First European Air traffic controller Selection Test (FEAST)

Information for Candidates applying to become Student Air Traffic Controllers

Network Management Directorate

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INTRODUCTION

You have applied for a position as Student Air Traffic Controller and have been invited to participate in the competition by taking some selection tests. In this process, a testing package called the First European Air Traffic Controller Selection Test (FEAST) is used. The aim of this leaflet is to give you an overview of what FEAST is about and what you need to know before you attend the tests.

FEAST has been designed and made available by EUROCONTROL, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation. It is widely used among European Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) and various approved Training Organisations in their recruitment and selection activities. These ANSPs are solely responsible for their selection decisions and EUROCONTROL plays no part in their processes.

This leaflet has been prepared by EUROCONTROL in cooperation with the organisation to which you have applied. For further information about FEAST, please refer to http://feast-info.eurocontrol.int/.

WHY ARE TESTS USED FOR ATC SELECTION?

Testing allows the most suitable applicants to be selected for the challenging job of air traffic controller.

The profile of an air traffic controller is very specific and the standard required is high. There are two reasons why the standards that are set in recruitment are high.

First of all, all organisations that provide ATC training aim to keep the failure rate in training as low as possible, as this is in the interests of both the organisation and the applicants.

Secondly, it is desirable to prevent candidates from starting training and realising only afterwards that they are not suited for the post of air traffic controller.

As these tests are so specific, you should note that even if you are not successful in them, it does not mean that you will be unsuccessful in other kinds of job applications.

We have found that candidates who do well in these tests tend to do well in air traffic control training and later in the job.

At the same time, we are able to gain information from these tests that cannot accurately be gained from just interviewing you for example. Some of the abilities that will be tested with FEAST go beyond what can be assessed in interviews, such as abilities like perceptual speed and three-dimensional ability. The information gained about applicants' abilities has been found to be predictive of success in ATC training, and so this is an objective way of conducting recruitment and selection.

FEAST

The FEAST test package is a professional, state-of-the-art, web-based testing system. The FEAST tool helps Air Navigation Service Providers to identify the most suitable candidates for their training positions.

FEAST includes a range of assessment tools. They measure a number of abilities and skills that are considered important for effective training and successful performance as an air traffic controller. A combination of special skills and other areas of potential, e.g. motivation and interest in the tasks involved, will help to guarantee professional success in this job. This series of tests was specifically developed for air traffic controller selection.

FEAST consists of up to three parts[1]:

- FEAST I: a set of cognitive abilities tests
- FEAST II: one or two more complex multi-tasking tests that generally follow the successful completion of FEAST I
- FEAST III (optional): the FEAST Personality Questionnaire (FPQ), a tool that is not used by all FEAST user organisations

The tests and accompanying administrative procedures have been designed with a great deal of professional care. They are administered and scored by computer, thus further adding to the objectivity of the process.

FEAST I

The **first phase** of FEAST is designed to measure your basic skills and abilities in decision-making, logical reasoning, visual perception, memory, attention, multi-tasking and spatial orientation. This phase also includes a test of your English language knowledge.

All tests are computer-based, and therefore the use of a keyboard and a mouse will be required.

It will take between **2½ hours** and **4 hours** to take the tests, including breaks. The exact duration will depend on the number of tests used by the testing organisation.

During the day of testing, you will be welcomed by a test administrator who will guide you through the day and explain everything you need to know before you actually start the tests.

Each test will be preceded by an introduction which explains the principles of the test. You will then be given an opportunity to practice the test with sample questions. Some tests will use a multiple-choice format, i.e. you will receive a number of solutions to choose from. Only one solution will be the correct one. In other tests, you will be required to react as quickly as possible. In general, **you should always try to work as quickly and precisely as possible**. It is also important to note that you might not be able to answer all items in all tests. This should not discourage you, as it does not necessarily mean that you have failed the test.

It is important to note that each candidate sits the tests under the same conditions and with the same instructions. You may therefore rest assured that all applicants are treated equally and fairly.

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[1] The exact numbers of tests in FEAST depend on the Air Navigation Service Provider or training institute you apply to.

FEAST II

Once you have successfully completed the FEAST I tests, you may be invited to attend a second round of testing. In this **second phase,** you will complete one or two work sample tests:

- the FEAST RADAR test
- the FEAST MULTI-PASS test

These tests are designed to measure your multi-tasking abilities. The tests are more complex and will require you to perform a number of different tasks at the same time as would be the case in the work of an Air Traffic Controller. However, it is important to note that again no prior knowledge of ATC procedures or other specific knowledge is required. These tests are designed for beginners with no background in ATC. The test instructions are very detailed and ensure that everything is explained before the test starts.

FEAST III (FPQ)

Some recruiting organisation may add the FPQ to their selection system. The FPQ can be administered at different stages of the recruitment process. The questionnaire is different from the other assessments in FEAST. It gives the recruiter, in addition to how you present yourself at interview, a picture of you as a person insofar as this will be relevant to the job for which you have applied. There are no wrong or right answers.

The questionnaire asks you to rate yourself on a number of questions on a simple scale from 1-5. The questionnaire is easy to complete and you should try to respond naturally and instinctively and not spend a long time on each response. The questionnaire takes approximately 30-35 minutes to complete.

OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) to which you have applied may supplement the FEAST tests with other tests. Usually you will attend a job interview at the end of the process. The ANSP will give you further information separately with regard to other tests in addition to FEAST.

PREPARATION FOR FEAST

To prepare for a FEAST test session, EUROCONTROL has developed a training platform for applicants. The tests on the platform are not identical to the tests used in a real test session; nevertheless, they capture the concept and principles of the FEAST I tests. In this way, applicants can familiarise themselves with the tasks to be performed in a FEAST test session. The use of the training platform is free of charge, and it can be found at https://feast-training.eurocontrol.int.

If you want to prepare thoroughly with the training platform, we advise you to take each test, check your results, and repeat the test once or twice. This should help you to understand the general test principle and familiarise yourself with the tasks you will need to perform. Items - that is, questions – and the specific instructions will be different in the real FEAST tests, so practice can only get you so far. As a rule of thumb, we recommend you spend a maximum of 8 hours on the training platform.

The training platform is the only platform or software authorised by EUROCONTROL which provides you with practice material for FEAST. Other test preparation software available commercially has been developed without the involvement or authorisation of EUROCONTROL. Therefore, practice tests available commercially may be very different from the FEAST tests and practicing with them may be misleading.

Although not covered in the training platform, you can also prepare for the English language listening and comprehension test that is part of FEAST. By making a conscious effort to improve your knowledge and use of English (e.g. by listening to video or audio programmes in English, by reading in English or by talking in English to native-speaker friends), you can improve your knowledge of the language. You will not be tested, as part of FEAST, in spoken English. Nevertheless, since the ability to speak English to a certain standard is an important requirement for the job of air traffic controller, you will most probably be tested for this ability at some stage of the selection process.

During the FEAST tests, you might come across certain words and phrases used in the field of aviation. It might be useful as a preparation to make sure you are familiar with their meaning. These words and phrases can be found in the Annex to these notes.

We also believe it is important for you to look for information about Air Traffic Control (ATC) and the job of an Air Traffic Controller. You can use the Internet to find out about the challenges and demands of the job and you can read aviation magazines. The more you understand the job you are applying for, the better you will feel as an applicant.

A FEAST test session is demanding in terms of concentration. Resilience and perseverance will be required. You should therefore attend the test in good physical and mental condition. Try to get a good night's sleep on the day before your test session.

Please be aware that some medicines can have a negative effect on your ability to concentrate. If you are in doubt about the effect of any such medication, you should seek medical advice and declare this beforehand.

FEAST TEST TAKER CONSENT

Finally, please read carefully the FEAST Test Taker Consent document, which you will also have received. This document gives information about how your test data will be used and stored. Your agreement to these conditions will be a prerequisite to taking the FEAST tests.

Good luck with your application!

ANNEX

A

Aircraft Label	Tag on an aircraft symbol containing flight information.
Aircraft symbol	A representation of an aircraft on the screen.
Airfield	Area of land set aside for the take-off and landing of aircraft.
Air picture	Map of the airspace (test-specific meaning).
Alert	Warning.
Array	Ordered series or arrangement.

C

To climb	Fly the aircraft to a higher altitude.
Code name	Combination of letters and numbers used to identify an aircraft.
Compass rose	A graduated circle printed on a map or chart from which directions can be taken.
Conflict	Event in which two or more aircraft experience a potential loss of minimum separation.
Conflict alert	Signal of an imminent loss of separation.
Conflicting aircraft	Aircraft experiencing a potential loss of minimum separation with another aircraft.
Coordinates	Numbers used to indicate the position of a point on a surface.

D

To descend	Fly the aircraft to a lower altitude.

E

Entry and exit point	A place where an aircraft enters or exits a section of airspace.

H

To handover	Giving control of an aircraft to another air traffic controller.
Heading	Direction.
Horizontal axis	X-axis on a graph (left to right).

I

Instrument	Measuring device used to gauge the level, position, speed, etc. of an aircraft.
Irrespective	Not taking (something) into account, regardless of.

K

Knots	Unit of speed equal to one nautical mile per hour (1852 m/h).

L

Landing	Bringing an aircraft to land.
Latitude	Geographic coordinate that specifies the north–south position of a point on the Earth's surface.
Longitude	Geographic coordinate that specifies the east-west position of a point on the Earth's surface.

M

Match	Object that is equal to another object (test-specific meaning).
To monitor	Keep under systematic observation.

N

Nautical Mile	Unit used in measuring distances at sea and in the air (equal to 1852 metres).
Navigation	The process of monitoring and controlling the movement of an aircraft from one place to another.

O

Omission	Test item that has been left unanswered.
Opposite traffic	Aircraft following the same track in reciprocal directions.
Out of bounds	Outside the limits of where one is permitted to be.
To overfly	To pass over in an aircraft.
Overriding	More important than any other considerations.

P

Penalised	Subject to penalty.
Position	Location of aircraft on the map.
Progress of an aircraft	Change in the aircraft position over time.
Proximity	Nearness in space.

R

Radar picture   Screen image showing the position and velocity of a distant object, such
                       as an aircraft.
Range   Distance.
Rate of turn   Heading change per unit of time (usually seconds).
Re-route   Send along a different route.
Route   Way or course taken in getting from a starting point to a destination.
Runway   Strip of hard ground along which aircraft take off and land.

S

Sector   Area or portion of airspace.
Separation   Distance between two aircraft.
Sequence   Set of items that follow each other.
Simultaneously   At the same time.

T

To take-off   Becoming airborne.
Three-dimensional   Property of an object that can be measured in terms of height, length, and
                       width.
Tone   Sound.
Trajectory   The path followed by an aircraft.
Turning point   The point at which an aircraft changes direction.

V

Vertical   At a right angle (that is, 90 degrees) to a horizontal plane.
Vertical axis   Y-axis on a graph (top to bottom).

W

Waypoint   A specified geographical location used to define the flight path of an
                       aircraft.

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