



EU TRAINING

Prepare . Improve . Succeed

AD5 ASSESSMENT CENTRE Q&A WEBCAST

08 DECEMBER 2017

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS NOT ANSWERED DURING THE LIVE SESSION

Q What is the difference between the 2 interviews in the assesment center?

A You probably mean the competency-based interview or CBI (also called structured interview), and the domain-specific interview (which is only used in 'specialist' competitions such as food safety experts or competition economists. The latter is not used for public administration exams. When you need to take this exam, they focus on your talent screener questions and general professional background, asking you to provide more information about a given work you carried out, a project you were involved in, and other questions related to your specific knowledge and expertise. They do not, however, ask you specific questions from your domain of expertise outside this frame, ie it's not a knowledge-based test in any way.

Q How is the competency based interview structured?

A They ask you to give a short introduction, followed by methodically going through each competency, asking 2-3 questions of situations you can recall so they can assess your competencies.

Q How to best prepare for the group exercise?

A Simulation with others is the best way. You can find other candidates or future candidates via our Facebook group, or Forum on eutraining.eu - you can use a sample case study in The Ultimate EU Test Book, or compile on on your own using EU press releases, newspaper articles, and similar sources.



EU TRAINING

Prepare . Improve . Succeed

Q How to prepare for the case study?

A You can use EU Training's online case study simulation, either with correction or just as an online simulation.

Q What is the best strategy to prepare for the AC?

A First, understand the methodology EPSO uses and familiarize yourself with the way competencies are drawn up. Practice the oral presentation by recording (and watching) yourself, simulate a group exercise with other candidates under realistic time pressure, use our online simulation tool for the case study practice, and review our ebooks and Tips & Tricks articles on how to prepare for the competency-based interview.

Q Is available online stuff for the preparation of oral presentation, group exercise and interview?

A The Ultimate EU Test Book's Assessment Centre edition is the best resource, and EU Training offers a 2+2 hour webinar recording as well. You can sign up for our classroom courses in Brussels (in English or French), and you can schedule coaching for one-on-one preparation with our EPSO expert coach.

Q Is there any tip about the group exercise? E.g. cooperative approach etc.?

A Partly addressed at the webinar, but to add to what was shared there, you are indeed expected to act as a 'moderator' who brings the group to some agreement (or able to summarize disagreement) all the while advancing the discussion so it's not stuck on a contentious point. Also, make sure to intervene on a regular basis throughout the exercise, but never speak too much or monopolize the floor.



EU TRAINING

Prepare . Improve . Succeed

Q Could you please give more info on the evaluation/scoring grid

A For the case study, there is a proprietary scoring grid EPSO (or more specifically, the Selection Board) uses, taking into consideration your style, analytical skills, validity of arguments, and other factors. For the competency based interview and other exams, they look at the competency they're assessing and break those into so-called 'indicators', ie what are the observable behaviours of a person demonstrating a strong 'working with others' or 'delivering quality and results' competency, and they score your actions on that basis.

Q How should we deal with time constraints for the oral presentation and group exercise ? There's so much to read...

A Skim the text only, try to get the main headers, key points, note various facts and pieces of statistics so you can use those as arguments, create a clear outline and you'll be fine :-)

**Q For the interview, is there a fixed number of questions for each competency?
Three in our case?**

A It can vary as there is no fixed number of questions, but usually they can ask you anything between 1-5 questions for each competency, depending on your example (story) and depth of your answer.

Q How many documents do we have to read for the oral presentation?

A It can vary, but usually there around 5-8 pieces in the background file, each from a different source and may vary in length. Make sure you don't treat each source the same, and give extra weight in your analysis to those from EU institutions.



EU TRAINING

Prepare . Improve . Succeed

Q How long should be the note in the case study?

A There is no minimum requirement, but usually around 300-500 words would be suggested. In an A4 format, that's around 1-1.5 page though the text editor won't show your word count or page length.

Q Can you give more details on the oral presentation? How many pages we get to read in 10 minutes? How are we going to give the presentation? Should we draw something?

A Usually it's similar to the case study background material, though it's somewhat shorter, ie around 8-15 pages in total (which of course is still a lot given the time limit). You need to first present the topic you've analysed, followed by questions from the assessors (which is probably the toughest part of the entire assessment centre process). You're encouraged to draw on the flipchart sheet a process flow, or a structure of what you'll cover, or symbolic figures to help you explain the topic better, as long as you keep in mind that it is a visual aid, not the presentation itself, ie keep any text on the sheet very short and limited to keywords only.

Q What kind of topic can we have in the oral presentation?

A Usually a broadly EU-related topic, but given that you're not expected to have a subject matter expertise, it's nothing to be concerned about. On the other hand, if you happen to be familiar with the topic, don't fall into the 'curse of knoweldge' trap, ie talking about points that were not in the background document but you happen to know already.