



TRANSCRIPT:

2016 EPSO Auditor Exams (EPSO/AD/322/16) Information Webcast

Good evening and welcome!

This is Andras Baneth speaking from Brussels at the live webinar about the 2016 EPSO Auditor Exams.

This webinar is being recorded so you might be listening to the recorded version but whatever I'm going to say is relevant as of today, which is the end of May or middle of May so to say 2016 and the EPSO tests the EPSO exams may change slightly in the future but whatever we know today, this is the information I am going to share with you.

I'm just waiting for quick confirmation from my colleagues and Lenke who is helping us from Budapest so she is helping with the administrative issues and questions that maybe coming in and I'll be trying to answer those as you have them.

So this is me Andras Baneth and I'm going to take about 60 minutes to cover anything and everything that you can and should know about the 2016 Auditor Exams and as I mentioned before, we're very happy to take questions so feel free to type into the chat box in the webinar platform and Lenke will be conveying these to me and I'll try to answer as many as possible during the live session. And if we don't have enough time to cover everything then I'm more than happy to follow up through email or we might write a short note for each of the questions so nothing is left unanswered.

In case if you missed something as mentioned before we will be sharing the full recording with everyone and the Prezi that I'm using right now along with the transcript. The transcript might take a little longer than what it says here but that is also something you will see online on our website and in your inbox.

So a few words about our community which you might know. We have so far around 80,000 registered users and several thousands of them are already EU officials, something we are really happy for and proud of that we help you become an EU official. That is our core mission and we do everything in our power to help you achieve that dream. Join our Facebook page if you haven't yet done so because it's a very vibrant and vivid community. We share a lot of useful information and inspirational stuff on our page that you will hopefully find useful. Feel free to practice with our system because we have around 20,000 questions in our database, which is a pretty impressive number I believe because it's a vast number of question-based something that have generated over 17 million questions which I think is a mind blowing number and then use our webinars, a lot of free webcasts and recorded instructional webinars over hundred hours we have covered so far most of which is available on the website and we have had 5,000 participants over the years.



Today's Agenda

So with this in mind, let's actually look at today's agenda and see what I'm going to cover in the next 55 or so minutes.

So I'll say a few words about a day in the life of an Auditor. What kind of job is that of an Auditor and look at the positions that are available for you in the framework of this EPSO competition. We'll look at eligibility which is a very important piece in the EPSO puzzle, making sure that you meet all the formal criteria to qualify as a competitor in this exam.

And then we'll look at why this is a great opportunity and then look actually at the tests themselves – the Pre-Selection test and the Assessment Centre in a nutshell. And we'll look at a few ideas and I'll share with you some tips on how to prepare (obviously very much on your mind) and how to optimise your performance and your preparation and then in the end, I'm happy to share with you a special exclusive offer to benefit from training packages and webinars on our website.

A Day In The Life Of An Auditor

So just a few words about day in the life of an Auditor and I see that there is already a question coming in which I very much appreciate. It's something about eligibility so I'll come back to it when we get to that part.

So one day in the life of an Auditor, what does an Auditor actually do? But before that, where do you actually work? And the place of work is the fairly classic triangle where EU institutions are located: Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg but essentially roughly 80% of EU permanent jobs are located in Brussels. Around 15% in Luxembourg which for the Auditor competition is even more relevant given the fact that Luxembourg is the host country of the European Court of Auditors so as an Auditor you have chances to get an employment opportunity there. And then Strasbourg is a little different because that's only where the European Parliament is officially located but very, very few staff actually works in Strasbourg as you see.

And then you have a number of employment opportunities surround the EU mostly at European agencies but those contracts tend to be Temporary Agent Contracts so once you passed an EPSO competition it's not likely that you will end up working at an EU agency. It's much more possible that you will be working at the European Commission, at the European Parliament, the European Court of Auditors or other European institutions.

Selection and Recruitment

And then the next thing about the Selection and Recruitment actually happens to all seven of the EU institutions. Especially the ones I mentioned so the Court of Auditors, Commission and Parliament but you have at least a theoretical possibility to work for the Council of Ministers, Court of Justice, Committee of Regions and the Economic and



Social Committee which means that EPSO establishes a reserve list, but they do not deal with recruitment. Recruitment happens by the specific institutions. The ones you see on the screen - who pick and choose the right candidates from the reserve list.

In this competition your goal is to get on the reserve list. You cannot indicate or cannot predetermine which institution you will be working for. It's very much at the end of the process or even after the end of the process that this question will be settled during the recruitment phase.

So this is just to emphasize the distinction between selection and recruitment. So as I mentioned before your place of employment or the institution where you will work for is only decided at the recruitment moment.

So essentially as you certainly know there are two subsets in the Competition, there are two grades for which you can apply – AD 5 and AD 7. Both of these are part of the same competition, which means that you need to choose. You cannot apply for both even if you are eligible for both.

And there is a special rule in this competition meaning if you qualify for the AD 7 and I will come back in a few moments what the qualification criteria are.

If you qualify for the AD 7 or at least you apply for AD 7, but it turns out you do not meet all the criteria for the qualification, you can give your agreement, your consent that you will be passed to the AD 5. So then your qualification is passed on to the AD 5 so you will not lose the chance to apply and to go through the tests in the competition just because you may not have a sufficient number of years of expertise for AD 7. Even so you could then run in the AD 5 competition. But you need to make a choice, you cannot apply for both.

And then application deadline 14th of June. I probably don't need to emphasize how important it is that you apply in time. Do not leave the application to the last moment, it's a regular phenomenon even in the age of robust IT systems and cloud computing, but it's a regular phenomenon that EPSO's servers crash one hour before the deadline and that is due to so many candidates filing and finalising their application in the very last moment. So my piece of advice, do it at least a couple of days before, never leave it to the last moment.

Language Rules

The language rules often a tricky topic because you need to pick the right language as a first language and the second language. Now most of the pre-selection tests (or not most but all the pre-selection tests) in this competition, so the Abstract, Verbal and Numerical reasoning tests are conducted in your first language.

And the first language, the definition of the first language is an EU official language and your mother tongue, but then again mother tongue can be far broader than just the 24 EU official languages depending on where you grew up or your



parent's language of use so in that case you need to make sure it's one of the 24 and then language number two has to be English, French or German.

And then again it is a tricky thing to choose rightly because the language one can be literally any of the 24, it doesn't need to correspond to your passport. If you're a Bulgarian but you speak fluent French because of whatever reason, you're free to choose French as language one. And with the condition that language two has to be different from language one, so in that case if you picked French as first one, language two has to be English or German.

The reason why that's important is because language two is the language of the Assessment Centre. So your choice should be based on your skill and competency in writing, linguistic skills in writing that whatever is stronger for you - that should be language one and the oral expression is language two. So if you have the liberty or the luxury to choose any combination of these two then language one can be a fairly passive knowledge whereas language two has to be a very active one because you need to write the case study in language two. You need to sit the Assessment Centre, present in language two. You need to do the group exercise in language two.

So this is a full list and then you have language two English, French and German. So this is really to emphasize that language one any of the 24 – it's not linked to your country of origin or your passport. Citizenship obviously you need to be in an EU citizen.

Available Positions

As long as you have the language part and the citizenship done for the AD 5 Competition you have 71 for the AD 7 you have 15. So AD 5 obviously has more chances of success, but then again it's a question with a lot of variables and the variable or the unknown part in this equation is how many people actually applied for these two to properly evaluate your chances.

Why This Is A Great Opportunity?

And in terms of why this is a great opportunity I probably do not need to preach to the converted, don't need to convince you why this is a great opportunity. Some of you may already be working at the institutions as a trainee or as a temporary agent so the salary is certainly a big attraction.

I do not encourage you to go for the EU job purely for the salary. The salary obviously is a very important one and the benefits but the job itself needs to be interesting enough to be enjoyable otherwise you may not be entirely happy with the job you get.



Nevertheless it's a great one because you could work at different Director Generals or the DGs which brings a lot of variety to your work. So even if you start at the Court of Auditors, you could keep your salary and keep your position and then transit to another DG and work in a completely different field while relying on your expertise.

So the salary for an AD 5, the net salary is around 4,000 euros give or take because there are a couple of factors that come into play. We will soon have or I would say we will have again on our website a salary calculator. It's something that we had on our previous site and we will install that on the new site in a couple of weeks so you can do a simulation or your situation. How much your salary would be for AD 7, it's around 5,000 euros net per month and there are various benefits so if you're married (health insurance is not connected to you being married) but if you're married, then you get a certain allowance depending on your spouse's work situation. You get full health insurance, full coverage and for children there are European schools and other benefits.

Pre-Selection Phase

And then let's look at the actual exams. Let's see the pre-selection phase where you have three exams. So you have a Verbal Reasoning which has a pass mark of 50% and then you have the Numerical and Abstract Reasoning tests with the combined pass mark of 50%.

Generally, that is good news. Generally that is welcomed news by many candidates because Numerical and Abstract Reasoning tends to be the toughest nut to crack. However, it's not such good news because you still need to perform very, very well in order to make sure that you are among the best candidates from among the competitors.

So we're going to take a bit of a closer look at how to actually get one of these jobs and I think I will take a moment afterwards to answer some of the questions which are coming in and I really appreciate these, I'm very happy that you're so open and willing to ask questions. I'd like to make this very relevant for you so I'll come back to these questions in a couple of minutes.

Eligibility

So let's look at a few points about eligibility. For the AD 5, the eligibility criteria is that you need to have a relevant diploma or a professional qualification.

Let me pause here for a second.

The good reason why EPSO formulated the eligibility this way, so "either relevant diploma or professional qualification", is because there have been some court cases in the past about what qualifies as an Audit degree and in some countries, as in my native Hungary, but in many other European member states there is no formal qualification for Audit. There is Business Administration, there could be IT, there could be Engineering and other studies but not Audit as



a degree. So professional qualification, which bares resemblance to the audit field or is close enough can qualify as a relevant degree.

And then for AD 5 no work experience is required and that's a very important thing, so if you are fresh out of university or you have a professional degree which is not university but relevant to the audit field, you can still be eligible.

And then for the AD 7, it's a similar concept as relevant diploma or professional qualification, but there you must have professional work experience. And the rule of thumb is that you need to have six years of work experience for the AD 7 of which a certain number of years has to be in the audit field so in the Notice of Competition there are different scenarios and for AD 7 its always a certain number of years of work experience so 6 or 7 (and that correlates with the duration of your professional qualification) and the certain number of years has to be in the audit field.

And there are again different shades of this, different scenarios depending whether your professional qualification was in the audit field and what is the number of work experience, the global work experience that's required and the relevant work experience that's required. And interesting thing is that you can have any professional qualification.

So I quickly glanced here, somebody asked a question (something I'll come back to), where somebody has a degree in Biology. So having a degree in Biology, it has nothing to do with Audit but then if your professional work experience is for a sufficient number of years and it's relevant, I think four years of it are relevant for the audit field, then you can qualify for the competition.

So that's an important thing that even if you studied something very different but then you gain experience in that field then your work experience can be accounted for eligibility.

And then the Pre-Selection test, let me say a few words about this and then I'll come back to the questions. So the Pre-Selection tests as you certainly know and I mentioned before: Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Reasoning and Abstract Reasoning, there is no Situational Judgment test for the Audit competition this year – important to know.

Verbal Reasoning

And let's take a quick look at some of these tests, verbal reasoning is a very straightforward exercise. You've got 20 questions and 35 minutes so a little more than a minute or not a little more but exactly a minute and a half per question...and no, I'm making wrong calculations on the fly, I wasn't thorough enough in doing this quick calculation it's not a minute and a half so a little more than a minute and a half per question.

What you have there is always a text passage which is around six, seven lines long - sometimes shorter, sometimes longer depending on the difficulty the exam, but given that this is an AD 5 and AD 7 the text passage is likely going to be a little longer.



Then you have a question which is always - which one is the correct answer or which one corresponds best to the text passage - and then you have four statements. Four statements, one of which is the correct answer. One of which is the true answer.

And here's the trick. Here's what EPSO test authors (this is how they try to mislead you) this is how they are trying to trap you. So very often you would have outside information in the passage which is not something you could have known, not something you should take into consideration. And I often caution candidates that if the text is about something very current, very recent - whether it's a refugee crisis, whether it's European politics, whether it's the Eurovision song festival, it doesn't matter what it is - and you read about that news item in the press and you have certain information about it, it's very easy to think that you know a piece of information from the text even though you actually know it from somewhere else.

So if the text is familiar, you might be very happy because cognitively you process that information much faster but then don't fall into the trap where you think something was written in the text even though you know it from somewhere else.

Often they would work with generalisations - so instead of saying yesterday it was a very heavy rain and thunderbolts, they would say yesterday was bad weather - and then it might be a tricky thing, does it describe the detailed information versus the general information. Or the other way around. What was mentioned in the text and what is mentioned among the answer options.

Very often they would operate with possibility vs. fact so words such as probably, possibly, likely or could be, so hypothetical, conditional words can definitely mislead you and change the meaning of one of the answer options. And often they would just use similar wording which doesn't entirely correspond to the original text. The original text says "Mr. Smith is confident that his contract will be concluded" and then in the answer options it has "Mr. Smith thought it was likely that his contract will be concluded" It's a similar wording but then again the meaning may not be entirely the same.

So these are things, adjectives, conditional prepositions are the kind of things you need to watch out for in the verbal reasoning because they are there to trick you.

Numerical Reasoning

When it comes to Numerical Reasoning you always have a chart. Some sort of table with information where you have 10 questions and 20 minutes (here I do the right calculation) and it's two minutes per question.

The trick there is really to eliminate as much information as possible. Try to focus on specific pieces of information and not digest the entire table because that's going to overload you and you might do unnecessary calculations.



So maybe in this chart the question is strictly about the 2006 production of Italy and then you say okay, that's one little piece, I might need one or two other cells or other two pieces of information from the chart, but definitely don't need to look at the area harvested for the 2005 figures. You can always, always eliminate.

So how you would calculate that? You take one piece you go for another one and you usually don't need more than 3 or 4 pieces of information in any given chart.

So in the Numerical Reasoning the very first thing you do is data interpretation. You make sure you understand and you know what information you need to look at and what can you reasonably exclude.

Then you do the reasoning part, the logical reasoning and say – okay this is how I'm supposed to come to some result. Once you have that, you do not start calculating at first. You try to estimate. Why? Because when you estimate, you save time, you save mental effort and chances are you may not need the exact figures or numbers.

How do you know that? If you look at the answer options, you're going to see whether those numbers among the answer options are close enough to each other or not. Because if the answer option A says 450, then B says 1,420 and then C says 6,000 you know that they are far apart so you most likely don't need the exact figures. What you need instead is a good estimation.

In other cases you do need calculation. So in those cases you can use the calculator that you are provided with (physical one or the one onscreen) and you just do the Math. And make sure you are comfortable using a calculator because sometimes you need parenthesis, brackets and that can really change the equation whether a multiplier or another figure in the equation is inside or outside your formula with parenthesis.

And there's a lot more to say about Numerical Reasoning. Just wanted to give you a snapshot of methodology that you can apply.

Abstract Reasoning

Then for Abstract Reasoning these are these cryptic and strange figures and shapes where you always need to find the next one in the sequence. The difficult part there is you have 10 questions in 10 minutes which is one question per minute or one minute per question and that's a pretty difficult thing to pull off.

At the beginning, so the first few questions, tend to be a little easier and often the difficulty increases towards the end. So if you can save time at the beginning of the first few questions of Abstract Reasoning, it's worth saving it and worth doing it efficiently in order to have that extra few seconds towards the end.

For Abstract Reasoning it's always about shapes and there is always a certain logic to the shapes. The very first thing you'd like to do for Abstract Reasoning is dissect it. Try to take it apart and try to focus on the different elements of Abstract Reasoning.



So in this case, you see the black dot which is moving according to a certain logic. The other box is also moving according to a certain logic. So your task is to try to identify each of these separately and then decide whether these two interact in any way. And for the fairly easy questions these two do not interact so they tend to be moving separately according to some logic which for the easier one is often easy to understand, easy to divide. So it's either going across according to a certain pattern like this black dot seems to be doing back and forth or the other square can go out at one side and then come back at the other or go back and forth or have similar patterns, similar shapes.

And then in an ideal scenario you already know what sort of pattern you are looking at and with each step once you identify the pattern of an element you can exclude many of the answer options. You could easily say: 'Well, B and D are no longer relevant because they don't fit the pattern that I have identified.'

Well in this very case actually seems to be fitting that pattern so B and D would still be in play but A and C could not. So this one is moving and there is always some movement according to a certain logic.

I'd love to spend a little more time on the Pre-Selection but for the sake of time efficiency and to answer your questions, we'll move on.

We have lots of methodology webinars, free e-books, free articles, a couple of professional paid webinars and one-on-one coaching available on our website so I encourage you to look at those because we really do very deep in methodology for all of these tests.

Scoring

And then the scoring as you may have seen in the Notice of Competition essentially for Verbal Reasoning it is 0-20; the pass mark is 10. And then for the Numerical you have the combined pass mark of 10 because each of these two, the Numerical and Abstract, are worth up to 10 points.

But regardless of the objective of that pass mark, in order to really pass to the next stage, you'd like to reach as high of a score as possible because the Selection Board of this Competition will do a ranking according to the scores you have achieved and will rank you according to your performance and only then will they look at your talent screener and make sure to decide who is in and who is not.

And I think I would stop here for a second and look at the questions. Just one note on the screen so these tests are eliminatory and they do not count toward the Assessment Centres.

So their importance lies in passing through the Pre-Selection but once you are invited to the Assessment Centre you no longer benefit from a high score or a low score as a matter of fact, it's only to decide who is going to be invited to the Assessment Centre.



Question Block 1

So I'll stop here for a second and let me look at a couple of questions so I can answer your comments as well. So let's see.

Question: I have a degree in biology and an MBA. Do I meet the requirements for Auditors?

Answer: It all depends on your work experience. So do you have seven years of work experience out of which (I think four years) are relevant to the field of Audit? If you have that, and you might discuss with or might try whether an MBA is considered a work experience or not (possibly not) but then again if you have a sufficient number of years working in the Audit field and a global work experience of at least seven years then you have a chance.

Question: What are the chances of being invited to the Assessment Centre if I have a degree in Economics and 3 years of experience in a field different than Audit, given that most of the questions in the Talent Screener section will be answered with 'NO' as they relate primarily to Audit experience?

Answer: Well I'm afraid it might be fairly low because... well, it depends because the degree in Economics might qualify as a field relevant for Audit so in that case you could qualify for the AD 5. Not necessarily AD 7 because the three years of experience is not sufficient for the AD 7 so in this case the Economics degree could possibly qualify you for the AD 5.

Question: There is a talent screener in the Auditors competition this year. Does that mean that those who do not have the work experience, have no chance to pass it?

Answer: Talent Screener - that's correct. So there's a talent screener that you have to fill in or will have to fill in when you start your application. Does that mean that who do not have work experience have no chance to pass it and then again that is essentially for the AD 7 because for AD 5 it's based on the qualification that you have. So for AD 5 there's no work experience required so any question in the Talent Screener referring to work experience is just not relevant for the AD 5.

Question: Can we have more info on what it is that auditors do?

Answer: Sure. Now Auditors can have very, very different jobs. I'll give you an example. I have a friend who works at the Commission's Internal Audit Service, so he would be going around different DGs (Directors General) from HR to DG Regio (the Regional Funds Directorate) and looking at their processes, looking at their performance systems and they would provide internally an audit. That's one thing. These could be external audit. So let's say if you're working at the European Court of Auditors you could conduct a performance review of one of the EU policies or the implementation of the agricultural policy or very specifically the funding and the disbursement, the payment systems of funding in Spain. So that could be a very specific project you work on. It could also be IT Audit. So you might be looking at IT systems whether in-house or beneficiaries of EU funding or other systems and do an IT audit. So it's very diverse, can be really multiple performance audit or financial audit and basically any EU institution facing inwards or facing outwards.



Then maybe two more questions before we move on.

Question: I think I can meet the criteria for AD5 probably not for AD7, is it better apply for AD7 with the possibility to move down to AD5 or apply directly to AD5?

Answer: Well, I think yes. If you think you're fairly sure that AD 7 can work out then it's worth trying it. And then of course allowing EPSO to sort of downgrade you, because then you would still qualify for AD 5. Why not give it a try, because if you are approved or where you are accepted for the AD 7 then you are probably better off. Though then again comes the question you might have lesser chances given the lower number of places available for AD 7.

So I'll move on. I see that there a couple of other questions, will definitely come back to this either later or in a written note but let's go on with the presentation and if we have some time in the end, I'll come back to those.

Assessment Centre

A few words about the Assessment Centre - which hopefully many or all of you will sit - given the fact that you will pass the Pre-Selection. The Assessment Centre has some three classic parts. Four exercises, or four exams that you need to take. One is the Case Study and the Case Study specifically for the Audit it's the application of your knowledge in Audit. So it's not a knowledge based test in the sense that they would ask you definitions and concepts and terminology, but you will be looking at a background file and you may be requested to write up the report or conduct an analysis based on various files, various background files that you need to file.

So it's the application of what you know and not the direct recount of your knowledge. And then this Case Study tends to be a couple of months before the actual in-person Assessment Centre. Then you have the Group Exercise and two interviews. One is the General Competency-Based Interview or Structured Interview and the Group Exercise which are, as the name suggests; its competency driven so it's not about what you know but it's about how you can work with others. How you can tell examples to the Assessors about specific situations in your life where you can demonstrate resilience, when you can demonstrate communication skills, where you can demonstrate working with others skills.

And then you have a Specific Competency-Based Interview which is an interview based on your qualifications, but essentially both the Talent Screener and your background so that's where they would ask you questions about your studies, about your professional conduct, about your professional experience, but then again it's not a knowledge-based test. So the Competency-Based Interview they would not ask you definitions or formula or lists with bullet point. This is not the purpose. It's really evaluating your professional aptitude and your professional skills to be a qualified Auditor at a European Institution.

So the scoring, there are eight competencies so 7+1. The reason I say it this way is because for Assistant Competitions it's seven competencies that they test but for AD exams, there is another one called Leadership that they test. Each one is worth 10 points so you can get 80 points.



There is a pass mark for each competency and there's an overall pass mark which is 40 items – 80. And then they test your specific competencies based on the interview that I just mentioned and there the pass mark is 50 out of 100. And if everything goes good, you're on the Reserve List.

Reserve List

The number of places in the reserve list is what we know upfront - so that's 71 and 50. The validity is usually more than one year. It's valid until another competition of this kind is announced.

Well, given the fact that Audit competition is probably going to be announced again next year. The validity is probably one year, so it's until then and you have pretty good chances of actually getting a job but you're more than pretty good chances, very good chances because this is all demand driven. So the European Institutions request a certain number of places from DG HR and if it's approved by the EPSO Management Board, so the number of places available corresponds to the number of places on the Reserve List with a bit of margin, because some candidates despite being on the Reserve List may decide for private or other reasons not to take up a job with the Institution. But the vast majority are available and then the recruitment happens by the specific institutions themselves. And then there's actually a job interview and that's when you begin working as an Auditor.

How to get the job? A couple of twist that I'm going to twist and turn your head with a bit of animation here: practice a lot. I often compare EPSO competitions to sports. It's very hard to say how much you should practice because it all depends on your baseline. If you are a body builder and you need to press a hundred kilos of weight, if you're in extremely good condition you might do it tomorrow. But if you haven't gone any physical activity in years, it might take you several months until you can reach that stage.

And it's a same thing with Mathematics, with Abstract Reasoning and in some part Verbal Reasoning as well. It all depends on your baseline – if you work with numbers every day, you're doing lots of calculations, you're quick when it comes to Abstract Reasoning Tests – you probably don't need to practice so much.

On the other hand, if you haven't done anything like this (by this I mean the psychometric tests), then you will probably need more practice. What's important is consistency. Whether it is 30 minutes every day or you practice one hour twice a week it's entirely up to you, but be consistent. It's not going online and doing tests and practicing 10 days before the exam. You need to start early on and build up that capacity and not to rush and try to do everything last minute. Be consistent. Have a plan. And learn methodology. There are lots of small tips and tricks, many of which I've mentioned, but there is far more to it that you can learn because it's going to increase your efficiency, it's going to save you time.

I just gave a short presentation on EPSO preparation yesterday and when I did a quick interview or quick survey among the participants what their greatest challenge was, the main answer that I got was time. So it's not the difficulty of these tests but the time pressure that they imposed on you.



That's why it's so important to be very efficient when finding the right answers because time is your biggest challenge and not the difficulty. And the faster you can find the right answer, the better your performance is going to be.

So be very persistent. Do not give up. Try to form a study group. Talk with friends and motivate each other, talk to each other and help each other out when it comes to those days when you just really don't feel studying or practicing.

And do lots of simulation. Try to do it under realistic conditions. Put a timer on, maybe even a shorter time than you will have at the exam and make sure that you really simulate how the exam day is going to be.

You're going to be stressed. You're going to perform a little worse than you do during the practice time and that is why it's so important to put an additional pressure on yourself when practicing so at the real thing, your performance will be as good as you would expect that to be.

So to get in the mood, the couple of screenshots from our tests. This is there from the old site but the new one is even nicer where we really simulate the interface of EPSO. We get lots of feedback from candidates, we fine tune it all the time, the difficulty of our own tests, the interface itself, the buttons and everything else. Same thing with Numerical Reasoning, you have an onscreen calculator, something you can use. And Abstract Reasoning again with the right figures and charts and systems in place so you really have zero surprise and you are fully aware of what to expect when you go the EPSO exam centre.

So I promised you a few things. Before I finish with our offering, so we have Verbal Reasoning in 16 languages, something which hopefully will be very helpful to most of you because from Romanian to Portuguese and Greek and then we have other languages, we have Verbal Reasoning in 16 and it's a growing number. We're planning to add a couple more. Numerical Reasoning we have in English, French and German and other tests in English and French so I mentioned a 25,000 question database, which we are still improving it and changing it and adding to it for you not to find the same question twice.

So for methodology and tips before we get to the special offer and then I'm going to get back to a couple of questions to answer those, there are many webinars, a lot of free webinars available on our site, watch them, share them and tell your friends to prepare from them. Also lots of professional and pro-tips webinars with our psychometric experts who design such tests as a profession, not just for us, but for a lot of international organisations and private companies. And we even have one webinar called Math Refresher for Numerical Reasoning - some of you may wish to have that because if you haven't dealt with Mathematics for a long time, this is tailored for the kind of operations that will be expected at the EPSO test. And a lot of free e-books and tips and tricks and demo also available.

So my book which came out a couple of months ago the 2016 Edition and last but not the least a special discount offer is a 19% off so the code is MyAudit2016. It is only valid for 2 days until the 20th of May 7pm which I encourage you to use. You may wish to share it with others.



And I'll leave this on the screen while I quickly go through a couple of questions. We still have a few minutes left. And hopefully these questions are relevant to everyone on this call, on this webinar.

Question Block 2

So here is one that says:

Question: How important are the accounting skills for this position?

Answer: Well, accounting skills, I would approach it from two perspectives. One is how important it is to be considered eligible whether you have those skills or you have any formal work experience or qualification there. It can be very helpful to prove your point if you are eligible for the competition. Number two is how important that is for actually succeeding in the exam. For the Pre-Selection it's not relevant. It's not what you are expected to do as you've seen the Abstract, Verbal, Numerical Reasoning tests. Accounting skills may have helped you developed those skills but it's nothing directly that you need to have pass those tests.

For the Case Study on the other hand it could be relevant. So depending on what the Case Study asks, the kind of paper you are required to draft. Knowing accounting can be helpful skill to process the information faster or just to provide a high quality paper in your case study.

Question: On eligibility/selection criteria: I don't fully understand what the degree of importance of the selection criteria is. If I don't meet all the criteria (actually very few) would it make sense investing my time on the CBT to then not pass the talent screener?

Answer: Well, I think if you are committed to passing an EPSO competition and you're aware of the risk that you may not be eligible now, it might still be a good investment because you can then apply for other competitions where your eligibility is not questioned. So where your eligibility is fine. What I'm saying is practicing for the CBT is a good investment if you're planning to sit this or other EPSO competition, because it is the same tests everywhere. The level of difficulty might change but the kind of test that you are expected to pass is the same for all EPSO competitions. So in that sense it might be worth that risk because even if you don't use it now, you might use it for another exam.

Question: Is there a maximum time one can apply for EPSO selections?

Answer: No, there is absolutely no maximum time. There is no history that might have a negative impact on your chances. You can apply once and succeed. You can apply 12 times or in parallel. You can apply to as many competitions as you like. There is absolutely no negative effect on your chances or on your profile.

Question: I would like to ask a question: If you think I meet the requisites...and I think I'll come back to you because it's quite... it seems like a unique situation, so I'll check that in writing and try to answer you. Or if I could ask you Francisco,



if I could ask you to send an email to customer support and mention it be sent to me, I'll get back to you about my opinion on your eligibility.

Question: If one passes the pre-selection but not the rest of the tests, is there a bridge to work as contractor for the EU (temporary contract)?

Answer: Unfortunately, there is no such middle way. Because the competition itself (how should I say that), it's a self-contained exercises. It's a full system where you either passed it all the way through or if you do not passed one part then you are out of the competition. So passing the Pre-Selection, it doesn't give you any rights or any additional possibility for this competition.

Now having said that there is another competition the CAST (the Contract Agent tests) where they normally have only Pre-Selection tests and nothing else. Sometimes EPSO launches a call for Contract Agents and they run a competition which only has Abstract, Verbal and Numerical Reasoning tests; now if you passed those, that's the end of the competition.

So once you passed those, you can get on the list and then from the list you could be eligible for a job offer.

Question: You mentioned that the pass mark is 50% for Verbal and 50% combined for numerical and abstract. How much mark do you need (theoretically) to have a good possibility to pass to the next step?

Answer: I'm happy you asked this. So just to emphasize there is an objective and subjective pass mark. The objective one is what I state on the screen, one that Alexandros is asking about, so there you need to pass those otherwise you're out. So if you don't get 50%, so 10 points out of Verbal Reasoning then you cannot pass any further. But just because you passed these objective thresholds, it doesn't mean you're going to pass to the next stage. That is where the concept of the competition comes in because that's where the ranking becomes an important factor.

What score should you have? It's very hard to tell because it varies from one competition to another because it all depends on the others. So how well others have performed and relative to others where you are.

Generally we say you need to have around 85, 87, 88% of the overall score to have a good chance of passing. But then again this is based on average, it's sort of a ballpark figure, it's impossible to say in advance but during your practice, if you reached 85, 86, 88% of your answers as those that are the correct ones, then you have pretty good chances at the competition itself.

Question: When is the interview?

Answer: Well the interview is in the Assessment Centre so it is a part of it and it has the Competency Based Interview, which is very skill and competency based in general and then you have the Specific Interview which relate to your profile and professional background or qualification as an Auditor.



Question: They often mention in the Competition Notice that they might screen the candidates before the CBT. But how likely is this to happen?

Answer: I guess you mean the Talent Screener which is part of the application process so it's a part of it – it's formally a part of it that you need to fill out. One important thing is, I'm not sure you've seen, make sure to look for it - we're going to try to share it or repost it, an article I wrote I think about two years ago, roughly two years ago about optimising your answers in the Talent Screener. So that's a free article and you can read a couple of ideas on how to better present your background, present your achievements or your qualifications in the Talent Screener, because it is being read by the Selection Board members and they are the ones who decide on how many points they attribute to you based on your answers. So it's important how you present that information because it has major impact on your scores.

Alright, couple of questions more.

Question: I have already tried to apply for AD5 and when I get into the application I have seen the talent screener part even if my application is for the AD5 post. Is it correct? Would these questions not count for AD5? How does it work?

Answer: For every question in the Talent Screener the Selection Board attributes a certain weight to each of the questions. And that's from zero to three. And it's important it's from zero to three because some questions may not be relevant for AD 5 so those will not be considered for the AD 5 candidates. So that's the weighting. Just because you don't have work experience, just because you're not required to have any work experience, EPSO cannot give advantage to someone who actually does whereas the formal criteria do not list that.

Question: What is the timing of the whole selection process?

Answer: Well, the exams have just been announced as you certainly know. And the likely timeline - EPSO has to forward planning on the website so it's worth looking at that. But generally it's around nine months from start to finish. So until the Pre-Selection test are done, the results are out, the Talent Screener is being checked, the thresholds are established, the Assessment Centre's invitations go out, the Assessment Centre is organised and then eventually when the Reserve List is published so this overall takes nine months which might seem quite a lot but then again if you compare that to how it used to be a couple of years ago, this is still much faster than before.

Question: Should you specify your final university mark in the application form when applying for the AD5? Would a high mark compensate for the lack of audit experience?

Answer: Well, the overall mark probably doesn't have much important or relevance, it's more about subjects that you had and making sure that you can convince the Selection Board members that you did study relevant subjects which will qualify you for the exam. But if you have space there, why not add? Wouldn't hurt but probably is not going to add much either.



Question: Is the discount valid for the book or for all resources on the website?

Answer: It's the resources on the website. So everything that you can find on www.eutraining.eu that discount code actually works for.

Question: Is it necessary to pass verbal and numerical tests but only a high mark of abstract and SJT are necessary in order to be included in the Reserve List?

Answer: Well there's no Situational Judgment Test at this competition and the scores are added up. So here it's not just about passing or not passing the scores are added together it's the pass mark that is decided but in any case or if you have doubts or questions about how they calculate the points you can always look at Notice of Competition because that's the authentic source of information where you can find everything in and you can always relate to it and you can always refer to it even in your correspondence with EPSO.

So the last question before we finish, it's exactly seven o'clock in a minute...and it's about yes the two scenarios on point two. This is something I'd be happy to come back to you on if I could ask you to just send an email with more details. I think it is Ines who asked this question. If you send an email, I'm happy to clarify that in one thing.

So this is where I'll stop and just to reiterate that you'll soon receive the full recording of everything I've said today and the Prezi itself and the transcript within a couple of days so you can re-watch it, re-screen it or share it with anyone whose preparing for the 2016 Audit exams.

And if you have any further questions always feel free to send us a message, we're happy to answer (obviously completely free of charge) whether it's my colleagues or myself directly, we're happy to assist you in any way we can in your preparation and on your road to success to pass the Auditor or any other competition.

So this is Andras Baneth from Brussels and I wish you good luck and have a nice evening. Thank you.