

ASSESSMENT CENTRE BROCHURE

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PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PRIMARY DOCUMENTS ARE THE [NOTICE OF COMPETITION](#) AND THE [GUIDE TO OPEN COMPETITIONS](#). THIS BROCHURE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY.

1. INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your success in the admission tests! Competition for positions in the EU institutions is intense and only a relatively small number of candidates are ultimately successful. You have come a considerable way towards being selected.

This brochure will assist you in your preparations for the Assessment Centre, the final testing phase in the selection procedure. It is designed to guide you through the process by describing all of the steps involved and explaining the terminology.

We in EPSO strive to treat all candidates fairly, using open and transparent procedures. In addition, we acknowledge and welcome the diversity of people. Should you have any questions that are not answered here, you may visit the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sections of the [EPSO Website](#), or our EU careers page on [Facebook](#). You can also download the Frequently Asked Questions in [PDF](#). Should the above not provide the answer(s) you need, please contact our [Candidate Contact Service](#).

It is our intention that you find the selection process challenging and stimulating and we wish you well in your endeavours at the Assessment centre!

2. EPSO ASSESSMENT CENTRE

An 'Assessment Centre' (AC) is an advanced approach to evaluating pre-defined competencies, by observing participants' behaviour. It is a process in which **candidates are assessed in a standardised way:**

- individually and in a group;
- by several assessors;
- during different types of exercises;
- against clearly defined competencies.

so that their relative strengths and weaknesses can be measured.

EPSO has adopted this model to assess the suitability of candidates for positions in the EU Institutions. At the EPSO AC, your strengths and weaknesses will be assessed in an objective manner, in order to measure the extent to which you possess the required competencies.

Not everyone will excel in all of the exercises. That is why the EPSO AC employs a variety of measures which will allow different facets of behaviour to be displayed and which will give you a number of opportunities to show your strengths and demonstrate the extent to which you have the required skills and competencies. You will participate in a written examination (case study), as well as in a number of simulation exercises which are set in a fictitious, but realistic, job context. From the moment you start the simulation until the end of the exercise, that context is the "reality" in which you have to perform certain tasks. During the simulations, you will be observed/evaluated in a systematic way by at least two trained assessors. Whatever the exercise, the task of these assessors is to look for various competencies that have been determined in advance.

There are **two categories of competencies: general and specific**, both of which are listed in the [Notice of Competition](#). In addition, the definition of each general competency can be found in our [Guide to Open Competitions](#).

The main difference between the two categories is that each general competency is observed and measured in at least two different exercises whereas specific, field-related competencies are measured only in the context of the case study (see below, point 4.1). At the end of the AC, the observations are compiled and integrated to obtain a total evaluation per competency and for the AC performance as a whole. At the end of the competition, you will receive this feedback in writing, along with the letter informing about your overall results. All the candidates of a same competition will be informed at the same time.

We are running our AC in three languages: English, French and German. You must use the second language that you have chosen for the exercises (unless otherwise indicated).

3. COMPETENCIES TESTED

In order to ensure that all competencies can be tested adequately, the EPSO **AC typically will last a full working day** (from 8:30 to +/-18:00 Brussels time).

The table below will give you an overview of the competencies tested across the various exercises:

	Case study	Structured interview	Group exercise	Oral presentation
LEVEL: Administrator, AD5				
Analysing & problem solving	X			X
Communicating	X			X
Delivering Quality & results	X			X
Learning & development		X	X	X
Prioritising & organising	X		X	
Resilience		X		X
Working with others		X	X	
Leadership		X	X	
Applying knowledge in the field	X			

When it comes to field-specific knowledge, the focus is primarily on testing your skills at **applying** knowledge. None of the tests is designed to measure experience in the field.

4. EXERCISES USED

The EPSO AC for **Administrators** consists of the following exercises:

- A case study in the field, including a language test in your main language;
- A structured interview;
- An oral presentation exercise;
- A group exercise.

Some of these exercises might appear to be rather unfamiliar to you. Just keep in mind that the assessors will be concentrating on how you handle the issues you are confronted with and how you adapt to new situations.

4.1 CASE STUDY

The case study takes the form of a **written** test. In addition to the general competencies, it focuses on your ability to apply your knowledge in the field for which you have applied. You will receive information about an EU-related scenario, presenting various problems which you will be asked to solve, or react to, solely on the basis of the material available. **The case study exercise may be split into two or three sessions**, one of which will be a written test to ensure that you master your chosen main language (normally your mother tongue), in addition to an exercise outlining your approach to the main case study.

Competencies tested:

Analysing & problem-solving
Communicating
Delivering Quality & results
Prioritising & organising
Applying knowledge in the field

The indicative duration of this exercise is: **2h30** min

4.2 STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

As the title suggests, this individual exercise aims to gather relevant information on your general competencies in a structured way. The interview will be conducted by at least two assessors. It is mainly based on the principle that "past behaviour is generally the best predictor of future performance" and will **focus on your experience in situations you have encountered in the past**.

Competencies tested:

Resilience
Working with others
Leadership
Learning & development

The indicative duration of this exercise is: **40** min

4.3 ORAL PRESENTATION

This **analysis and presentation exercise** is an individual test in which you will be asked to develop a proposal dealing with a fictitious, job-related problem. After analysing the documentation handed out, you will have to present your ideas to a small audience which consists of at least two assessors. Electronic aids will not be employed. You may use a flip-chart to display key points.

Competencies tested:

Analysing & problem-solving
Communicating
Delivering Quality & results
Resilience

The indicative duration of this exercise is: **60** min

4.4 GROUP EXERCISE

For this exercise you will be required to individually process a certain amount of information, after which you will meet a number of other participants to **discuss your findings together and come to a collective decision**.

During the group discussion you and the other candidates will be observed by several assessors. The assessors do not take part in the exercise, but rather examine behaviour in relation to the competencies being evaluated.

Competencies tested:

Learning & development
Prioritising & organising
Working with others
Leadership

The indicative duration of this exercise is: **60** min

5. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE?

All the exercises - apart from the case study - have been designed in such a way that you are not required to have prior knowledge of the specific context of the exercise in order to succeed. The material you will receive will contain all the information required to successfully complete the task. It is up to you to fill any possible gaps with what may logically be assumed.

However, for the case study, you will need to be **familiar with the EU issues and EU Institutions**, so that you can quickly grasp the context of the simulations. **Please review the Notice of Competition** and give some thought to the skills and

competencies the assessors will be looking for in you and other candidates during the course of the AC.

5.1 DOCUMENTATION & TEST MATERIAL

Make sure you bring along the following documents:

- 1) A valid identity card, or passport to prove your identity;
- 2) Travel documents for reimbursement, if applicable;
- 3) Your full application file, as requested via your EPSO Account;

Test material, including pens and paper, will be provided at the AC. If PCs are used, your preference for the keyboard/language will have been asked beforehand.

In our selection procedures, we aim to provide all applicants with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. If you are a candidate with special needs, more information on the arrangements and EPSO contact points* can be found in our Guide to Open Competitions (point 2.1.3.2).

5.2 ADVICE

- Get a good night's rest.
- **Arrive at the AC at least 30 minutes before the start.** Please note that we do not have any parking facilities for candidates. However, 4 spaces are foreseen for disabled candidates so please ensure that you inform us* in advance should you wish to reserve one of these.
- Be yourself (at your best).
- Listen carefully to the instructions and always read the information you are given thoroughly. Make sure you understand the questions before you give an answer.
- Read carefully all documentation provided and be conscious of the time constraints in any exercise.
- Actively participate in interactive exercises.
- Try to remain focused and motivated for the entire day.

Moreover, you should take into account that **the final evaluation of your AC day is based on the results of all the exercises**. If you performed poorly in one exercise, this is not necessarily a problem, as you can perform more successfully during other exercises. Remember that you are not evaluated on just one characteristic or exercise only!

Lastly: try to enjoy the day as much as possible. Use this unique experience as an opportunity to learn more about yourself and to receive specific feedback for further growth and development. At the end of the entire selection procedure, you will receive more detailed feedback in the form of a Competency Passport (see below, point 6.4). This passport will give you a global overview of your strengths and weaknesses in the different competencies, based on the observations gathered during the AC day.

* EPSO-accessibility@ec.europa.eu.

6. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT ON THE ASSESSMENT CENTER DAY?

You will be one of five to six candidates in a group and there will be several assessors. In addition, EPSO staff will be present to welcome you and guide you throughout the day.

You will be interviewed and asked to take part in a number of exercises, including a case study in the field. The exercises, explained above, will be based on the nature of duties and competencies set out in the Notice of Competition

There will be strict rules regarding conduct during the AC day which will be explained on arrival. These are to ensure the smooth running of the process and fair treatment of all candidates. Failure to observe these rules could result in your disqualification.

6.1 UPON YOUR ARRIVAL

Arrive on time and unaccompanied. Friends or relatives will not be allowed to wait in the building, or to contact you while you are tested.

If you arrive late, you will not get any additional time to complete the exercises. You might also be excluded from participating at all, especially if you miss one of the exercises entirely.

Upon arrival, our staff will welcome you and ask you to present the documents mentioned under point 5.1. You will be given an identity badge to facilitate your movement about the premises during the course of the day.

6.2 SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

The AC day will typically start at **8:30** and finish at **18:00**.

Please note that no lunch will be provided. However, you will receive a magnetic card with which you can buy drinks or snacks from the vending machines in the AC building (these machines also take euros). You can also have lunch outside the AC premises during the lunch break.

You will receive your exact schedule for the day upon arrival.

6.3 DURING THE ASSESSMENT CENTRE

You will receive all material necessary for the various exercises on the spot.

- A locker room will be provided for your luggage and other personal belongings. **You should leave your mobile phone and other electronic devices in this during the exercises.**
- A waiting room will be provided for your breaks, with vending machines for drinks and snacks.

During the AC exercises, it is **strictly forbidden** to use

- your mobile phone or any kind of electronic device with or without memory

(laptops, PDA, palm tops, computer, dictionary or calculator etc.)

- encyclopaedias, reference books, newspapers, magazines, personal notes or pens, etc.
- correcting fluid, or similar correction material.

During the day, it is **strictly forbidden** to disturb the other candidates and the assessors

Please note that the EPSO AC is a non-smoking environment.

If you do not respect these rules, you will be excluded from the AC premises, your tests will be declared void and your participation in the competition will be brought to an end.

6.4 AFTER THE TESTING SESSION

Before leaving the building, **remember to take all your personal belongings** and return the key of your locker, your magnetic card and your identity badge.

When the AC phase for the entire competition has been completed, all candidates - successful and unsuccessful - will **receive their results and their Competency Passports**. The Competency Passport consists of the following four elements:

- A general description of the competency framework;
- A global overview of your strengths and weaknesses;
- A description per competency of the main findings;
- A general conclusion.

EPSO will make the Competency Passports of the successful candidates (= laureates) available to the human resources departments of the EU institutions, for recruitment purposes.

7. USEFUL LINKS

http://europa.eu/epso/index_en.htm

http://europa.eu/epso/apply/on_going_compet/adm/index_en.htm

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/EU-Careers/298387676087>

http://europa.eu/epso/apply/contact/details/index_en.htm