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Scientific research administrators AD7 | 2024 EPSO Exams | Info Webcast | Transcript

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INTRO

I'm so happy to be presenting this webinar to you today from our brand new studio, which is a podcast and video studio here in Brussels at [Ambiorix Center](#).

As you can see behind me, it's called [Ambiorix Studio](#). If anybody's interested in this space, you're more than welcome to come by, check it out, and maybe even use it for your own event.

Today, we're going to spend the next hour looking at a brand-new competition—a major EPSO competition that's just been launched. I'll be presenting and walking you through the different steps and pieces of information that are essential if and when you decide to apply. This is likely the case for everyone on this call, and perhaps also for those watching the recording. We'll make sure you are aware of all the necessary details so you can qualify and successfully pass.

ABOUT EU TRAINING

A few words about our company. We have a robust community of candidates and former candidates and those who will be candidates again because just because somebody landed a contract agent job, they may be looking at a permanent job or maybe trying to go up a couple of grades and pass another competition. This whole community is accessible on [our own website](#), on [Facebook](#), on [LinkedIn](#), and on various other platforms. Do join and follow us on all these channels and media platforms wherever you are present.

And then we have lots of [practice questions](#) in all 24 languages when it comes to verbal reasoning, but then there are many other types of practice questions and lots of [methodology webinars](#). A large

number of them are free and many are paid, depending on how deep they go, but we always try to be very practical even for the free stuff. And we have lots of [ebooks and tips and tricks and various tools](#) that we have, and we are still developing new ones.

COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Now very specifically, let's look at this particular competition: Scientific Research Administrators, the EPSO/AD/413/2024.

This is a pretty large competition. For those of you who may be new to the wonderful world of EU careers and EPSO exams, for you to know: the number of places in the reserve list and the scale of this competition is pretty large in comparison to other competitions that were launched in the past months or years.

A couple words on that—this information is in the Notice of Competition, the number of places on the reserve list or positions available ultimately. But this means that there is a fairly large chance of succeeding, obviously depending on how many candidates apply in one field and certain fields, perhaps ICT, perhaps AI, perhaps energy, perhaps behavioral science. So some may be more popular than others, so certainly the probability or the chances of succeeding can vary greatly, but we're not talking about a couple dozen places on the reserve list, but many more.

So that essentially means that if you have the chance, depending on your background, depending on your publications and obviously depending on your personal interest, you can choose from multiple options and multiple fields. You could consider the numbers where you have the greatest possibility, the greatest likelihood of succeeding.

Certainly, there's another consideration, which is where you might end up working. And there are certain things to be said about it, which I'll cover in a few moments. It's not immediately obvious from the get-go where you may end up working. Though practically you will end up working at the European Commission, we're talking about the Joint Research Center, which has locations in a few places around Europe. So that is something I'm going to come back to.

And the total number of positions is 622. It's hard to predict how many more candidates there are going to be or what the multiplier is going to be in terms of candidates. But basically, you need to look at the overall numbers and then the specific field number to determine your choice.

Where will you work?

Now, this is what I mentioned earlier—where will you work? You are going to work in the Commission, but which location of the Joint Research Center? Well, there is a presence in Belgium, there's a presence in Germany, there's a presence in Italy, there's a presence in the Netherlands, and in Spain. And certainly depending on the field, you may be more likely to work at one location than another because you could be dealing with certain parts of science or certain areas which are simply being done in Italy or being done in Seville in Spain. So there is a certain predictive value there, but again, whether that has a big impact on your choice or it's rather what is your background, what is your field of expertise, what is your research about, and then making sure that you apply to the right field.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

General Requirements

Eligibility above all means you need to meet the formal criteria first and foremost. And then you certainly need to pass the different steps in the competition to ensure that you even have any choice in where you may end up working. So do not take that as a primary consideration as to which field you pick.

So what will you actually do? Well, you'll be doing research. And given the diversity of the topics that are under the umbrella of this particular competition, the actual work may vary quite a bit. If it's closer to social science or statistical work, it could be more lab-driven, then the work will be quite different or varied. But there is a description in Annex II of the Notice of Competition where you have quite a few examples, from data analysis to research, evidence-based decision-making preparation, or research and application in AI—again, heavily computer-driven and screen-driven as to the nature of the work or socio-economic political science research from all angles.

Now, one interesting thing we didn't put on the slide, but one interesting thing to bear in mind, is what does the Joint Research Center do? The JRC is part of the European Commission, so technically it is the European Commission. But the JRC is a very interesting department or part of the European Commission because a friend of mine who used to work there would say, well, there's science for policy making, and then there's the policy of science. And the European Commission basically does both, because the Commission allocates funding for third parties, meaning non-commission staff, researchers, entities, or stakeholders, to look at what sorts of things they should research, where should their attention go, and there are lots of regulations and different political instruments to influence the science policy.

But this is not what we're talking about here. This is an in-house scientific service, so it's input that feeds into the commission's own work. So these are in-house scientists; that's what you're aiming at becoming, those in-house scientists who have freedom and independence to do your work while feeding that into not just the academic journals but also into the work of the large machinery that the European Commission is.

I'd like to pause for a second and take a quick look at the questions that are coming in and I see that there are quite a few at least from the corner of my eyes that many questions related to a phd or which domain and how that refers to the academic sort of publication part.

Now one important thing and I don't have right now the possibility to really look at each and every unique situation that you're sharing here. One general thing is that in the notice of competition you see that there's this annex three where they list which peer-reviewed journal where you have need to have at least two publications what are the criteria that make those journals eligible, and then also the field has to be related to the particular domain that you've chosen so if you are an agronomist but you have a publication on something about machine learning, not sure that would qualify as such, and again i'm talking in generalities, and that every situation could be very unique as to the field and the publication as long as the peer-reviewed journal qualifies as a properly say accredited journal based on the criteria in the notice of competition. Again, I don't want to say something that may not be accurate for your particular situation but that is something we'll try to come back to and now I'd like to answer maybe one or two questions before we talk about the eligibility the way it's presented the way it's required from all candidates.

Q: *How often do they run these competitions?*

A: Not that often because it's a specialist competition. It's for researchers and off the top of my head I don't remember when such a competition launched last but that probably means at least three four years ago, possibly longer. Occasionally they might have more targeted ones maybe for climate science or climate change research or environmental science research. But such a large-scale broad competition for researchers is fairly unique so take this opportunity and make the most out of it.

Q: *Will there be specific training material for this competition on EU Training?*

A: The answer is yes, except for one thing and I'll mention that because this open-ended question test (FRSTQ) that we'll look at in a moment is one we are still getting our head around about how to address it. But almost every required exam that you need to sit there is [dedicated material](#) on our site and if we don't have it right now we're going to have it as soon as possible.

Eligibility Criteria

Let's look at the different eligibility criteria. There are some very basic criteria. You need to be an EU citizen, you need to have fulfilled your military service if that is required of you—and I think that's the case in perhaps Austria; you'll correct me if I'm wrong, but in Greece or Cyprus. Bottom line: as long as it's compulsory in your country, you need to have completed it or you need to provide some proof of exemptions. And then meet the character requirements, and that is especially for a security clearance that you may need to undergo. That is not typical, and chances are for most of you this will not be required. But in case that's the situation, or let's say if you have a criminal record or similar, that might cause problems, but we assume that this is not the case for the vast majority of you.

Language Rules

Then there are more specific requirements when it comes to languages and then work experience, which is the trickiest. Language-wise, it's pretty straightforward, and there are some nuances to cover.

But before we get there, there is a tool that EPSO makes available to candidates called EASI, which is an abbreviation of the Experience Assessment Survey Instrument, so that's the "I" in the end, which is essentially a fully sort of free and easily accessible tool. It ensures that if you are blatantly or manifestly ineligible for this competition, then you're not going to waste your own time or the European Commission's or the Selection Board's time by applying when you may absolutely not meet one or another essential criterion.

This is something you can try just to be sure that you meet all those checks. But then more importantly, let's look at the language rules.

First of all, those of you who are new to this field of EU careers, there are no formal language tests that you need to have. You're not expected to have an Oxford certificate, DELE, or DELF, or any of these like TOEFL. Whatever language exam there is, you're not expected to have any of that, but you are expected to have a certain level of fluency in two languages. That sort of fluency is pretty easy to match, it's fairly straightforward, and especially since quite recently, why? Because it used to be the

case that it had to be English and/or French or German or Italian or Spanish, or one of the larger languages or the more widely spoken languages. But there were several court cases saying that it goes against the principle of linguistic diversity and the democracy of languages.

The result is that you can choose any of the EU's 24 official languages as your **Language 1**—be it Maltese, Czech, Bulgarian, English, or any other.

Language 2 has to be one of the 24 languages as well, as long as it's different from language one. Therefore, you have 23 other choices to pick from. So for me, I could choose Hungarian and then Spanish or whatever language I feel comfortable enough taking the exam in. The big caveat is that certain tests are taken in language one and others are taken in language two. So if you speak multiple languages—and it doesn't necessarily need to be a large number of languages, but maybe two or three—then you have the option. I encourage you to reflect on which language you will pick as language one and language two, because the nature of the exam that you need to sit in that particular language will be somewhat different.

For example, for the written test, you want to pick a language in which you are very comfortable drafting documents, whereas for the abstract verbal and numerical reasoning tests, which are more about analysing information and simply choosing an option from A, B, C, or D, that requires a different level of language skill. As an example, I'm quite fluent in French in terms of understanding and expression. I can write fairly well, but my spelling—oh my God! Without a spell checker, I would not want to submit my documents in French, especially when the stakes are so high.

What I'm saying is I would not choose that particular language to draft documents in. I might choose that as language one but not the one in which I need to write a response to an assignment. These are considerations worth having, especially if you can choose from multiple languages. One important aspect is it has to be an official language. If your mother tongue is Russian or any language that is not among the 24, you won't be able to pick those. These are the principles that can shape your thinking and your choice.

Qualifications

You need to have at least a three-year university diploma and then seven years of relevant experience. But there are some nuances to bear in mind, and one of those nuances is that you need to have at least two publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Before we get there, I'll take a look at some of the questions that have come in because perhaps I can address some that are of broader, general interest. Let's look at one here:

Q: *There's an eligibility requirement regarding publications. The notice mentions "publications," but the ASJC reference seems to point only to journals. What about peer-reviewed publications in books, which are coded differently?*

A: If you're putting me on the spot, I'd say that even if I shared my perspective, it wouldn't be official. That's why I'm very cautious about commenting on this because the question seems to be about whether books qualify as publications, or if only journals do, or whether any other format is

acceptable. My thought would be that publishing in a scientific book presumably qualifies, but these are the kinds of questions that many others are likely wondering about as well.

In this regard, I would suggest asking the Selection Board directly. If enough of you submit this same question, they may issue a clarification or at least provide guidance on the EPSO competition page. This is a fundamental question because it affects your eligibility, and I'd again be cautious to say anything without official confirmation. Ultimately, any clarification needs to come from the selection board, so I'd advise reaching out through their contact form to inquire about the policy on the term "publication"—whether it includes journals, books, or any other formats.

Now, why is it necessary to have or be part of at least two publications? Is it because the competition focuses on research, or does this generally apply to AD7 positions? Well, it is research-focused, so the aim at the end of the process is to hire researchers, which explains the publication requirement, specifically for at least two peer-reviewed journal publications. This isn't typically requested in AD7 competitions. For instance, in a recent AD7 competition for transport experts, there was a professional experience requirement and a diploma or qualification requirement, but no publication requirement. This is specific to the research field.

Q: *I realised I made a mistake in my application that I sent in. Can I delete it and submit it again?*

A: That depends on what "sent" means here. If you've already formally submitted it, I don't think you can edit it any longer. If there's an error, even if minor, I'd suggest at least sending a message to point out the mistake—whether it's just a typo or something more consequential. This way, there's a record (even if digital) that you intended to correct the incorrect information.

If it's something administrative, like your email address, that may be different.

All right, a couple of other questions are coming in, and we'll address those in due course. But now, let's return to the presentation so I can walk you through the steps of the exam.

WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

Before that, actually, a few words on why this is a good opportunity. Probably I don't need to preach to the converted—this comes with a lot of perks and benefits. Aside from working in an international environment, you'll be working on consequential topics that, as I said before, feed into broader policy-making and general thinking on a European, perhaps even global, level.

On a practical, personal level, you get health insurance, and there are European schools if you have children, which are run in nearly all the languages that the EU offers. I'm not entirely sure if this applies to Ispra or Seville as well; perhaps those with experience could point that out in the chat.

The salaries are certainly very attractive. This is an AD7 position, which means the starting level for administrators in EU institutions is AD5, so AD7 by definition requires at least six years of work experience. Based on the criteria here, you'll need at least a bachelor's degree plus seven years of relevant work experience. But, in administrative terms, an AD7 position

means having a minimum of six years' work experience. There could be exceptions for lawyer-linguists, but that's a separate matter.

In essence, you're not a newbie starting at the basic level for administrators; rather, this is a more senior, experienced level, which is reflected in the salary.

On the EU Training website, there's an [EU salary calculator](#) where you can input variables like your years of work experience and family situation, as these affect the benefits and salaries. You can run calculations and simulations—these are more indicative, but at least you'll have an idea.

We did a calculation for Seville, assuming a starting grade of AD7. The grade itself is certain; AD7 is the grade at which you'll be hired. The variable is the salary step—we assumed step two, which resulted in a fairly attractive salary. When considering purchasing power parity, this can be even more advantageous than in more expensive locations like Brussels or Luxembourg, giving you a useful indication.

Now, one very important thing—especially for those who may be less familiar with the way EU competitions work—is the distinction between *selection* and *recruitment*.

Right now, we are looking at selection. The ultimate goal of this entire exercise, so to speak, is to establish a reserve list. If everything goes well, you pass the competition, you're deemed eligible, and everything checks out, then you will be placed on the reserve list.

However, that's not the end of the process. Why? Because being on the reserve list is necessary but insufficient for the overall procedure—you still need to be recruited. EPSO and the selection board handle the selection process, but they do not manage recruitment. Once you're on the reserve list, it's then up to different departments, divisions, or units within the Joint Research Centre (JRC) or other European Commission departments to proceed with recruitment.

Primarily, it's the JRC, but it's not exclusively them who can recruit from the reserve list. The various Directorates-General (DGs) or departments of the European Commission will look at the reserve list and decide whom to invite for an interview with the goal of hiring that person.

So, to summarise, this competition is designed to get candidates onto the reserve list, but it's not just an exercise for its own sake. The idea is that institutions or specific DGs or departments have indicated to EPSO how many researchers they'd like to have in the end, which in turn informs the number of places available on the reserve list.

EPSO COMPETITION PHASES

Step 1 - Application

Let's look at the application process and the competition steps. You submit the application by filling in your EPSO profile in any of the languages. You fill in all the forms and answer the questions asked of you. Then, you upload the supporting documents, although the due date for that is actually later than the application date, as it happens. Everyone who submits their documents will be invited to sit a test. When you get that message inviting you to sit a test, unfortunately, that doesn't mean that your documents have been checked and your experience, publication record, and all the rest have been formally evaluated and approved. That comes later.

The application deadline is December 10th. A little over a month from today. Make sure you don't leave that to the last moment. The deadline for uploading the supporting documents is a little later because you may need to get that translated, or you may need to get hold of it if it takes time to contact a university or research centre for formal and official documents. Make sure you upload everything by 18 February 2025.

Step 2 - EPSO Tests

Then comes the exam day, and I say exam day because it's going to be the same day for everyone. There are various tests that you will be required to sit through, starting with what we refer to in-house as AVN or CBT—abstract, verbal, and numerical reasoning, or computer-based tests.

These tests will be taken remotely, meaning you don't need to go to a test centre as it used to be. Now, you can take the test from a place with a stable internet connection, like your home, and a computer where you have administrator rights to install the necessary application.

EPSO COMPUTER-BASED TEST (CBT)

The reasoning tests are pass/fail, so you need to hit a minimum score. Once you do that, that's great, but the score doesn't impact your ranking. However, don't take it too lightly because you still need to pass. For the abstract, verbal, and numerical reasoning, you'll have a specific allocation of time,

Starting with 20 questions in verbal reasoning with 35 minutes to complete them. This is logic-based, not a linguistic test.

Then you have numerical reasoning with 10 questions and 20 minutes, so two minutes per question.

Abstract reasoning is typically the most challenging, with shapes and forms in a sequence, and you need to find the next in the line within a minute per question.

The good news is not only that it's pass/fail, as we mentioned before, but the ranking system is a bit different. There's a pass mark set at 50 percent, and the numerical and abstract reasoning tests are combined. This is a common approach used by EPSO or selection boards.

This combined scoring means that even if you don't do well on the abstract reasoning section, as long as you perform very well in numerical reasoning, you could still pass. Of course, you don't want to rely on this entirely, but it does mean that the pressure is somewhat lower since you only need to achieve a combined score to pass.

FRSTQ

Then there is the FRSTQ, or the Field-Related Short Test Questionnaire. This is a new type of exam, and here's how it works: you have 10 open-ended questions, but you're not expected to write lengthy essays. There will almost certainly be a character or word limit—perhaps around 500 characters or a few short paragraphs. You'll be given a short passage with an open input field where you type in your answer. These questions will be fully related to the specific field you've chosen.

For example, if you choose behavioural economics, a question might be, "What does Kahneman say about System Two thinking?" (although, in practice, the questions will probably be more complex). This is where they assess your knowledge in your chosen field.

Now, how do you prepare for this? That's a big question, as you'll need to research or identify various sources, like textbooks, that cover topics related to your field. I mention "textbooks" specifically because these questions are typically not drawn from EU documents, reports, or policy materials unless your field directly relates to them (such as environmental science). Generally, these are university textbooks or similar resources since the questions are heavily field-related and not focused on EU policies or regulations.

Another important factor is language. You need to be fluent in the language you're answering in, including knowing the terminology and jargon for that field. So, if you studied agro-sciences or behavioural economics in Germany, for instance, it may be wise to choose German, as you'll likely be familiar with the terminology in that language. This is something to keep in mind when selecting your language.

This test score significantly impacts your ranking compared to other candidates within your specific field. You aren't ranked across different fields; instead, you're directly competing with others in the same field, making this score particularly important.

Interestingly, there's no formal pass mark. However, this doesn't matter much, as the process is competitive, and your performance is ranked against that of other candidates. Your answers are evaluated by experts, and only the top-ranked candidates will have their written tests scored. So, you need to be among the top performers for your written test to be evaluated.

On exam day, however, this ranking has no immediate impact—you simply take all the tests in sequence. These include abstract, verbal, numerical reasoning, the field-related short test

questionnaire, and the written test, all on a single day with breaks in between. This entire process depends on the selection board's expert evaluation of each test.

Written test

What about the written test? It's fairly straightforward. You have 40 minutes to complete it, and you can score up to 10 points, with a minimum of 5 points needed to pass.

For the written test, there's always a background document, which is typically provided in advance. You can expect this document to be available online, usually about 10 to 14 days before the exam, so you'll have time to review and understand it. Ahead of the exam, we offer several resources to help you prepare for this, including mind maps, briefing notes, coaching, and a Written Test Simulation + Evaluation service based on the actual document published by EPSO.

On the exam day, you'll have 40 minutes to draft a response to the assignment. You might be asked to write a briefing note or something more analytical, but realistically, there's only so much you can write in 40 minutes.

While the content will relate to your area of research, the test doesn't aim to evaluate your knowledge in the field. Instead, its primary purpose is to assess your written communication skills. Key indicators of good communication in this context include clarity, an awareness of the audience, and correct formatting. Although it's not a language test per se, it's certainly advisable to write accurately and professionally, as they will consider these aspects. However, the main focus will be on how effectively you communicate rather than linguistic precision.

So, to emphasise, it's not a language test.

Overall scoring

The overall scoring essentially works like this: the reasoning test will either qualify or disqualify you, but its score doesn't affect your final ranking.

What does impact your final score are the two other assessments—the Field-Related Short Test Questionnaire and the written test.

I hope that's clear. Basically, those are the assessments you complete, and out of a maximum of 50 points, candidates are then ranked based on their scores.

Step 3 - Eligibility checks

That's when the eligibility check happens. This is the stage where they begin examining all the different permutations you might be asking about, such as, "What if my qualification is this?" or "What if my work experience is that?" or "What if my publication falls under a certain category?"

And when—because I’m being optimistic here, not saying if—everything goes well and you make it through these hurdles (which I’ve explained in detail), it essentially comes down to one exam day. You pass three types of tests, and that’s it. Of course, the preparation requires a lot of effort, and I’ll say a few words about that, but then the focus shifts to ensuring your eligibility meets all requirements.

Step 4 - Reserve list

Hopefully, then, you receive a positive notification saying you’re on the Reserve List. Names are added to the reserve list based on scores until all available spots are filled, whether that’s 63, 75, or whatever number was communicated earlier (we covered this at the beginning). And that’s it—you’re on the reserve list.

It’s not ranked, so there isn’t a specific order like candidate number one, number fifteen, or twenty-four. All the names are listed, and you’re now eligible to be hired as an official, likely as a researcher at the Commission, most likely with the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

The recruitment services have access to this list, and there are steps you can take and methods you can use. In fact, we have a webinar on this called [How to Get a Job Once You Are on the Reserve List](#)—a session I did some time ago where I share a few ideas and tips.

Before we look at how to prepare, here are one or two questions I see.

Q: *Are AD7 reasoning questions more difficult than AD5?*

A: Someone is asking about the level of difficulty in abstract, verbal, and numerical reasoning. Yes, AD7 tends to be a bit more challenging. There's a pool of questions from which the selection board picks, and they indicate the level of difficulty required. Typically, AD7 includes more complex questions for abstract, verbal, and numerical tests.

Q: *Is there an estimation of when the competition will take place?*

A: At best, it’s just a guess. Almost certainly not this year, as the deadline is in December, and the supporting documents are due by February. My best guess is sometime around the end of January or February, though it could be delayed by several weeks due to many variables.

One factor I haven’t addressed yet is that EPSO had issues running these remote tests—not directly EPSO, but their contractor. There were technical problems that prevented candidates from completing the exam smoothly. This has been addressed, and the situation has improved, but the interaction between EPSO and their technical provider will impact the timing. My guess is that it won’t be before the end of January at the earliest. We’re monitoring the situation closely, and if we see any trends or updates, we’ll let you know.

Q: *Can this reserve list be used by Commission agencies?*

A: No, and here's why. Agencies generally do not employ officials, who are permanent employees in this context. This competition is for permanent officials, which means open-ended positions. EU agencies typically hire temporary agents, though there are rare exceptions where a permanent official might be seconded to an agency. In nearly all cases, however, agencies won't be hiring from this list. It's essentially the European Commission, specifically the Joint Research Centre, that will be the employer.

Q: *What about eligibility checks—why are they done after the test?*

A: A bit of background here: this has been a debated issue of whether checks should happen before or after. The reason it's done after is simply due to bandwidth. From a candidate perspective, it would be ideal to know eligibility early on. However, with thousands, and in some cases tens of thousands of candidates, the administration asks, "Why check all those candidates if many won't pass the exams?"

This is the classic "chicken and egg" problem, and the solution has been to put candidates through the system. They have an initial tool to filter out those who are clearly ineligible, but those who, to the best of their knowledge, believe they meet the eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply.

HOW TO PREPARE

How to prepare? A couple of points.

- First, take it seriously, so **practice**. It could be 10 to 12 weeks, or maybe three weeks super intensive, but give it some time. Consider how other factors—like Christmas holidays or children being at home—might affect your ability to focus on preparation. Come up with a plan, set aside enough hours per day to practise, and do so in a structured, systematic way.
- **Learn the test methodology.** I'll be running a [new webinar on 28th November focused on preparation methodology](#), so you can learn to prepare consistently rather than only when you feel like it. It's easy to get distracted by more enjoyable things like Netflix, but that won't help you pass this kind of exam.
- Having a structured system for preparation and **staying persistent is key**.
- Part of that could include **simulations**, or even forming a study group with friends who are also taking the exam. Peer-to-peer learning can be motivational, and you can share information. At EU Training, we're exploring ways to facilitate this approach, helping people form study groups with others who might technically be competitors but could still benefit from mutual support. In groups of three or four, you could share resources, methods, and tips, like ways to approach abstract reasoning more effectively.

We offer a range of resources, including

- [reasoning skills workshops](#)
- [free and paid methodology webinars](#)

- [personal coaching](#)
- [support for beginners on the various tests](#)
- <https://eutraining.eu/resources/tips-and-tricks>
- [preparation planner](#) (an early-stage AI-driven tool we're experimenting with, available for free on our website), you can input your exam type and challenges to receive a tailored plan.

Then there's the "[Ultimate EU Test Book](#)"—a resource that covers material for assistants, administrators, and career development. It's worth exploring, and we have tests and packages available, with more coming soon. We'll notify you by email when these are available, including a special discount for those preparing for this competition.

We also have Facebook communities, including a [group specifically for scientific research administrators](#). It's a place to share best practices, insights, and even frustrations if there are delays or if you come across useful information to share with others.

QUESTIONS?

Q: Who will be evaluating the field-related short test questionnaire and the written test? EPSO, external evaluators, or contracted experts?

A: Typically, it will be experts from within the Selection Board or the EU itself, who are at least at the AD7 level and have expertise in the field. They will have the knowledge to accurately evaluate open-ended answers and determine the validity and accuracy of responses.

Q: Is there any chance the pass mark for the FRSTQ will be adjusted if most candidates perform poorly?

A: No, there is no set pass mark for the FRSTQ. Scores will be used to rank candidates against each other, along with the written test, rather than applying a strict pass/fail threshold.

Q: Do patents count as publications?

A: It's uncertain. Patents may not typically count as publications since they are categorized differently from journal publications or other scientific articles. However, it's best to clarify directly with the Selection Board if this affects your eligibility.

Q: If I select a certain language for the exam, will that influence the location of the job placement?

A: No, the field or topic you choose will primarily determine the placement, not the language. Location depends on where specific vacancies arise in that field within the Joint Research Center or other relevant departments.

Q: How do I prove my years of work experience?

A: Work experience can be demonstrated with official documentation like pay slips, employer records, contracts, or any other formal proof. Internships may count if they were paid. Check the Notice of Competition for specific guidelines on acceptable documentation.

Q: Will the selected language for the exam influence the recommended location?

A: No, the selected language doesn't affect the recommended location. Placement is determined based on the specific field you've chosen and where related vacancies are available, primarily within the Joint Research Center.

Q: What are the eligibility checks, and why are they done after the test?

A: Eligibility checks are done after the test to streamline the process. It would be very resource-intensive to check eligibility for every applicant before the tests, especially when many applicants might not pass the exams. So, EPSO uses the tests to filter down to a manageable number before conducting the eligibility checks.

Q: Can this reserve list be used by EU agencies, or is it strictly for the European Commission?

A: No, the reserve list is strictly for the European Commission and primarily the Joint Research Center. EU agencies usually employ temporary agents and not permanent officials, so they do not recruit from this list.

Q: Are the AD7 reasoning questions more difficult than AD5?

A: Yes, the AD7 level questions tend to be more challenging, with a pool of questions designated for the higher level. They are generally more complex and require a deeper level of reasoning than those at the AD5 level.

Q: Will there be training material available specifically for this competition?

A: Yes, we'll provide dedicated material for almost every required step, except for the open-ended question test, which is a new addition. We aim to have all relevant materials on our site within the next two weeks.

Q: What is the estimated timing for when the competition will take place?

A: Based on the application deadlines, it's likely the competition tests will occur around the end of January or February. However, EPSO has had some technical issues with remote testing, so there could be some delay depending on the readiness of the testing infrastructure.

Q: Why is it needed to have or be part of at least two publications?

A: This competition is for researchers, so publications are a key requirement to demonstrate research experience and expertise in the field. This criterion is unique to research-oriented AD7 competitions and is generally not required in other AD7-level competitions.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!