately, he just wasn't suited to the role and lacked educational methods to guide a new team member.</p> <p>I also firmly believe that many of the issues I faced could have been tackled during the exchange itself if there was an opportunity to give feedback at an earlier stage.</p> <p>I haven't submitted my feedback report yet: I'm not sure when I need to do it or what it should include!</p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; gap: 10px;"> <span style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px 10px; border-radius: 3px;">QUOTE</span> <span style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px 10px; border-radius: 3px;">REPLY</span> </div>
<p>Nikos Damala      24/06/20XX-1</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div> <p>Unfortunately, my first-choice host unit could not accept my application, but Anna Salinski did offer me a few interesting alternatives.</p> <p>My main objective was to observe working methods in a unit other than my own. I wanted to learn as much as possible about how they prepared translations and ensured they were delivered on time. Overall, this exchange was useful to me.</p> <p>For my own personal use, I created an overview to help me keep track of what activities I was allowed to participate in.</p> <p>Luckily, I was able to attend all relevant host unit meetings and to take part in many host unit activities, from which I was able to take a number of ideas for optimising work in my own unit. However, I do realise that this was possible only because my manager was willing to allocate some of my tasks to other colleagues.</p> <p>It would be nice to have someone to mentor in the next cycle. However, this is just not feasible for me, because there are only two of us working as assistants in the Greek unit. I would not be able to take on all the extra workload related to mentoring for months, especially if my colleague was on holiday or sick leave.</p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; gap: 10px;"> <span style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px 10px; border-radius: 3px;">QUOTE</span> <span style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px 10px; border-radius: 3px;">REPLY</span> </div>



Joséphine Barbé	11/08/20XX-1		
	<p>When I shared my experience with colleagues, some of them seemed to be very interested in participating in an OE.</p> <p>For me, the help of my mentor was invaluable; but I know that not everyone was as lucky as I was. Some of those I have spoken to said that their mentors seemed ill-prepared and unaware of what was expected of them.</p> <p>I, however, learned a lot about how the assistants in my host unit prepare translations and how my working methods could be improved!</p> <p>Finally, it would be easier to submit an application without having to wait for an appointment with the manager to get formal approval. I believe that the Development Unit could contact the manager for approval later, when all details have been agreed with the host unit.</p>	<a href="#">QUOTE</a>	<a href="#">REPLY</a>
Miguel Sanchez	17/09/20XX-1		
	<p>I found it awkward to have to introduce myself to people in the host unit. I received some information about the unit via email on my arrival, but I would have liked to discuss things in somewhat more depth with my mentor.</p> <p>My understanding is that a mentor's main function is to be someone who the exchange assistant can turn to for advice on how to bond with his or her new colleagues. A person's skills should be less of a consideration when identifying suitable mentors; it is much more important that they are motivated and open. Therefore, I do not think that trusting managers to appoint mentors is a good idea, as they might favour those with whom they have a good personal relationship.</p> <p>I also experienced difficulties with organising my work. I would have been prepared to give up some of my tasks (such as coordinating meetings) in exchange for others that could be managed more easily when working from a different unit.</p>	<a href="#">QUOTE</a>	<a href="#">REPLY</a>
Giulia Antonelli	16/11/20XX-1		
	<p>I hope that the managers from the various host units will share their experiences with one another to help optimise the procedures for this project. In fact, my host unit was so popular that I feared that my application would get rejected. Fortunately, they saved a place for me after my manager contacted her counterpart there.</p> <p>During the exchange, I received information from various people in my host unit, about both meetings and activities. But having all practical information centralised in one document, right from the start, would certainly have helped me settle in. I also felt it should have been made clearer to me when I could approach my mentor just to chat about how everything was going. As I do not work on Fridays, it was a bit challenging to find a mentor whose availability matched mine.</p> <p>I strongly believe that several information sessions should have been organised to ensure all staff members were able to attend one. I know about colleagues who would have loved to attend the session, but they were not able to make themselves available at that moment.</p>	<a href="#">QUOTE</a>	<a href="#">REPLY</a>



# DT monthly newsletter

18/12/20XX-1

---

## OE pilot project

The OE pilot project is now coming to an end, and after the results have been evaluated, a new cycle of exchanges will be launched in a few months. This time, we certainly aim to involve more units in the programme. To convince managers fully of the benefits of hosting an exchange assistant, they need to hear about it from their peers. However, some unit managers who have already hosted exchange assistants have shared a few concerns regarding the pilot project, which could discourage other managers from participating as hosts.

The input of exchange assistants and other staff members will be crucial in helping the management identify aspects where improvements could be made to handle exchange assistants better in the future.

We already know that despite still having access to all the documents and systems they require, exchange assistants face many practical challenges that make it much more difficult for them to carry out their daily administrative duties.

In fact, the OE pilot project also had an impact on staff within the host units, who were often asked to welcome people to their units without information on what they should expect of them.

In order to assess whether the exchange was a success, it will be important to know the extent to which the exchange assistant's skills or knowledge developed during the programme.

A brief summary of the findings about the OE pilot project will be posted on the internal website.

---

## Insight

Language unit assistants are a real asset to the DT. Having very different backgrounds and therefore various fields of expertise, they also speak a lot of languages:

Number of assistants by spoken languages*	Bulgarian	Croatian	Czech	Danish	Dutch	English	Estonian	Finnish
	18	12	26	7	33	192	5	6
	French	German	Greek	Hungarian	Irish	Italian	Latvian	Lithuanian
	184	172	9	10	3	140	31	28
	Maltese	Polish	Portuguese	Romanian	Slovak	Slovenian	Spanish	Swedish
1	62	32	21	28	4	142	28	

\* other than the language of their own language unit

## Minutes 1



# DT MANAGEMENT MEETING MEETING MINUTES

<b>Date and time:</b>	07/01/20XX – 10:00–12:00
<b>Attendees:</b>	Director of DT, All Unit Managers

## AGENDA TOPICS

### OE: PARTICIPATION AND APPLICATION

- ◆ The Polish Unit has been struggling with some of the functions of the new translation tool; it would therefore be happy to host an exchange assistant who has experience with those functions. Unfortunately, no centralised records are maintained of staff members' fields of expertise.
- ◆ The units representing the least spoken languages are also the smallest units of the Department, having only two assistants per unit. In small teams, people are more supportive of each other, which can make it easier for a newcomer to integrate.
- ◆ Regarding applications, it would be a waste of time for both the Development Unit and the host unit if they had to process an application which, in the end, might not be approved by the sending unit. Ideally, the Development Unit should look for an available host unit only when the application has been approved by the applicant's manager.
- ◆ Because exchange assistants continue to work for the sending unit, even smaller units can afford to send an assistant to the programme. With good planning (and also taking individual workplans into account), units can organise their daily work with one assistant fewer in the office.
- ◆ The main findings of the Evaluation Report of the OE pilot project will be presented at the next management meeting in February.

### WORKLOAD ISSUES DUE TO THE OE

- ◆ HR warns that inaccurate estimates of the extra workload can lead to the mentors becoming overloaded. This will, in turn, result in the mentors and other staff members feeling demotivated.
- ◆ If the burden on a mentor becomes too high, they can always ask for help and management will do its best to find a solution. However, extending deadlines can easily lead to work piling up, impacting other important tasks and deadlines.

### UPDATES FROM HR

- ◆ HR reminded the attendees that the focus of the internship is on translation and other linguistic tasks, such as terminology research, to ensure that interns grow in this field.
- ◆ An open competition will be launched in the course of 20XX+1 to recruit assistants in the following languages: Danish, Estonian, Finnish, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Maltese and Slovenian.
- ◆ HR has started to test the new filing system. It asks all units to send all requests related to the personal files of officials as soon as they know with certainty that the file (or an extract of it) is required in a process.



MESSAGE

New

Reply

Reply All

Forward

Delete

Move

## OE PILOT PROJECT – FEEDBACK FROM AN EXCHANGE ASSISTANT



From Nora Karlsson, Assistant, Swedish Unit  
Tuesday 26/10/20XX-1  
To Anna Salinski, Administrator, Development Unit

Dear Anna,

As you know, I just finished my two-month OE in the Slovak Unit. Please find my feedback below.

My main goal was to learn more about how assistants in the host unit carry out detailed checks on outgoing documents. Unfortunately, I was unable to learn as much as I wanted, because I had only a limited amount of time to shadow my fellow assistants, since I still had all my own work to do. In fact, depending on their nature and the practicalities involved, some tasks proved more difficult than others to complete while working away from my 'home' unit. For example, I was perfectly able to keep track of translations and ensure they were of the required quality, but I struggled with performing general administrative tasks. My manager suggested involving an intern to ease the burden, but I declined the offer, as an intern would need extensive guidance to perform any tasks they were unfamiliar with. Assigning some of my tasks to interns would only have added to the workload of my fellow assistants.

As for the future of this programme, I think it is great that assistants can choose any unit to join, even if they do not speak the language, as all DT staff members speak English and/or French. However, more could be done to encourage managers to approve their assistants' applications. I believe that a first experience with the OE could convince managers that it is worth sending other staff members on the OE programme in the future. However, with a yearly quota system, all assistants would need to participate in the exchange sooner or later – even those that do not want to.

For your information, I went to the information session last year to find out whether I would be suited to the role of mentor. However, what I heard there was so vague and general that I decided against volunteering to become one.

Kind regards,

**Nora Karlsson**

## Minutes 2



# DT MANAGEMENT MEETING MEETING MINUTES

<b>Date and time:</b>	11/01/20XX – 14:00–16:00
<b>Attendees:</b>	Irina Cielecka (Mentor), Maria Gomez (Mentor), Amélie Lanvin (Mentor), James Hacker (Mentor), Anna Salinski (Development Unit)

## AGENDA TOPICS

BECOMING A MENTOR	
<b>Irina</b>	<p>More people would have wanted to become mentors if the information session had revealed more details about what mentoring actually means in this project. One colleague told me that he had no idea what was expected of a mentor until he heard me talking about it!</p> <p>I volunteered as mentor and I am willing to take on this role in upcoming exchanges. I firmly believe that staff members can decide themselves whether they have the time and necessary skills to assume such responsibility.</p>
<b>James</b>	<p>It would have been particularly interesting to discuss possible issues with would-be mentors from other units. In the end, the role of mentor demanded far more energy, patience and people skills than I had expected.</p>
<b>Maria</b>	<p>Although the information session was interesting, it focused mainly on the goals of the project and on what was expected of the exchange assistants themselves; little was said about the role of a mentor.</p>
<b>Amélie</b>	<p>Given the differences between the various language units in terms of organisation and work methods, it would be difficult to get detailed answers to individual concerns at general information sessions.</p>
EXPERIENCES WITH MENTORING	
<b>Irina</b>	<p>I really appreciated the feedback I got from the person I mentored. At her own request, she and I had an intermediate meeting with the manager because she felt that not everything was going smoothly.</p> <p>The main issue was her heavy workload. Perhaps, in the future, translators could be more involved in preparing documents for translation, (i.e. by checking whether any of the text has been translated in the past or ensuring the layout is correct), as this is already part of their daily work to some extent.</p> <p>She also told me that our small team was so united that it was difficult for her to bond with her new colleagues and that she felt like an outsider for the first month.</p>
<b>James</b>	<p>I spent quite some time with my exchange assistant in the first week so that we could bond. This proved to be very useful later in the programme.</p> <p>My exchange assistant was very active. For example, acting on his own initiative, he asked to participate in an activity in our unit that he felt was relevant to him but to which he had not been invited.</p>

<b>Maria</b>	<p>I was very motivated in the beginning. I even arranged to meet up with my exchange assistant so that we could become acquainted before he actually arrived in our unit. However, mentoring proved to be more difficult than I expected. My exchange assistant often interrupted me during the day to discuss minor issues that I felt could have waited till later.</p> <p>This added to my already high workload. That being said, I am grateful to my manager because she extended deadlines for some tasks so that I could focus on mentoring.</p>
<b>Amélie</b>	<p>I experienced similar issues, however, extending a deadline was not always possible. In such cases, I had to do overtime to meet my deadlines. If I had known in advance how much time the various mentoring-related activities would require, I could have planned and prioritised my other tasks better.</p>