FEAST
First European Air Traffic Controller Selection Test Service

Background

The timely and professional selection of trainees for air traffic control is more than ever a key element for successful and cost effective ATC operations by Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) and ATC training institutes.

Selecting the most suitable applicants for this challenging job is not easy. Specialised selection tools and methods are necessary. Furthermore, the professional application and use of such tools is as important as the choice of the tools themselves. The FEAST test package and FEAST service have been designed and put into use to offer such a capability to ANSPs and ATC training institutes.

In the light of the Single European Sky initiative, the use of a harmonised tool which can be applied across cultural and organisational boundaries in different European States offers clear strategic and operating advantages and increases the quality of recruitment and selection decision making.

The experience gained through its extensive use in Europe and its versatility has made FEAST in recent years an increasingly attractive proposition for ANSPs outside Europe as well.

The FEAST test package was developed, tested and evaluated during 2000-2005. Since 2006, a full service has been provided to users. In 2010, a study on the predictive validity of the FEAST cognitive ability tests was carried out. In 2016 and 2019, validation studies for the FEAST work sample tests followed. The three studies established a clear link between the FEAST test scores and later performance in the ATCO training.

Objective

The aim is to make available for multi-state use an easily administered package of scientifically reliable and valid selection tests. Quite simply, the FEAST assesses the knowledge, skills and abilities of applicants that are relevant and necessary for the ATCO job.

The objectives of the FEAST Service are to provide implementation support including helpdesk to users, a centralised infrastructure and web platform for the delivery of the tests and future enhancements allowing customers to share the benefits of developments and technical evolution. The FEAST Service does not participate in the selection process itself. Selection decisions are made solely by the recruiting ANSP or ATC training institute.

Finally, EUROCONTROL sponsors and facilitates the FEAST User Group (FUG) meetings and communications. The FUG is a group of recruitment, training and human resources managers from the organisations that make use of FEAST and as customers, give feedback to the FEAST Service. The group also provides a valuable means of networking with fellow professionals in the field thus serving as a Community of Practice.

The FEAST Service

The FEAST Service is a provision to civil and military ANSPs and ATC training institutes consisting of:

- A workflow software application for the selection of ab-initio ATC trainees with a database for management of candidates and results.

- A test package comprising:

  - a battery of cognitive abilities tests (measuring multi-tasking, planning ability, learning and applying rules, processing speed and attention, 3D visualisation);

  - an English language listening and comprehension test (ELICIT);

  - two work sample tests (DART and MULTI-PASS);

  - the FEAST Personality Questionnaire (FPQ-R).

  Test scores and results are easily and quickly accessed and stored confidentially.

- Full implementation support including helpdesk and accreditation training courses with user and administration manuals and guidance material.

- Sponsorship and facilitation by EUROCONTROL of the FEAST User Group.

The application and database are hosted on secure dedicated servers.

Licence Agreements and non-disclosure Agreements with users govern the access to use the tests, the test data, the maintenance and upkeep of the infrastructure.

The FEAST Service is currently used by 50 ANSPs and ATC training institutes in Europe and beyond. The total number of candidates who have completed the FEAST tests is over 100.000.

Benefits

- High-quality assurance in the test materials, test delivery and standards of test administration and application.
- Flexible and cost effective tools providing ease of administration and standardised test conditions.
- More predictive information about applicants' abilities; so enabling good selection decisions in order to optimise training success rates.
- Wide use throughout Europe leading to economies of scale and synergies in test development, maintenance, administration, standards and application.
- Harmonised and versatile selection tool, which supports Single European Sky policies and initiatives.
- Objectivity, fairness and high-selection standards perceived by test takers promote the attractiveness of the job.

Key dates

- 2004: First use of the tests.
- 2006: Official start of the FEAST service.
- 2010: Publication of FEAST Validation study.
- 2011: Release of the Dynamic ATC Radar Test (DART).
- 2013: Release of the FEAST Personality Questionnaire (FPQ).
- 2014: Release of the work sample test MULTI-PASS.
- 2016: New workflow-based test platform and publication of DART Validation study.
- 2018: Release of FEAST Plus, a set of additional cognitive ability tests.
- 2019: Publication of the MULTI-PASS validation study.
- 2020: Publication of the FPQ validation study.
- 2021: Release of the English Language Listening and Comprehension Test (ELICIT) and the revised FEAST Personality Questionnaire (FPQ-R)

Access Conditions

Civil and military ANSPs and ATC training institutes may request to use the service and tests. FEAST may also be provided to organisations outside Europe. The use of FEAST is subject to the signature of a license agreement.

Contacts

Further information is available at:
www.feast.info

or by contacting:
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