



The EPSO Application Process & the Computer Based Tests

Applying for an EPSO Competition

If you are interested in getting a job in one of the EU Institutions, you should familiarise yourself with the [EPSO info-site](#) and [main website](#).

When you find a competition which interests you, you should read the Notice of Competition (Avis de Concours), which is published on the EPSO website, thoroughly. These notices are carefully prepared and contain all the key information that you will need about the competition. Pay particular attention to the competencies EPSO identify as relevant to the post – and consider how you can ensure your application illustrates these.

The EPSO application form is detailed so you should set aside sufficient time to complete and submit it. It may be useful to assemble key documents (Passport/ID; College certificates etc) in advance so that you are ready. You should never leave it to the last minute to apply, as the form takes time to complete and the process of final submission and acknowledgement is not a simple “click of one button”. Given the numbers applying for these posts, it’s likely that any errors in your application will be noticed and will limit your chances of progression.

The First Round – The Computer Based Tests

Where there are large groups of people applying for a particular campaign, selection tests are often used to establish the level of people skills. The selection tests typically fall into five broad categories – cognitive reasoning; situational judgement/ jobs simulation exercises; bio data/personality questionnaires; skills based; knowledge-based. The tests most commonly used as first round filters – and those used by EPSO in its concours - are cognitive reasoning exercises which are also known as psychometric tests or aptitude tests and generally focus on Verbal Reasoning; Numerical Reasoning; and Abstract (Inductive) Reasoning.

The underlying premise for cognitive reasoning tests is that upon reaching adulthood a person’s innate reasoning aptitude will not change significantly. This means that undergoing similar tests on a number of occasions over time will produce broadly the same result and is a good measure of an individual’s aptitude in different areas. There are many schools and / or test preparation bodies who will argue the contrary and will happily accept fees from enthusiastic candidates to ‘train’ them. Neither EPSO nor PAS endorses or recommends any of these courses.

Can courses help candidates to improve their scores in reasoning tests? Scientific studies prove that it is not possible to improve underlying reasoning aptitude. However, through preparation it is possible to give oneself the best opportunity to demonstrate the aptitude one has. This can be achieved through:

- Building familiarity with the style/format of the test
- Building familiarity with taking a test on computer
- Sharpening reaction times around reading, thinking, analysing and deciding

On test courses, these opportunities are presented to those participating. However, this type of preparation can be done just as well at home using materials freely available on [PAS](#), [EPSO](#) and [the EU Jobs](#) websites.

Preparing for the Computer Based Tests

While it is possible to sit tests of this type with no preparation and do well, by becoming familiar with the test format and what you have to do, this can help reduce your anxiety levels and help you perform to the best of your ability on the test day.

Before the Test

It sounds obvious, perhaps, but ensuring that you are prepared for the test day can help you a lot. The differences in performance between those who are called to the second stage and those who aren't are often small, so every little counts.

- Carefully work through the documentation provided in advance. Make sure you are familiar with the tests you will sit, the number of items and the time limits.
- Work through the sample questions provided in advance to ensure you are very comfortable with the format and the level of difficulty, remembering that the tests themselves may be more difficult. Before you commence the test itself, there will be additional practice questions.
- In addition to the materials provided by EPSO you may find additional practice material on the [PAS](#) website. You will also find practice material on the [EPSO](#) website and [the EU Jobs](#) webpage
- Get a good night's sleep before the test.
- Make sure you know where the tests will take place and double check your time and date in advance. It's essential that you leave yourself plenty of time to get to the test venue, as being late or rushing is likely to have a detrimental effect on your performance.
- Wear casual clothes, ideally with layers, so you can be as comfortable as possible during the testing session.
- Bring water and snacks to ensure you are not distracted by hunger or thirst.

During the Test Session

- It can be useful to complete some sample items before going to the testing centre go allow you to focus on what you will be doing.
- Make sure you have your Photo ID and Invitation ready.
- Nerves can either be positive and keep you focused on doing well in your tests or can negatively impact your performance. Before you start your test, take some deep breaths and compose yourself. Focus on what you have to do, remembering that you have practiced and are familiar with the format. Remember your aim is to do as well as you possibly can in the tests; ignore what other candidates may be doing or saying.
- Read the instructions very carefully, paying attention to the number of questions in each test and how much time you will have to do them.
- Try to answer as many questions as possible, as the more you get right, the higher your score will be! However, there may be negative marking for incorrect responses - please check the instructions and aim for a balance of speed and accuracy.
- For difficult questions, either try to choose the correct answer by first eliminating the wrong ones, or skip the questions and return to them later if you have time.
- Be aware that the tests are timed, but try to focus on progressing well through the questions rather than spending too long checking your time.