

Content

	Introduction	5
Part 1	Nature of the test	7
Chapter 1	What is an e-tray test	9
Chapter 2	Competencies	15
Chapter 3	Values.....	19
Chapter 4	Scoring system.....	23
Part 2	Method	27
Chapter 5	The method	29
	Tasks A, B, C and D: Preparatory phase	33
Chapter 6	Task A: Analysing the scenario.....	35
Chapter 7	Task B: Constructing a calendar	41
Chapter 8	Tasks C and D: Overview and selective reading of emails	43
	Task E: Dealing with questions	47
Chapter 9	Question typology.....	49
Chapter 10	Dealing with targeted questions	51
Chapter 11	Dealing with general questions	59
Chapter 12	Dealing with calendar questions.....	63
Chapter 13	Dealing with verbal reasoning questions	69
Chapter 14	Revision.....	71
Chapter 15	Summary	73
Part 3	Exercise 2: Answers and explanations	77
Chapter 16	Task A: Analysing the scenario.....	79
Chapter 17	Task B: Constructing a calendar	81
Chapter 18	Tasks C and D: Overview and selective reading of emails	83
Chapter 19	Task E: Dealing with the questions.....	85
	Who are we?	115

Introduction

1. WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

This book is designed for all EU institution competition candidates who wish to prepare in the best way possible for the e-tray exercise.

2. THE E-TRAY EXERCISE

The e-tray exercise is a computer-based simulation of a real-life working situation. It consists of an email inbox containing a number of emails. The candidate must use these to answer a series of multiple choice questions (MCQs). For each question, he has to rank three options. The test lasts 50 minutes.

The e-tray exercise has been part of the AST Generalists assessment tests since 2011 and of certain AD competitions since 2013. In 2015, it was introduced as an intermediary test in AD Generalist and Audit competitions¹. The AST and AD e-tray competition tests are similar.

The e-tray test is designed to measure four competencies:

- analysis and problem solving;
- delivering quality and results;
- prioritising and organising;
- working with others.

3. CHALLENGES OF THE TEST

The main challenge of the test lies in the scattered nature of the information and the time allowed for the exercise. In order to answer a question, the candidate has to gather and analyse information sourced from a number of emails. However, the inbox contains around twenty emails, so an organised mind is essential.

The way the options are ranked is another challenge. The candidate must rank each option according to a 5-point scale ranging from "Totally disagree" to "Totally agree". He may hesitate between two similar values, for example between "Totally disagree" and "Disagree". So a fine level of discrimination is also required.

The e-tray test is a technical exercise. To obtain the maximum points in each of the competencies, the candidate must:

- identify his role;
- interpret the questions correctly;
- quickly identify the relevant emails and extract the key information from them;
- master the EPSO competencies;
- be familiar with the values of EU institutions;

¹ For administrators, the test is an additional stage between the admission tests and the assessment centre tests.

- combine different criteria in order to rank the options correctly;
- train well for the test.

4. GIVING YOURSELF EVERY CHANCE OF SUCCESS

This book will give you every chance of achieving a successful outcome in the e-tray exercise.

Part I deals with the specific nature of the e-tray test: question format, ranking criteria and scoring.

Part II looks at the methodology. It explains, step by step, the procedure to follow in order to rank the options correctly.

The detachable booklet contains two e-tray exercises:

- a short exercise designed to illustrate the methodology;
- a full-length exercise designed to give you practice.

Part III provides a detailed explanation of the full-length e-tray exercise.

Good luck with your preparations!



PART I

NATURE OF THE TEST

CHAPTER 1 - WHAT IS AN E-TRAY TEST?

1. KEY FEATURES

The test lasts 50 minutes and is taken in language 2.

The candidate has access to an email inbox containing just under twenty emails. He has to answer a series of questions (17 on average), basing his answers on the information contained in the emails.

Here is an example question²:

Q1

How do you deal with Elena who says she won't be able to deliver the training information on time?

A. You discuss her work schedule with Léon Verstaevel.	--	-	-/+	+	++
B. You ask Alf Lorenz to reactivate the old software temporarily.	--	-	-/+	+	++
C. You ask her if she has done the tutorial.	--	-	-/+	+	++

Each question relates to an action to be taken (or behaviour to be adopted) in response to a specific situation. The situation may be partially described in the question. This is true of the example here: Elena says that she will not be able to deliver the training information on time. The situation is also referred to in one or more emails: to find out why Elena can't deliver the information to us on time, we will need to open one or more emails.

For each situation, the candidate is given three options. He must rank each of these actions according to a 5-point scale. The scale is as follows:

- Totally disagree
- Disagree
- /+ Neutral
- + Agree
- ++ Totally agree

Each rating can be used only once in the same question. For example, you can't assign the (-) rating to two options. So, if there are two options you don't agree with, you must decide which one is worse than the other and assign it the (-) rating.

The fact that the same rating can't be assigned to two options within the same question means that you will have to indicate your order of preference for the three options. For example, option B is better than option C which in turn is better than option A.

² The questions are taken from exercise 1 in the detachable booklet.

2. QUESTION FORMAT

The screen is divided horizontally into two parts.

The upper section displays the email inbox. This in turn is divided into two parts: on the left are the email titles and on the right is the content of the selected email. To view the content of an email you have to click on its title.

The emails are not arranged by subject, nor are they in chronological order.

The lower section of the screen displays the questions. To move from one question to another, you have to click on the "Next" and "Previous" buttons.

Navigation in the inbox is separate from navigation in the question box. In other words, the question that appears on the screen does not necessarily relate to the email that appears above it. When you move on to the next question, the email displayed doesn't change.

Here is an example e-tray screen:

Welcome	From: Arthur Nimoy, Strategy and Communications Directorate
Contacts	To: <Your name>
Inoquest software	Date: 20/05/201X
Meeting report	Subject: Inoquest software
Software problem	<p>Hello <Your name>, I hope you are settling in well in your new department. I understand that you are very busy at the moment with preparations for the Dialogue with Citizens Symposium. Catherine and I are in the process of producing the SAFE questionnaires. This morning we became stuck on the factor analysis. We can't manage to extract the data from the Inoquest software. As you were the only one in the team to use it, I thought that perhaps you could come and help us. We have to submit our conclusions in three days'time. Thank you. We are counting on you! Arthur</p>
RAX software	
Article on multilingualism	
Brochure	
Warsaw seminar	
Request from Nicol	
Training requests follow-up	

Q5

How do you react to Arthur Nimoy's request? Rate the following actions on a scale ranging from "Totally disagree" (--) to "Totally agree" (++)

A. You do nothing as it doesn't concern your department.	--	-	-/+	+	++
B. You take the lead and train your former colleagues yourself.	--	-	-/+	+	++
C. You ask your line manager if you can assist with the processing of the questionnaires alongside your current duties.	--	-	-/+	+	++

Help

Overview

Previous

Next

In this example, the candidate has selected the "Inoquest Software" email, which relates to the question.

The "Help" button takes you to the instructions. The "Overview" button takes you to the question list. This list allows you to identify the questions you haven't answered yet: they are the questions not crossed out.

Overview



The questions you have already answered are crossed-out.

Click on the number of the question you want to answer.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Question 1 | <input type="radio"/> Question 2 |
| <input type="radio"/> Question 3 | <input type="radio"/> Question 4 |
| <input type="radio"/> Question 5 | <input type="radio"/> Question 6 |
| <input type="radio"/> Question 7 | <input type="radio"/> Question 8 |
| <input type="radio"/> Question 9 | <input type="radio"/> Question 10 |
| <input type="radio"/> Question 11 | <input type="radio"/> Question 12 |
| <input type="radio"/> Question 13 | <input type="radio"/> Question 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> Question 15 | <input type="radio"/> Question 16 |

3. EQUIPMENT

You will have at your disposal:

- a computer equipped with a mouse;
- two laminated sheets of squared paper to take notes (A4 format);
- two markers.

Before starting the test, make sure that the equipment is working properly, especially the markers.

4. TEST OBJECTIVES

As in the situational judgement test, the e-tray test evaluates your behaviour and your decision-making ability in a working situation: you must show that you know how to act appropriately in different situations.

However, the two tests differ essentially on three points:

- the number of competencies tested;
- information retrieval;
- option ranking.

► The competencies

In the e-tray exercise, only four competencies are tested (compared with five in the situational judgement test). These competencies are:

- analysis and problem solving;
- delivering quality and results;

- prioritising and organising;
- working with others.

▶ **Information**

In the situational judgement test, all the information appears in the question. In the e-tray exercise, you will have to retrieve it from around twenty emails. This means that you will need to be fast and well organised, selecting the relevant information as quickly as possible from a large number of documents.

▶ **Option ranking**

In the situational judgement test, you have to compare the options and choose the two extremes. In the e-tray exercise, you have not only to compare the options but also to rank them according to a 5-point scale, which is more difficult. For example, if you believe that there is only one good option, do you give it a (+) or (++) rating?