E-tray: 2015 Administrators

What is an e-tray?

An e-tray exercise is a computer-based simulation of a real work situation and replicates an email inbox which contains information relating to a particular issue. Candidates need to find solutions in the best way possible within a fixed amount of time. The exercise is taken in language two of the candidate and is designed to measure four competencies:

- Analysis and Problem Solving
- Delivering Quality and Results
- Prioritising and Organising
- Working with Others

Candidates are presented with 18 questions based on the background information provided in a number of emails.

Each question has 3 options and candidates are requested to rank each of the options using the following 5-point scale:

– -	totally disagree
–	disagree
- +	neutral
+	agree
+ +	totally agree

Each ranking symbol can only be selected once per question, which means that you will have to indicate your order of preference (i.e. best, middle, and worst) among the 3 options. See example below.

Example of a question measuring the competency "Delivering Quality and Results":

	Ideal score for DQ&R				
I ask Mr Caligiuri if any of his colleagues could provide me with a more in-depth briefing.	--	-	-/+	+	++
When taking account of the Council's point of view in my compromise proposal, I use only to the information I received from Mr Caligiuri, as it is sufficiently specific.	--	-	-/+	+	++
I ask Mr Caligiuri for more documentation, just in case the Council's proposal conflicts with those of the other stakeholders.	--	-	-/+	+	++

How are the questions scored?

The points awarded for each question are based on:
1) how you rank each option on the 5 point-scale;
2) your order of preference for the 3 options;
3) the competencies being tested.

As part of the development process, Subject Matter Experts (SME's) defined:

1) the ideal ranking for each set of 3 options for each question, and;
2) the order of preference for the three options.

This scoring system is agreed by the Selection Board.

Marks are awarded according to how closely your answers are to the ideal ranking and the order of preference defined by the SME's and the Selection Board. Both are combined to give the final score.

Unlike the verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning, there is no single right or wrong answer for each question rather there are ideal answers per competency defined per question. Unlike the situational judgment test, neither is there a simple scoring range per question (e.g. 0-2 points).

How is the total score and score per competency calculated?

There is no pass mark for this exercise. Each competency is marked out of 10 and your total score is marked out of 40.

Each competency is tested up to 8 times and multiple competencies may be tested per question. Your responses to all of the questions are combined and then rescaled to give a mark out of 10 for each competency. Your score may therefore include a decimal place.

You should try to answer each question as honestly as possible, as individual answers will score differently depending on the competencies tested.

The test is automatically scored to ensure objective assessment for all candidates. The candidates with the highest total marks qualify for the next stage of the competition.

What feedback do candidates get on their performance?

All candidates who complete the e-tray will receive their total combined score. Candidates not invited to the Assessment Centre will receive a breakdown of their score per competency with the results of their e-tray.

Candidates invited to the Assessment centre will receive the results of the e-tray exercise together with their final competition results. The Selection Board will be provided with the scores per competency achieved in the e-tray. This information will be used in conjunction with the candidates' performance in the other Assessment Centre exercises, as set out in the Notice of Competition, in order to establish a final score per competency.

EPSO does not give any further detailed information on candidate performance against each of the competencies, provide their replies and the correct answers, or which competencies were tested per question, as these tests may be reused in the future and the detailed scoring system is covered by the secrecy of the work of the Selection Board.

Why is the e-tray being used as part of the assessment process?

Unlike a work sample exercise, e.g. a presentation exercise where you are asked to present on a topic, an e-tray is designed to assess procedural knowledge which is the extent to which you know the right thing to do in a given situation. This type of assessment provides very valuable information for the Selection Board, as a candidate who is aware of the most appropriate action within a scenario will be able to use this awareness when recruited and required to perform within the role.

How can candidates be confident that the e-tray represents what is required in the Institutions?

The e-tray is developed by subject matter experts with a broad expertise in the field of the particular exercise in behavioral competencies and in test design. As part of the development process, the e-tray undergoes comprehensive testing and development, including with EU officials of an equivalent grade. The final content and most suitable replies are validated by the Selection Board.

The e-tray is being used as exercises of this type have been shown to accurately predict job performance through objective assessment of the relevant competencies. E-trays have been used for selection procedures for assistants (AST) since 2011 and administrators (AD) since 2013. Stringent quality assurance was built into the design of the exercise:

- Subject Matter Experts developed the content and scoring guide for the e-tray informed by best practice in competency and test design;

- The exercise was extensively trialled before it was used to ensure it worked effectively and was appropriate for use in the European Institution context;

- The Exercise content and scoring was validated by Selection Board.

Example of instructions for an e-tray exercise

Instructions

Please pay attention to the following:

- You are advised to answer all 17 questions within the 50 minutes allowed. The time remaining will be visible at the top of the screen during the whole exercise.
- Work quickly, but carefully.
- Rank the 3 options on the **scale indicated in the question**: -- (totally disagree), - (disagree), -+ (neutral), + (agree) and ++ (totally agree).
- Each ranking symbol can only be selected once per question, which means that every complete answer must contain a combination of 3 different symbols. In this way, your answers indicate not only **what ranking you assign to each individual option**, but also your **order of preference among the 3 options**.
- In other words, answers will only be recorded if you have ranked all 3 options.
- You may **change your choice at any time** by clicking on another button.
- **Each question must be considered on its own** – when answering one question you do not need to take the other questions into account.
- **Navigation through the mailbox and navigation between the questions are separate.** So the question you see is not necessarily linked to the e-mail that is visible on the screen at that time. A question can be related either to several e-mails or just one.
- To navigate through the mailbox displayed in the top half of the screen, **click on the e-mail titles** at the left.
- Only use the **'Previous' and 'Next' buttons at the bottom** of the screen to navigate between the questions in the bottom half of the screen.
- To see an **overview** of the questions you have already answered and the questions you have skipped, click on the 'Overview' button. The questions you have already answered are crossed out. Click on the number of the question that you want to answer. Click on the 'X' to close the sidebar.

You are allowed to use a piece of rough paper, but please note that you are not allowed to take any paper out of this room. Everything will be collected at the end of the exercise.

Click 'Next' to start the exercise.

Good luck!

Previous   Next

You can navigate through the mailbox and between questions:
- To navigate throught the mailbox, click on the email titles at the left;
- To nagivate through the questions, use the 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons at the bottom.

Example of emails in the mailbox and one sample question

INTEGRATED PROPOSAL

COUNCIL POSITION ON COMMISSION PROPOSAL 749

From:	Giuseppe Caligiuri, Council
To:	Aaren Sutton, Secretariat of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, EP
Date:	10/10/201X
Subject:	Council position on Commission proposal 749

Dear Ms Sutton,

My apologies, but I am afraid that, starting tomorrow, I will be out of the office until 29 October 201X, which means I will not be able to meet you or your colleague in the next two weeks to give you a full overview of the Council's position regarding the Commission's proposal. However, to ensure you have some information to work with, I have briefly summarised our position on the main points of the proposal:

- Phase-in: 60 % of the vehicle fleet to reach 130 g CO_2/km in 201X+4, 75 % in 201X+5, 85 % in 201X+6 and 100 % from 201X+7 on.
- Long-term targets: Review in 201X+5 to reach a long-term target close to 95 g CO_2/km in 201X+12 .
- Specific emission targets: we propose the same targets as the Commission proposes: targets should be based on vehicle mass.
- Penalties. Until 201X+7, penalties will be based on deviation from 130 g CO_2 as follows: penalty per exceeded gram will be €25 for any deviation of up to 3 grams; €40 for deviations of up to 6 grams and €80 for deviations exceeding 6 grams. From 201X+7, the rate per gram exceeded will be €25 for a deviation of up to 3 grams and €95 for any deviation exceeding 3 grams.

I hope this provides you with some of the information you need to propose a compromise solution. We can arrange a meeting when I am back from holiday if you have any further questions.

Kind regards,
Giuseppe Caligiuri

INTEGRATED PROPOSAL

COUNCIL POSITION ON COMMISSION PROPOSAL 749

From:	Aaren Sutton, Secretariat of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, EP
To:	Your name, Secretariat of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, EP
Date:	10/10/201X
Subject:	Integrated proposal

Dear (Your name),

On 7 December 201X-1, the Commission submitted a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council to set emission performance standards for new passenger cars. This initiative forms part of the EU's integrated approach to reducing CO_2 emissions from light-duty vehicles.

The first reading has been completed and now I have to collect the opinions of the different stakeholders in order to propose a compromise solution to our Head of Unit at a meeting on 27 October 201X.

However, after today, I will be out of the office for the next two months (for medical reasons) and therefore will be unable to attend the meeting with our Head of Unit myself. Could you go in my place?
As a first step, I have asked Giuseppe Caligiuri from the Council to meet you in order to brief you thoroughly on the Council's position on the Commission's proposal.
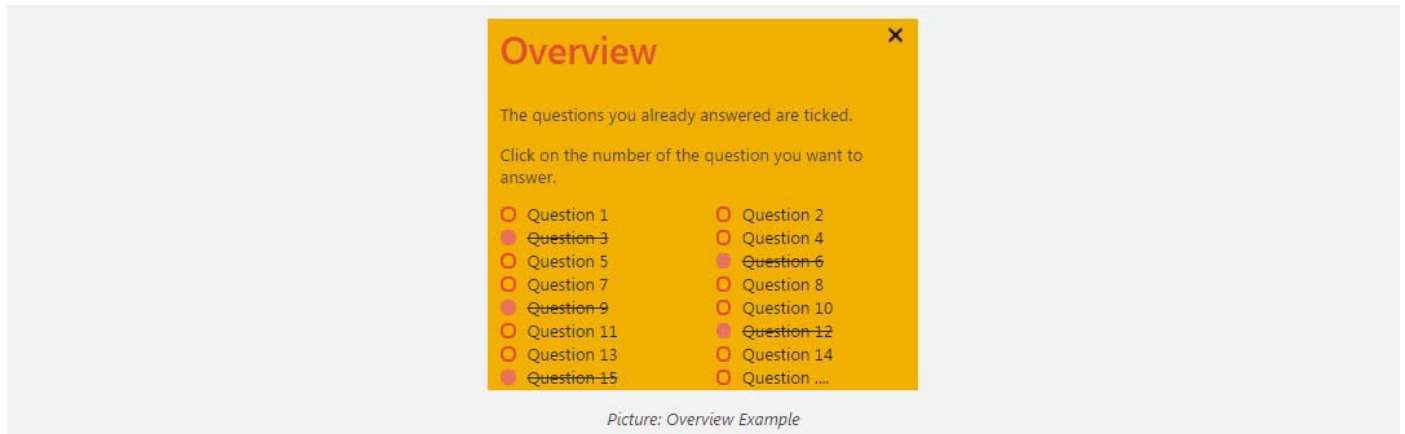
Thank you for your flexibility.

Kind regards,
Aaren Sutton

Example

How do you deal with the problem of the limited information you received from Mr Caligiuri? Rate the following actions on a scale ranging from totally disagree (--) to totally agree (++).					
A.	When taking account of the Council's point of view in my compromise proposal, I use only to the information I received from Mr Caligiuri, as it is sufficiently specific.	--	-	-/+	+	++
B.	I ask Mr Caligiuri if any of his colleagues could provide me with a more in-depth briefing.	--	-	-/+	+	++
C.	I ask Mr Caligiuri for more documentation, just in case the Council's proposal conflicts with those of the other stakeholders.	--	-	-/+	+	++

Help

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Example of the overview of questions for an entire e-tray

Overview

The questions you already answered are ticked.

Click on the number of the question you want to answer.

○ Question 1	○ Question 2
● ~~Question 3~~	○ Question 4
○ Question 5	● ~~Question 6~~
○ Question 7	○ Question 8
● ~~Question 9~~	○ Question 10
○ Question 11	● ~~Question 12~~
○ Question 13	○ Question 14
● ~~Question 15~~	○ Question ....

Picture: Overview Example

An overview of the questions that you have already answered, and of the questions you may have temporarily skipped, can be found in 'Overview'. The questions you have already answered will be crossed out. You can access the question you want to answer next by clicking on the number of that question in the overview. Clicking on 'x' will close the sidebar.