



NATO's Recruitment Process

+ Tips for candidates

Step 1: Application phase (4 - 6 weeks)

- Applications must be submitted in English or French via [NATO's online recruitment platform](#).
- The deadline to apply is usually **4-6 weeks** after the publication of the vacancy notice. The exact date and time of the deadline is mentioned in the vacancy notice.

Review of applications (2 - 4 weeks)

The hiring manager and representatives from NATO's HR department review the applications and decide on a **long-list** of candidates. They use an assessment sheet with a grading system to evaluate the candidates and make an objective decision.

Step 2: Recorded video interview (1 - 2 weeks)

- All candidates on the **long-list** receive an invitation to complete a recorded video interview.
- The interview contains **3-4 questions**, takes around **20 minutes to complete** in total.
- Candidates get **1 or 2 minutes** to prepare for each question and **up to 3 minutes** to record each answer.
- Once a candidate has seen a question they must record their answer immediately.
- It is not possible to re-do questions.
- The questions also assess the language skills required for the position.
- Depending on the position, some of the questions might require a written answer.
- The questions do not have to be completed all at once. It is possible to pause the interview between questions.
- The deadline to complete the interview is usually **1-2 weeks** after receiving the invitation.

Review of recorded video interviews (2 - 4 weeks)

The recorded video interviews are assessed and marked by at least 2 evaluators - usually the hiring manager and a representative from NATO's HR department. The candidates with the highest marks make it onto the **short-list**.

Step 3: Written exercise and language test

- All candidates on the **short-list** receive invitations to do an online **written exercise** and **language test**, as well as an invitation to a **panel interview** (step 4).
- The written exercise and language test are **scheduled for a specific day and time**. Invitations are sent 2 weeks in advance.
- The **written exercise** usually lasts **1-3 hours**. The questions are designed to test the knowledge and skills required for the job.
- The **language test** is a multi-choice test in English or French – whichever is the candidate's weaker language.

The written exercise is marked by the members of the interview panel.

The answers are marked anonymously before the panel interviews.

Candidates will not be asked questions about the written exercise during the panel interview.

Step 4: Panel interview

- This is **scheduled for a specific day and time** and lasts for **approximately 45 minutes**. Most interviews take place via **video call** but, in some cases, it may be in-person.
- Candidates are interviewed by a panel, who take it in turns to ask questions.
- The **panel normally includes at least four people**: the hiring manager, a representative from NATO's HR department, a representative from another division and a panel secretary.
- The **questions are designed to test the competencies** mentioned in the vacancy notice.
- Candidates have the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview.

What happens next?

- The panel gives each candidate a score for their performance in the interview.
- Results of the written exercise are revealed – the panel finds out which answers belong to which candidate.
- The panel prepares an **evaluation report** which considers the merits of each candidate, based on their assessment of the written exercise as well as the interview.
- The panel **recommends a first-choice candidate** for the role.
- The evaluation report and recommendation are submitted for **formal approval**.
- Once there is formal approval, the first-choice candidate receives a **conditional job offer** and the other candidates are notified about the outcome of the selection process.
- The conditional job offer is subject to completing **medical checks** (conducted by a doctor) and obtaining a **security clearance** (conducted by the national authorities of the candidate's home country). If a candidate passes these checks, they receive a **final job offer**.

Important points to note:

- Due to the administrative formalities explained above, candidates may have to wait **several weeks or months for news** following the interview.
- It takes **3-6 months on average** (but sometimes even longer) to obtain a security clearance certificate. The waiting time will depend partly on the national authority conducting the security clearance, and also on the candidate's personal situation.
- **Candidates are not permitted to use ChatGPT, similar tools or any other forms of outside help during any phase of the recruitment process**. If their use is detected, the candidate will be disqualified.
- This factsheet describes how NATO's recruitment process works in general, but there may be some differences in the process for specific positions.

Tips for candidates

Step 1: the application form

- Read the vacancy notice carefully.
- You can save the application form as a draft and edit it as many times as you wish before submitting it.
- Do not wait until the final moment to press the submit button, in case there are technical issues.
- If you try to edit or submit the form after the deadline, the changes will be rejected by the online recruitment system.
- NATO will only evaluate the information you write in the text boxes on the application form, so make sure you provide clear answers and mention the most important information. Do not write “please see my CV.”
- You may upload documents to support your application form (such as your CV), but they will not be formally evaluated.
- Use bullet points or paragraphs to structure your answers and make them easier to read.
- Prepare your answers to the pre-screening questions in a separate document to easily check for spelling or grammar mistakes and ensure your answers respect the character limits.

Step 2: the recorded video interview

- Choose a good place to record the interview. Ideally in a quiet and well-lit room, free from distractions.
- Test your computer’s camera and microphone to make sure they are working properly.
- Try the practice questions on the online platform before you do the real interview. This will help you get used to talking to the camera and answering questions within time limits. You can attempt the practice questions as many times as you wish.
- Look at the camera when recording your answers. If you find this difficult, place a photo or an object behind your computer screen in line with the camera, so you have something to make eye contact with.

Step 3: the written exercise

- Re-read the vacancy notice and look carefully at the job description. The questions in the written exercise will be in line with the responsibilities mentioned in the job description.
- Organise your time effectively. Read through the exercise first, to see how many questions there are and how the marks are distributed.
- Do not use ChatGPT, similar tools or any other forms of outside help during the written exercise. If the use of outside help is detected, you will be disqualified.

Step 4: the panel interview

- Re-read the vacancy notice carefully. Make sure you are familiar with the job description and the requirements.
- Read up on NATO, the division and recent events or topics that might be relevant.
- NATO has [16 key competencies](#) for international civilian staff. The interview questions are designed based on the competencies listed in the vacancy notice. Be prepared to give recent examples of how you demonstrated these competencies.
- Project yourself in the role. Be prepared to talk about your motivation, your approach to certain tasks and why your professional experience makes you a good fit for the role.
- Listen carefully to the questions and take a few seconds to organise your thoughts, perhaps jotting down a few bullet points before answering. Ask for clarification if the question is not entirely clear to you.
- Prepare one or two relevant questions for the hiring manager to find out more about the position and its context, or NATO in general.
- Be yourself and act naturally.

Feedback on your application

Please note that we cannot provide feedback on every single application. But if you make it to step 2 (recorded video interview) or further, you may ask to receive personalized feedback at the end of the recruitment process.

For more information visit:

[Careers at NATO – How to Apply](#)

