

Candidate Guide to Reasonable Accommodations in EPSO selection tests

This guide is created for EPSO candidates to enhance their understanding of the granting of reasonable accommodations in EPSO competitions and selections. It will provide support, guidance and a clear picture about what candidates need to know before requesting special adjustments in [EPSO selection tests](#).

IMPORTANT to note:

This guide...

- describes the processes and rules applied to EPSO selection tests only;
- is not exhaustive. More information is available in the candidate toolbox under [chapter 6](#) of this guide or by contacting [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#);
- will be regularly updated based on the evolution of EPSO's processes and services;
- can be requested in the Braille printed version upon [request](#).

CONTENT

Chapter 1 – Why provide reasonable accommodations in EPSO selection tests?

1.1 EPSO's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, mission and objectives

1.2 Legal framework

1.3. EPSO's disability & specific needs Policy

Chapter 2 – Definitions and clarifications

2.1 Some definitions

2.1.1. Disability and temporary medical conditions

2.1.2. Specific needs

2.1.3. Reasonable accommodations

2.2 Some clarifications

2.2.1 Selection VS recruitment

2.2.2. Special adjustments VS reasonable accommodations

2.2.3 Disability VS specific needs

2.2.4 Pregnancy and breastfeeding as a medical condition or specific need

Chapter 3 - Reasonable Accommodations

3.1 Who can request special adjustments?

3.2 Who is involved in the definition, organization and implementation of reasonable accommodations?

3.3 Overview and illustrations of possible accommodations

3.4. What types of certificates should candidates provide to support their request?

3.5 How EPSO defines reasonable accommodations?

3.6 What is the process for requesting special adjustments?

3.6.1 Open competitions

3.6.2 CAST P selection procedures

3.6.3 Temporary selection procedures

Chapter 4: Data Protection

Chapter 5: Good to know

5.1 Accessibility

5.2 Positive Actions for persons with disabilities

[5.3 Call for cooperation to all EU diversity organizations](#)

[5.4 Contact point](#)

[Chapter 6: Candidate TOOLBOX](#)

[6.1 Video on how to request special adjustments in the selection tests](#)

[6.2 Step by step guide to requesting special adjustments in EPSO selection tests](#)

[6.3 Overview of possible accommodations](#)

[6.4 Policy for female candidates requesting reasonable accommodation\(s\) in staff selection procedures related to pregnancy or childbirth](#)

[6.5. Other resources](#)

CHAPTER 1

Why provide reasonable accommodations in EPSO selection tests?

1.1 EPSO Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, mission and objectives

The **European Personnel Selection Office**, also known as EPSO, is responsible for selecting staff to work for the institutions and agencies of the European Union.

EPSO believes in equality, diversity & inclusion. To ensure that EU institutions offer equal opportunities to all its citizens and reflect the diversity of today's world, EPSO upholds the following mission, principles and objectives:

- **Equal opportunities and access to EPSO's competitions and selections:** Ensure equal opportunities and access to all candidates regardless of their sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- **Inclusion:** EPSO respects inclusion in its selection procedures and provides all candidates with an equal opportunity to fully demonstrate their competencies by identifying and eliminating any blocking factors, possible biases and risks of discrimination;
- **Promote equal opportunities and attract a more diverse candidate pool:** EPSO promotes equal opportunities and engages with various stakeholder groups and expert organisations in order to reach out to a more diverse talent. Currently (December 2020) EPSO is launching calls for cooperation to EU and national EU diversity organisations and is creating a diversity network with all EU Member States;
- **Contribute to a more diverse EU civil service:** EPSO strives to increase diversity in the talent pool and help EU Institutions become more representative of the diversity of the EU citizens they serve.

1.2. Legal framework

The European Union's founding values of freedom, democracy, equality, human dignity and the rule of law guide EU legislations, policies and activities to advance equality, non-discrimination and diversity across Europe.

More specifically, two legal frameworks guide the EU's policies and procedures for persons with a disability inter alia:

1. [Article 1 d of the Staff Regulations for EU officials](#) prohibiting discrimination on any grounds, defining disability and provisions for persons with a disability such as reasonable accommodations;
2. [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) implemented by the Member States and the EU Institutions under which EPSO has adopted an action plan. The action plan aims at attracting more talent with disabilities to help the EU Institutions increase the employment of persons with disabilities in line with the implementation of the Convention.

1.3 EPSO's Disability & Specific Needs Policy

A disability, special need or a medical condition should not be an obstacle to participation in an EPSO selection procedure.

EPSO has a well-established reasonable accommodations procedure (described in [chapter 3](#)) based on its long experience in this field and international best practices.

The key guiding principles of EPSO's policy are:

- **equality and inclusion:** EPSO identifies potential obstacles to the full expression of candidates' competencies and defines and provides reasonable accommodations to allow every candidate to compete on equal basis;
- defining reasonable accommodations on a **case-by-case basis**. Each candidate is unique and will receive accommodations according to his/her specific situation per type of test;
- **candidates as the starting point in EPSO reasonable accommodations procedure.** EPSO invites candidates to share all useful information regarding their condition and specific needs per type of selection test;
- in-depth, rigorous and comprehensive analysis of reasonable accommodations based on **expertise and international best practices;**

- **confidentiality and data protection:** EPSO will not communicate any information on candidates' condition(s) or specific needs to any outside body or recruiting service.

CHAPTER 2

Definitions & Clarifications

2.1 Some definitions

2.1.1. Disability and temporary medical conditions

A person has a **disability** if he/she has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder his/her full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others ([Article 1 d of the Staff Regulations for EU officials](#)).

A **permanent condition** is defined by a long-term, chronic impairment that can affect one or more aspects in the life of individuals, such as sensory or physical impairments, psychological or mental disorders,

Temporary conditions or injuries are short-term and can have little or no outstanding or lasting effects on the individual, such as pregnancy or breast-feeding, temporary physical impairments (broken limbs, fractures, etc.) or short-term injuries following surgery or medical treatments etc.

2.1.2. Specific needs

The term **specific needs** groups all types of needs due to a disability, permanent or temporary medical condition, which can be taken into consideration for granting reasonable accommodations in EPSO selection tests.

2.1.3. Reasonable accommodation

'Reasonable accommodation', in relation to the essential functions of the job, shall mean appropriate measures, where needed, to enable a person with a disability to have access to, participate in, or advance in employment, or to undergo training, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer ([article 1 d of the Staff Regulations for EU officials](#)).

2.2 Some clarifications

2.2.1. Selection VS recruitment

EPSO's mission is to **select** candidates via a tailor made selection process composed of various tests and assessment methods aiming at identifying and placing competent and successful candidates on a reserve list. Once a candidate has been successful in an EPSO competition and is placed on an EPSO reserve list he/she is eligible to be **recruited** by one of the EU institutions. Each Institution has its own specific recruitment process for recruiting successful candidates from a reserve list.

2.2.2 Special adjustments VS reasonable accommodations

Candidates with a disability or a medical condition, which could prevent them from fully participating in EPSO selection tests, can request special adjustments in the selection tests based on their specific needs. EPSO analyses the request together with any supporting documents and may grant reasonable accommodations per type of test.

In summary, candidates request special adjustments and may receive reasonable accommodations in EPSO selection tests ([concept defined in the Staff Regulations, article 1d](#)).

2.2.3 Disability VS specific needs

Candidates with a disability, a permanent or temporary medical condition, can always request special adjustments in EPSO selection tests if appropriately supported with relevant and appropriate documentation ([see point 3.4](#)).

Candidates with specific needs, whether or not linked to a disability, permanent or temporary medical condition may be granted reasonable accommodations in EPSO selection tests if appropriately supported with relevant and appropriate documentation.

In summary, reasonable accommodations are not only limited to candidates with a disability.

2.2.4 Pregnancy and breastfeeding as a medical condition or specific need

Pregnant and breastfeeding candidates can request special adjustments. EPSO considers that their conditions may give cause for specific needs in an EPSO testing situation. Read more about EPSO's policy for pregnant and breastfeeding candidates under [point 6.4](#).

CHAPTER 3

Reasonable accommodations

3.1 Who can request special adjustments?

All candidates with specific needs in EPSO selection tests due to a disability or another permanent or temporary condition, including pregnancy and breastfeeding, can request special adjustments.

It is important to note that the final decision on granting reasonable accommodation(s) is taken by EPSO ([EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#)).

3.2 Who is involved in the definition, organization and implementation of reasonable accommodations?

EPSO has a dedicated team in charge of defining and organizing reasonable accommodations in its selection tests, [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#). This team includes a senior psychologist specialised in reasonable accommodations in selection tests and in the workplace. When necessary, the medical service of the EU Institutions or other external experts are consulted in order to contribute to the best possible analysis and definition of reasonable accommodations for our candidates. Of course, such consultations are entirely anonymised.

In addition to [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#), our test contractor for computer based tests and selection board members in charge of assessment of candidates are involved in the implementation of these reasonable accommodations as defined by the [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#).

3.3 Overview and illustrations of possible accommodations

EPSO has developed an [overview of possible accommodations in selection tests](#) for candidates with disabilities or specific needs including pregnant and breastfeeding candidates.

This document explains how EPSO defines reasonable accommodations and proposes a glossary of possible accommodations. For each type of accommodation, candidates can see what it entails, at which test phase they can request it, in which test centers it is possible to grant it, and who is responsible for providing it.

3.4. What types of certificates should candidates provide to support their request?

To support their request for special adjustments candidates should provide the appropriate disability or medical certificate or a specialist report.

Candidates are not obliged to translate certificates into English. However, a summary of the content of the certificate in English would be highly appreciated.

Certificates must be uploaded into the [information form](#).

Should the [information form](#) be incomplete or not contain the valid certificate(s) by the corresponding deadlines for the specific selection procedure, the request will be rejected.

The following is a non exhaustive list of acceptable certificates:

- Disability certificate issued by a national authority. In addition candidates should attach a detailed report on the specific condition(s) delivered by a specialist which will allow EPSO have a better understanding of the need(s) requested and what the possible obstacles and accommodations per type of test might be;
- Medical certificate from a specialist doctor explaining the condition(s) and the necessary accommodations per type of test duly justified (in case of a non-permanent condition, candidates must provide a recent certificate);
- Specialists' reports (in case of some conditions such as learning disorders or mental conditions, it is necessary to have a more detailed report on the condition(s) and the possible obstacles and accommodations in a testing situation per type of test).

Certificates provided to support a request must be issued by registered general physicians and/or specialists and organisations in order for the request to be taken into account by EPSO.

To ensure an efficient and complete response to their request candidates should provide as detailed information as possible.

3.5 How EPSO defines reasonable accommodations?

The [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) is responsible for analysing each individual request for special adjustments on a case by case basis and the proposed accommodation(s) are validated at

management level. This is a comprehensive and rigorous exercise taking into account, amongst other things the following elements:

- The request for adjustments in the selection tests introduced by candidates via the information form on specific needs due to a disability or a medical condition;
- A good understanding of the nature and extent of the candidate's functional limitations in the selection context;
- Supporting documents from qualified professionals and/or national authorities (e.g. disability certificates, medical certificates, specialist reports...);
- EPSO's expertise in reasonable accommodation;
- External expertise (in some cases, experts are consulted to allow the best definition possible of accommodations such as the medical service of the EU Commission or external experts. This consultation is entirely anonymised and protection of data is guaranteed);
- Type of tests and media used (e.g. computer based, handwritten or essay type on computer, oral);
- Type of output expected (e.g. answers to a multiple choice questionnaire, essay type, oral/interaction);
- Type of actions necessary to indicate the correct answers (e.g. clicking, typing, handwriting, speaking, interacting);
- Any other relevant information.

3.6 What is the process for requesting special adjustments?

Before deciding to apply to an EPSO competition or selection procedure, candidates must first create an [EPSO account](#).

3.6.1 Open competition

Step 1: Registration phase

1. In the application form, under 'registration data' tab, candidates should answer 'YES' to the following question: *'Do you need special adjustments of the selection tests due to a disability or a medical condition'?* by ticking the corresponding answer option under 'specific needs requirements' section;

2. Candidates must complete the application form;
3. When candidates validate their application, they get access, either in the validation message of their application or in their EPSO account, to the [information form about specific needs due to a disability or a medical condition in the context of the selection tests organized by EPSO](#) (hereinafter called 'the information form').

Step 2: Information phase

Candidates have validated their application in the registration phase and have received the link to the [information form](#). Candidates should now complete [this information form](#) with as much detail as possible so that the [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) have sufficient information regarding their condition(s) and need(s).

Candidates should ensure to attach all relevant supporting documents to substantiate their request, i.e. disability or medical certificates, specialists' reports etc.

In summary: only ticking the box in the application form **is not sufficient** to receive reasonable accommodations – candidates must complete the information form and provide the relevant supporting documentation.

IMPORTANT:

- EPSO's **'No certificates no adjustments'** policy. In the absence of these documents their request will be rejected and no accommodations will be granted;
- Candidates must **complete this phase within the published deadline for registration for each open competition communicated in the notice of competition.**

Step 3: EPSO analysis phase

[EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) will analyse each candidate's request and evaluate which reasonable accommodation may be granted, if any. Reasonable accommodations are defined and approved based on a rigorous and comprehensive exercise as described under [point 3.5](#). In the event that reasonable accommodation is granted, candidates will be informed of the details before the test

date. Should a candidate not be satisfied with the EPSO decision concerning their request, they should contact [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) before the test date.

Candidates should note that actual reasonable accommodations granted may differ somewhat from what was requested based on the rigorous and comprehensive analysis as described under [point 3.5](#).

Once accommodations are defined and communicated to the candidate, [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) takes charge of ensuring that the relevant measures are communicated and that the actors involved implement them in due time.

Step 4: Test phase

Eligible candidates are invited to sit EPSO selection tests according to the special requirements and accommodations granted, in the best possible conditions allowing them to fully demonstrate their competencies and to compete on an equal basis with other candidates.

For each test phase, the actors involved in assessment and assistance are informed of the accommodations granted. Should a candidate encounter an issue with the accommodations and/or any technical problem during the tests, they must report it directly to the staff in place in the testing center and inform EPSO via the [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#).

Step 5: Feedback phase

Candidate feedback is important to EPSO. With a view to continuous improvement of our services, [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) invites candidates, at the end of each test session, to share their feedback regarding the accommodations granted.

IMPORTANT:

What if a disability or medical condition occurs during the competition?

Candidates should inform [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) as soon as possible of the condition. EPSO will send the candidate the link to the [information form](#) (about specific needs due to a disability or a medical condition in the context of the selection tests organized by EPSO) that should be completed with the supporting documents so that the request can be taken into consideration.

What if the condition evolves during the competition and after completion of the information form?

Candidates should note their contribution ID (reference number of information form when candidate completed information form for the first time). This contribution ID appears in the validation message of the information form. In this way candidates can retrieve their information form at any time and update it accordingly without having to complete it once again. If they do not have access to this reference number, candidates should contact [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#).

After tests, what happens next?

Being placed on the reserve list of successful candidates or 'laureates' does not guarantee a job. Laureates from reserve lists may be invited by an EU recruiting service for a job specific interview. In this case laureates should ensure to request special adjustments directly to them as they will be in charge of interviews and possible accommodations. EPSO is not involved in the recruitment phase and does not communicate any details regarding the candidate's condition to any EU institution in line with data protection and non-discrimination rules and guidelines.

3.6.2. CAST P selection procedures

1. Registration phase

CAST P candidates select the profile they wish to apply for and complete the application form. Similar to open competitions, CAST P candidates request special adjustments for the EPSO selection tests by ticking the corresponding box under registration data, 'specific needs requirements' and get access to the [information form about specific needs due to a disability or a medical condition in the context of the selection tests organized by EPSO](#) (hereinafter called 'the information form').

2. Information phase

Candidates should complete the [information form](#) and attach all relevant supporting documents to support their request, i.e. disability or medical certificates, specialists' reports etc. **at the same time as they apply**. Candidates should note EPSO's '**No certificates no adjustments**' policy and **remember to respect the deadlines**. Failure to respect these two elements can result in rejection

of the request. However, should a candidate's condition occur after the validation of their application, they are invited to contact the [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) as soon as possible in order to receive the link to the [information form](#) to update their information and request.

3. EPSO analysis phase

[EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) analyses requests for special adjustments from CAST P candidates **only** if the candidate has been preselected to sit the computer based tests **and** has received an invitation to the tests. Please note CAST P candidates should update their [information form](#) on the evolution of their needs at any time between their application and invitation to the test. To do so, candidates use their contribution ID (reference number of candidate's request for special adjustments that appears in the validation message of the [information form](#).) to retrieve their [information form](#) at any time and update it accordingly. Candidates should contact [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) if they do not have access to this contribution ID.

4. Test phase

In the event that EPSO may require further analysis and/or additional information which may not be available in time to respect the initial testing date, the CAST P candidate will be invited to the next testing window with the appropriate reasonable accommodations in place.

IMPORTANT: EPSO's responsibility for CAST P candidates is restricted to the computer based cognitive and competency tests and does not cover interviews or any additional tests organized by specific EU Institutions.

EPSO does not communicate any information on a CAST P candidate's specific needs to any EU recruiting service. Therefore CAST P candidates should request special adjustments directly to the recruiting service in the event they are invited to a job interview or to sit any other additional tests.

5. Feedback phase

Feedback from CAST P candidates is important to EPSO. CAST P candidates will receive a satisfaction survey from [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#) to collect their feedback which will be used to improve EPSO's processes and services.

3.6.3 Temporary selection procedures

EPSO candidates applying to temporary selections should check the details related to the specific temporary selection procedure and follow the process as described in that selection or vacancy.

CHAPTER 4

Data Protection

EPSO guarantees that the data relating to candidates' disability or medical condition will be treated confidentially in compliance with [Regulation \(EU\) No 2018/1725](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018.

Only EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team will have access to information regarding candidates' disability or medical condition(s).

EPSO will NOT share any details regarding candidates' condition(s) with EU recruiting services or anyone else.

EPSO can provide EU Institutions offering positive actions for persons with disabilities a list of candidates who have authorized EPSO to share their contact details ONLY (name, phone number and email address) following their express consent.

CHAPTER 5

Good to know

5.1 Accessibility

EPSO is working continuously on improving accessibility of our communication and selection procedures. Regular accessibility screenings are performed in order to check how accessible EPSO information? is and how it can enhance accessibility for all. Accessibility requirements are integrated in all new IT developments. EPSO produces accessible formats of documents which are not 100% accessible for assistive technologies and is currently auditing the EPSO website to

reach AA level of WCAG 2.1 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). Candidates encountering any accessibility issues or need assistance should contact the [EPSO ACCESSIBILITY team](#).

5.2 Positive Actions for persons with disabilities

Some EU Institutions or agencies may offer positive actions to candidates with disabilities. In such instances, the specific EU Institution is responsible for defining the eligibility criteria for such actions.

The aim of such positive actions is to help the EU civil service increase employment of persons with a disability and implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability.

EPSO may play a role in communicating these positive actions to its candidates.

Candidates who wish to benefit from positive actions can authorize EPSO to communicate **only** their name and email address to the recruiting services by confirming their explicit consent to do so in their [information form](#). EPSO **will not** communicate any information regarding the candidate's disability to the recruiting services.

5.3 Call for cooperation to all EU diversity organizations

EPSO believes in and actively promotes equality and diversity in all our selections.

In particular EPSO would like to reach out to EU citizens with disabilities (including various medical conditions) and encourage them to apply to work for the EU institutions or agencies.

This is also an opportunity to inform the EU citizens and potential candidates about EPSO equality and diversity policy, specific measures for candidates with disabilities (including various medical conditions) and share some practical tools on how to request special adjustments in selection tests.

Candidates can find out more about this call on [EPSO equal opportunities webpage](#).

5.4 Contact point

For any question, suggestion or feedback, please contact EPSO-accessibility@ec.europa.eu

CHAPTER 6

Candidate TOOLBOX

In this chapter, candidates can check out some of EPSO's pedagogical tools and promotional materials on special adjustments:

6.1 [Video on how to request special adjustments in the selection tests](#)

6.2 [Step by step guide to requesting special adjustments in EPSO selection tests](#)

In case of difficulties accessing this document with assistive technology, candidates can refer to [this accessible version](#) or [request print outs in Braille](#).

6.3 [Overview of possible accommodations](#)

6.4 Policy for female candidates requesting reasonable accommodation(s) in staff selection procedures related to pregnancy or childbirth

(updated version available soon on [EPSO equal opportunities webpage](#))

6.5. Other resources

⇒ [EPSO equal opportunities webpage](#)

⇒ [FAQs : equal opportunities section](#)

⇒ [VIPTechJob app](#) – application helping visually impaired candidates to find a job supported by EPSO

⇒ [Registration form](#) to join the network of disability partner organisations and help EPSO attract more talent with disability and specific needs