



First European Air traffic controller Selection Test (FEAST)

Information for Candidates applying to
become Student Air Traffic Controllers

Network Management Directorate



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 parts¹:

- 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.

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 Dynamic ATC Radar test (FEAST DART)
- 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 35-40 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

The tests will be 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.

Although most applicants are somewhat nervous before any such event, it has been shown that a **relaxed and composed attitude** is the most helpful approach to the tests.

You may have read on web forums about the experiences of others who have taken the FEAST tests, or even be tempted to purchase a so-called FEAST preparation package. Such packages have been produced without the authorisation of EUROCONTROL and most people who know about these things will tell you that such packages are not useful. They might even give you incorrect information about the tests or teach misleading strategies which could give rise to negative results in FEAST. Our advice is to steer clear of such preparations. We do not believe you can improve very much on your abilities and skills as applicants, at least not without the kind of extensive professional training you will receive as actual ATC trainees.

It is understandable that candidates want to be successful in these tests, but preparing for them is not the same as the kind of preparation you might have made in the past for school examinations. Abilities such as spatial orientation cannot be learnt.

In reality, you have to be confident in your skills and ability. It will not be of any help to be successful in the testing procedure if you do not feel fully at ease with the cognitive and behavioural requirements for the job of air traffic controller. In these circumstances, even if you start the training, you might well fail later on.

On the other hand, we believe it is important for you to look for *information about Air Traffic Control (ATC) and the job of an Air Traffic Controller*. You should familiarise yourself with the challenges and demands of the job. You can try to visit and see first-hand ATC locations, you can use the Internet and you can read aviation magazines. The more you understand the job you are applying for, the better you will feel as an applicant.

There is one FEAST test that you can prepare for and improve your performance. That is the English language listening and comprehension test. By making a conscious effort to improve your knowledge and use of English (e.g. by listening to the radio or TV programmes in English, reading books, newspapers or articles in English or by talking in English to native-speaker friends), you can undoubtedly 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 so it will help if you are able to practise speaking English before attending the tests. By making this effort, you will no doubt enhance your chances of success in the selection process.

In the course of 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 may be found in the Annex to these notes.

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 a radar screen which identifies an aircraft
- airspace = a three-dimensional segment of space through which aircraft fly (test-specific meaning).
- Aircraft symbol = a mark or character used as a conventional representation of an aircraft.
- 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.

B

- Bearing = angle between the direction of an object and another object.

C

- to climb = fly the aircraft to a higher altitude.
- Code name = combination of letters and numbers used to identify an aircraft.
- Collision = instance of one moving object or person striking violently against another.
- Compass rose = a graduated circle printed on a map or chart from which bearings can be taken.
- Conflict = event in which two or more aircraft experience a loss of minimum separation.
- Conflict alert = signal of an imminent collision.
- Conflicting aircraft = aircraft experiencing a 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.
- Diagonal = neither horizontal nor vertical (test-specific meaning).
- to display = visual presentation of instruments.
- Dot = round mark or spot.

E

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

H

- to handover = the giving of control of an aircraft to another air traffic controller.
- Heading = direction.
- Horizontal axis = x-axis on a graph (top to bottom).

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 (1,852 km/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 = observe/keep under systematic review & check the progress of an aircraft over a period of time.

N

- Nautical mile = unit used in measuring distances at sea and in the air (equal to 1,852 metres).
- Navigation = the process of monitoring and controlling the movement of an aircraft from one place to another.
- Notional line = a line that exists in theory.

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

- Pattern = model or design.
- Penalised = subject to penalty.
- Position = location of aircraft on the map.
- Progress of an aircraft/flight = tracking/status of a flight.
- Proximity = nearness in space.

R

- Radar picture = image on a screen showing the position and velocity of a distant object, such as an aircraft.
- Range = distance.
- Range rings = each of a set of concentric circles on a radar screen that correspond to known target distance.
- Rate of turn = number of degrees of heading change per unit of time (usually measured in seconds).
- Re-route = send along a different route.
- Route = way or course taken in getting from a starting point to a destination.
- Runways = 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 = musical or vocal sound.
- Trajectory = the path followed by an aircraft.
- Turning point = the point at which an aircraft operates a change of direction.

V

- Vertical = at a right angle (that is, 90 degrees) to a horizontal plane.
- Vertical axis = y-axis on a graph. (left to right)

W

- Waypoint = a specified geographical location used to define the flight path of an aircraft.

NOTE: although knowledge of the ICAO alphabet is not required, it may help to recognise the names used in some of the tests.



SUPPORTING EUROPEAN AVIATION



© EUROCONTROL - September 2020

This document is published by EUROCONTROL for information purposes. It may be copied in whole or in part, provided that EUROCONTROL is mentioned as the source and it is not used for commercial purposes (i.e. for financial gain). The information in this document may not be modified without prior written permission from EUROCONTROL.

www.eurocontrol.int