

SPECIFICATIONS

**NATO STANAG 6001 English Language Proficiency Test
for the Bulgarian Armed Forces**

seventh revised edition

English Language Tests Development and Administration Department

Human Resources Directorate

Ministry of Defense

Republic of Bulgaria

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ASSUMPTIONS

1. The Bulgarian English Language Test Specifications have been designed by the English Language Tests Development and Administration Department, Human Resources Directorate of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defense in accordance with NATO STANAG 6001.

The Bulgarian Ministry of Defense officially recognizes only the versions of the Bulgarian STANAG 6001 English Language Test released by the English Language Tests Development and Administration Department.

2. The current Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test Specifications are seventh revised edition.
3. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test Specifications and the test variants have been designed in full accordance with STANAG 6001 (Edition 3) and the descriptors of the language proficiency levels.
4. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test Specifications have been designed in accordance with the theoretical and methodological language testing principles and provide the basis for the Bulgarian STANAG 6001 English language test development.
5. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 test fully complies with the requirements of the BAT test (Benchmark Advisory Test) developed by NATO member countries.
6. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test measures language skills, **NOT** professional competence. The four language skills—listening, reading, writing and speaking—are tested separately for all levels.
7. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test is a multilevel one for Levels 1-3.
8. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test for Level 4 is administered only in cases when candidates apply for international positions requiring that level. Level 4 candidates are supposed to have already achieved Level 3 in all four language skills and should possess a valid certificate as of the test-taking date.
9. Level 5 is not tested in Bulgaria as Level 5 is awarded to well-educated native speakers only.
10. Candidates are assigned levels on a band scale from 0 to 4, expressed by whole numbers, i.e. 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4. Borderline (plus) levels are introduced for levels from 0 to 3. If a candidate is rated at a given level on this scale, it is assumed that he/she has covered all the language skills required at the preceding lower levels.
11. Candidates, who are assigned 0 or 0+ on any skill, are not awarded a certificate.

PURPOSE OF THE TEST

The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 English Language Test is of key importance for the needs of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defense for personnel selection based on their English language competence as a step towards enhancing NATO countries' interoperability. Bulgaria's full membership in NATO and the Bulgarian Armed Forces participation in multinational military exercises, operations, and missions call for high levels of English language competence.

The purpose of the test is to assess the overall English language proficiency of the candidates regardless of the English language course book they have used. The test gives assessment of the extent to which a candidate is able to communicate effectively in everyday situations and professional environment.

TARGET LANGUAGE USE SITUATION

For Levels 1-3 the domain is broadly defined as "general English" and "work-place English" which means using English for everyday communicative needs and in a military-related context.

Level 4 candidates are supposed to use the target language very fluently in specialized military context, as well as when holding consultations and conducting negotiations in a multinational military environment.

TOPICS

Topics covered in the test for Levels 1-3 can be drawn from the personal, public, and professional domains e.g. daily routines, free time activities, the environment, military education and career, as well as other military and socio-political issues.

For Level 4 the topics can be drawn from the public and professional domains e.g. issues of military and socio-political character like politics, security, economics, environment, science and technology, cultural and social life, geography, history, etc.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST-TAKERS

The exam is designed to test the knowledge and skills of the military and civilian personnel in the Bulgarian Ministry of Defense and the Bulgarian Armed Forces who will take part in multinational military exercises and operations or will be employed in international military environment, as well of any personnel, occupying in-country positions, who are required to possess a certain level of English language proficiency for their job.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST FOR LEVELS 1 - 3

The test consists of four sections, testing the four language skills:

Reading	120 minutes
Listening	about 45 minutes
Writing	90 minutes
Speaking	20 – 30 minutes

Each skill is assessed separately and independently of the other skills.

READING SECTION

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

The aim of this section is to measure the ability of the candidate to recognize and understand different communicative functions in reading materials. The candidate has to demonstrate ability for overall understanding of the text, for finding specific information, for identifying the main idea and the supporting details, for making inferences and conclusions, as well as for identifying the cohesive devices in a text for a limited period of time.

The Reading Section tests language sub-skills such as:

- understanding the main idea;
- scanning for specific information;
- understanding explicit meaning;
- understanding implicit meaning;
- understanding cohesion and coherence within the text;
- understanding and making inferences;
- identifying stages of an argument or discussion;
- recognizing emotional overtones;
- understanding hypotheses;
- identifying the author's viewpoint and attitude;
- understanding most common cultural references;
- recognizing different stylistic nuances.

DESCRIPTION OF THE READING PROFICIENCY LEVELS 0 – 3

0 — no proficiency	The candidate has no practical ability to understand reading materials. Reads with difficulty only isolated numbers, words and phrases, personal and place names.
0+ — memorized phrases	The candidate can recognize all the letters in an alphabetic system and is able to read some numbers, isolated words and phrases, personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations. May be able to read phrases that are memorized or strongly supported by context, but cannot read at the sentence level.
1 — survival	The candidate shows sufficient comprehension in reading simple and short texts related to everyday survival and workplace situations such as: short messages, advertisements, simple descriptions of people, places and objects, simple signboards and signs. Can understand the basic meaning of simple texts and some specific details.
1+ — survival+	The candidate understands simple, very predictable authentic printed texts intended to convey social and routine job-related information, such as announcements of public events and brief biographical facts. Shows some limited and unsustained ability to understand longer concrete texts such as descriptions of persons, places and things as well as narrations of current, past and future events.
2 — functional	The candidate understands authentic or edited texts covering familiar topics. Can comprehend straightforward, factual texts describing people, places and objects in details; as well as narrations about current, past, and future events. Understands factual details, identifies the main ideas and can make simple inferences and conclusions. Can recognize the basic cohesive devices in a text. Sometimes can guess the meaning of unknown words in a straightforward context and point out the main idea of a complicated text. Demonstrates good comprehension of high-frequency, job-related language in the context of everyday military environment.
2+ — functional+	The candidate is able to read with complete comprehension concrete, factual, authentic written material on familiar subjects. Can also understand more complex general and professional material. Contexts include not only factual news items but also some informational and editorial items in major periodicals as well as personal and some professional correspondence. Can readily separate main ideas from less

important details and use broad reading vocabulary to make intelligent guesses about unfamiliar material.

3 — professional

The candidate demonstrates good understanding of authentic written materials on both general and professional topics. Can follow text cohesion, opinion argumentation, and hypotheses. Makes inferences and draws conclusions. The candidate has rich reading vocabulary including most commonly used idioms, and understands complex grammatical structures. Demonstrates comprehension of abstract concepts in reading texts and recognizes different stylistic levels. Determines the author's opinion and can read between the lines. Apprehends official policy presentation and argumentation.

TASK TYPES

Multiple-choice questions with 4 options.

NUMBER OF ITEMS

about 60 items

TIME

120 minutes

TEXT TYPES

The Reading Section consists of texts of different length and graded complexity. All texts are taken from authentic sources and edited if necessary. Texts can be drawn from: signboards and signs, leaflets and guidebooks, newspapers and magazines, reports, accounts, manuals, documents, analyses, lectures, military briefings, and could be from the fields of military affairs, politics, economics, culture, science, and technology.

LENGTH OF TEXTS

The total number of words of all texts in the Reading Section for Levels 1-3 is approximately 3000.

RUBRICS

The instructions and the examples for each task are written in English. They inform the candidates about:

- task type;
- what they are required to do and how to mark the right answer.

MARKING SCHEME

Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. A level, indicated by a whole number (1, 2 or 3), is sustained if 70% of the questions are answered correctly. A borderline (plus) level is awarded if 50% of the questions are answered correctly. If a candidate is rated at a given level on this scale, it is assumed that he/she has attained the preceding lower levels. For example, Level 3 is awarded if the candidate has answered correctly 70% of the questions for Level 1, 70% of the questions for Level 2, and 70% of the questions for Level 3.

LISTENING SECTION

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

The aim of this section is to measure the overall listening comprehension in real time conditions. The candidates are expected to recognize various native and non-native accents and simultaneously complete specific tasks like identifying or interpreting information related to various situations, participants and goals, as well as identifying basic characteristics of the discourse (e.g. main ideas, supporting ideas, conclusions, examples).

The Listening Section tests language sub-skills such as:

- understanding the main idea;
- understanding detailed and specific information;
- making inferences and conclusions;
- understanding specific and abstract concepts;
- understanding hypotheses;
- determining the speaker's viewpoint on and attitude to a certain issue;
- following stages of an argument or discussion;
- recognising emotional overtones;
- recognising various registers, tones and stylistic nuances addressed to specific listener groups.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LISTENING PROFICIENCY LEVELS 0 – 3

0 — no proficiency

The candidate has no practical ability to comprehend communication. Understanding is difficult and limited to occasional isolated words and/or short memorized utterances.

0+ — memorized phrases

The candidate understands isolated words and/or some high frequency phrases and short sentences in areas of immediate survival needs. Usually requests repetition and requires pauses. Can understand only with difficulty even simple words and phrases.

1 — survival

The candidate understands common familiar phrases and short simple sentences related to surviving in English environment. These include patterns to express minimum courtesy and basic everyday communication (in areas such as transport, accommodation, shopping, short directions, instructions, etc.) in a straightforward context. The candidate's skills are adequate to understand concrete meaning, simple questions and answers, as well as very short conversations. The candidate recognizes the basic linking words.

1+ — survival+

The candidate understands simple face-to-face conversations on everyday social and routine job-related topics. Not only comprehends short conversations based on simple questions and answers, but also has some limited ability to understand slightly longer conversations on concrete topics. Shows a limited and unsustained ability to understand descriptions of people, places, and things; narrations of current, past and future events.

2 — functional

The candidate understands monologues and dialogues on everyday social and routine job-related topics. Can comprehend the gist of texts in familiar subject-matter areas, follow main points of a discussion or a speech in his/her professional field, distinguish the main idea from details, as well as comprehend specific information and draw simple inferences. Can understand discourse on various concrete topics, related to personality, family, society, work matters; descriptions of people, places, or objects; as well as narrations of current, past and future events. Recognizes cohesive devices in longer texts. Occasionally comprehends words or phrases under unfavorable conditions (e.g. background noise, sound interference or rapid speech).

2+ — functional+

The candidate understands conversations on practical, social, and everyday professional topics. In addition to understanding all discussions of concrete topics found in descriptions and narration about current, past, and future events, can also understand a significant amount of the language used in interactive meetings, briefings, and other forms of extended discourse, including some discussions of unfamiliar subjects and situations. Shows some ability to understand the essential points of discussion or speech on topics in his/her professional field.

3 — professional

The candidate understands very well formal and informal speech on everyday, social, basic professional and abstract topics. Accurately follows the essential stages of conversations and lectures on general and professional subject matters, as well as media broadcasts. Can draw valid conclusions, inferences and implications from context and deduce causes and effects from events. The candidate can fairly accurately follow opinion argumentation and hypothesizing; can understand official policy presentation and interpretation. Can well

differentiate various styles. Can comprehend high-frequency idioms.
Can recognize the speaker's attitude towards the subject matter.

TASK TYPES

Multiple-choice questions with 4 options.

NUMBER OF ITEMS

about 60 items

TIME

about 45 minutes

TEXT TYPES

All texts for the Listening Section are from authentic sources, edited if necessary, read by native speakers and recorded in an audio studio. Texts can be monologues or dialogues and include: (telephone) conversations, directions and instructions, announcements, commentaries, interviews, briefings, radio and TV news, lectures, reports and speeches.

RUBRICS

Candidates listen to the recording only once. The recording, once started, does not stop until the test is over. There is only one task per each text.

All instructions and the example, accompanying each task, are in English.

The instructions inform the candidates on:

- the type of text they are going to listen to;
- what they are expected to do and how to mark the right answer;
- the length of the pauses and the time they have to read through the questions in the Answer Sheet;
- how much time they have to check their answers.

MARKING SCHEME

Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. A level, indicated by a whole number (1, 2 or 3), is sustained if 70% of the questions are answered correctly. A borderline (plus) level is awarded if 50% of the questions are answered correctly. If a candidate is rated at a given level on this scale, it is assumed that he/she has attained the preceding lower levels. For example, Level 3 is awarded if the candidate has answered correctly 70% of the questions for Level 1, 70% of the questions for Level 2, and 70% of the questions for Level 3.

WRITING SECTION

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

This section aims at assessing the communicative ability to write fluently and effectively on everyday and professional topics. The candidate is expected to produce coherent and meaningful texts using the appropriate format, register, style, grammatical structures and vocabulary.

The Writing Section tests language sub-skills such as:

- expressing thanks and apology;
- making and responding to requests;
- asking for and giving advice, information, and instructions;
- describing and comparing people, objects, places, events and their consequences;
- describing activities and processes;
- describing changes over a period of time;
- narrating a sequence of events;
- explaining cause and effect processes;
- presenting an opinion using arguments, evidence and examples;
- analyzing a situation and hypothesizing about it;
- elaborating on abstract ideas and concepts.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITING PROFICIENCY LEVELS 0 - 3

0 — no proficiency	The candidate has no practical proficiency to communicate in written form.
0+ — memorized phrases	The candidate can produce symbols in an alphabetic writing system, can write numbers, dates, own name, address, nationality, etc., such as required on registration forms. Can only write memorized material, set expressions, often with incorrect spelling. Attempts at writing at the sentence level are usually unsuccessful.
1 — survival	The candidate can communicate by writing short personal notes, postcards, short personal letters, phone messages, invitations, short descriptions and narration. Conveys thoughts on a given topic through

short, simple sentences and phrases. Uses the basic grammatical structures and high frequency vocabulary. Errors in spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation may often cause shift of meaning.

1+ — survival+

The candidate can readily write short notes and personal letters, post cards, phone messages, and invitations, as well as fill out forms and applications. Can write simple personal and routine workplace documents. Shows some inconsistent and unreliable ability to write short factual accounts and instructions; descriptions of people, places, and things; narration of current, past and future events. Shows some limited ability to connect a group of sentences coherently. Vocabulary may be imprecise. Simple structures and basic grammatical relations are often inaccurate. Errors in usage, spelling, and punctuation may sometimes obscure meaning.

2 — functional

The candidate can write personal (formal and informal) and routine workplace correspondence and related documents, such as memos and brief reports/accounts. Can state facts; give instructions; describe people, places and objects; can narrate past, current, and future activities in complete paragraphs. Can use basic coherence to link sentences and paragraphs into connected prose. Demonstrates control of simple grammatical structures but inaccurately uses or avoids more complex ones. Vocabulary use is specific and appropriate for everyday topics and limited professional needs. Errors in spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation may sometimes distort meaning.

2+ — functional+

The candidate can write personal and informal correspondence. Can provide considerable details when narrating, describing, stating facts, comparing and contrasting, and instructing. May be able to write about abstract concepts and concepts from his/her professional field but with some limitations and inconsistency. There may be imprecise vocabulary and punctuation, as well as flawed use of more complex grammatical structures.

3 — professional

The candidate can write effectively formal and informal correspondence on social and professional topics. Can express opinion on abstract professional and topics. Can convey main ideas and supporting facts using a wide range of cohesive devices. Uses appropriate style and register to comment a topic, give arguments, agree/disagree with a statement, analyze, hypothesize, give detailed explanation/narration/description. Conveys message accurately using appropriate vocabulary, complex

grammatical structures, and correct punctuation. Errors in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation are occasional and do not interfere comprehension.

NUMBER OF TASKS

The tasks are three.

TIME

90 minutes

TYPES OF TASKS

Task 1: a short text, e.g. a short note or a message, a greeting card, a form/a list to fill in, a short e-mail, a memo of about 40-80 words depending on the type of the text.

Task 2: a text on a given topic, e.g. description, narration, report of about 150 words.

Task 3: a text on a given topic, e.g. commentary, argumentation of an opinion, agreement or disagreement with a statement, analysis, hypothesis, detailed explanation/narration/description or briefing of approximately 250 words.

RUBRICS

The instructions for tasks 1 and 2 are in Bulgarian, for task 3 – in English. They inform the candidates on the task type and what they are required to do.

MARKING SCHEME

The written papers are read and marked by a board of minimum two qualified examiners using a standard assessment scale based on the STANAG 6001 language descriptions. Papers are assessed according to the following criteria: task completion, textual organization, vocabulary and grammar, style and register, spelling and punctuation. Candidates will be assigned Level 0 for a task if the topic or the instructions of the task are violated. Candidates aiming to achieve Levels 1 and 2 need to work on Tasks 1 and 2 whereas those attempting Level 3 need to work on all three tasks.

SPEAKING SECTION

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

The aim of this section is to measure the ability of the candidate to communicate verbally in a variety of situations. The candidate is expected to demonstrate effective communicative use of the target language through various discourse patterns and strategies, appropriate for the targeted level grammatical structures and vocabulary, register and style.

The Speaking Section tests language sub-skills such as:

- providing personal information;
- providing factual information;
- describing people, places, objects, events;
- comparing and contrasting people, places, objects, events;
- giving directions and instructions;
- narrating present, past and future events;
- expressing likes and dislikes;
- expressing opinions, intentions, attitudes, moods, emotions;
- eliciting information about people, objects and events;
- giving advice how a situation or a problem to be solved;
- speculating on future events and their consequences;
- hypothesizing;
- elaborating on abstract ideas and concepts;
- conversing in formal and informal environment;
- understanding and making appropriate common cultural references.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKING PROFICIENCY LEVELS 0 - 3

0 — no proficiency	The candidate has no practical proficiency for oral communication even in elementary everyday survival situations.
0+ — memorized phrases	The candidate is able to satisfy immediate survival needs using memorized, rehearsed utterances. Vocabulary is random and generally limited to areas such as greetings, brief personal data, numbers, time expressions, common objects. Attempts at creating speech at the sentence level are usually unsuccessful. Pronunciation, stress, and intonation are usually quite faulty and hinder communication.
1 — survival	The candidate can participate in communication on everyday topics. Can begin, maintain, and close short conversations by asking and

answering simple questions. Can typically satisfy simple, personal and accommodation needs; meet minimum courtesy, e.g. introduction and identification requirements; exchange greetings; elicit and provide skeletal biographical information; ask for goods, services, and assistance; request help, clarification or information about goods or services; express agreement, disagreement and confirmation. Can speak at sentence level using high frequency vocabulary and basic grammar structures. Can sometimes join two or more simple short sentences using the most common linking words. Frequent errors in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar sometimes distort meaning.

1+ — survival+

The candidate is able to initiate and maintain everyday face-to-face conversation. Can easily take part in short conversations by asking and answering simple questions. Shows a very limited ability to handle longer conversations on concrete topics. Discourse consists of strings of related sentences, which do not form a full paragraph. Can readily supply biographical background; ask for assistance; request information and clarification; and express satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and confirmation. Shows a limited and inconsistent ability to describe people, places, and things; to narrate current, past, and future events; to state facts; to give instructions or directions. Frequent errors in pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar may obscure meaning.

2 — functional

The candidate can talk on concrete topics in everyday social and workplace situations. Can describe people, places, and objects; narrate current, past and future activities linking successfully sentences in short paragraphs by common cohesive devices. Can state facts, compare and contrast; give instructions and directions. Basic grammatical structures are typically controlled, while more complex structures are used inaccurately or avoided. High-frequency vocabulary is used appropriately in everyday social and routine workplace situations but unusual or imprecise at other times.

2+ — functional+

The candidate is able to communicate in many informal and formal conversations on practical, social, and everyday professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence in a way that is often, but not consistently effective and acceptable. Can use the language effectively to narrate, describe, state facts, compare and contrast, give detailed instructions and directions. Can use the language

with less ease and effectiveness to support opinion, clarify points, and answer objections. Will show some linguistic limitations when participating in meetings, giving briefings and dealing with unfamiliar subjects and situations. Can often discuss abstract concepts but can rarely use abstract linguistic formulations successfully. Imprecise vocabulary and flawed use of more complex structures are often.

3 — professional

The candidate can effectively communicate in formal and informal conversations for practical, social, and professional needs. Can discuss social and professional topics with considerable ease. Can use the language effectively for clarifying, justifying decisions, responding to challenges, supporting opinion, stating and defending official policy. Demonstrates language competence when conducting meetings/seminars/workshops, delivering briefings, or speeches, hypothesizing. Can convey abstract concepts and ideas in discussions on complex general and professional topics. Flexibly uses cohesive devices. Communicates fluently using rich vocabulary including high-frequency idioms. The candidate is aware of style and register. Errors may sometimes occur in low-frequency or highly complex structures without distorting meaning.

TYPES OF TASKS

The Speaking Section consists of three stages.

1. Introduction - The candidate is asked short direct introductory questions to allow him/her get accustomed to the examiner's voice and accent.

2. Core - Depending on the language competence level of the candidate some of the following sub-stages can be included:

2.1. General conversation - The examiner chooses from a number of topics such as:

- general topics like place of birth, family, traveling, free time and leisure activities, sports, environment;
- military and professional topics like military education and career, work place and work responsibilities, participation in operations, NATO, PfP and UN missions and exercises, EU issues.

2.2. Description - The candidate is asked to describe people, objects, places, etc.

2.3. Narration - The candidate is asked to narrate past, present or future events or personal experience.

2.4. Comparison and contrast - The candidate is asked to compare and contrast people, places, events, facts and give arguments for or against (for level 3).

2.5. Giving directions and instructions - The candidate is asked to give direction for reaching a place or instructions how something should be done.

2.6. Asking questions - The candidate chooses a flash card and is expected to ask relevant questions about it. Level 3 candidates are assessed on the basis of the variety of questions they can ask correctly and their ability to report on the information they have gathered.

2.7. Information gathering task – The candidate asks one of the examiners on a given topic and then retells it to another member of the test board.

2.8. Role play - A dialogue with one of the examiners. The candidate is asked to choose a situation card and is expected to adopt a role in a routine or non-routine /for Level 3/ situation.

2.9. Hypothesizing - The candidate is introduced into an imaginary situation and asked to hypothesize about it.

2.10. Expressing opinion and giving comments - The candidate is asked to state his/her personal opinion or official policy, supporting it with appropriate facts and examples.

2.11. Interpreting quotations - The candidate is asked to give his/her interpretation and comment on a quotation by a famous person.

3. Wind-down - A few sentences giving a smooth conclusion to the interview.

TIME

20—30 minutes

MARKING SCHEME

Candidates are assessed by a board of minimum two qualified examiners using a marking scheme developed in accordance with STANAG 6001 standards and considering the following criteria: communicative skills, control of vocabulary and grammatical structures, register, style, pronunciation, and fluency.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST FOR LEVEL 4

The test consists of four sections testing the four language skills:

Reading	75 minutes
Listening	about 40 minutes
Writing	90 minutes
Speaking	about 30 minutes

Each skill is assessed separately and independently of the other skills.

READING SECTION

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

This section measures the ability of the candidate to understand in depth a variety of complex texts with different communicative goals. The candidate has to demonstrate, for a limited period of time, the ability to draw inferences and conclusions based on the text; to follow the sudden shifts in the author's thoughts and ideas; to detect and interpret the subtle meaning of the linguistic units and cohesive devices building the text.

The Reading Section tests sub-skills such as:

- understanding the main idea;
- understanding implicit meaning;
- understanding a text in its entirety;
- drawing inferences and conclusions;
- apprehending cohesion and coherence within the text;
- recognizing emotional overtones;
- identifying author's viewpoint and attitude;
- understanding a variety of cultural references;
- recognizing stylistic nuances.

DESCRIPTION OF READING PROFICIENCY LEVEL 4

4 — expert

The candidate demonstrates strong competence in analytical reading of complex texts for professional needs, as well as texts from unfamiliar general or specialized professional areas which contain specific terminology, idiomatic language and cultural references. Can adequately and readily apprehend explicit and implicit meaning. Recognizes the subtle meaning of lexical and complex grammatical structures. Demonstrates firm grasp of stylistic nuances and register in texts from various areas on general issues. Can easily follow the sudden turns in author's thoughts and ideas. Easily recognizes emotional overtones in a text. The candidate's speed of reading is similar to that of a native speaker.

TASK TYPES

Multiple-choice questions (3 or 4 options), short-answer questions, gap-fill, sentence completion, matching, etc.

NUMBER OF ITEMS

about 20 items

TIME

75 minutes

TEXT TYPES

All texts are from authentic sources: newspapers and magazines, reports, accounts, manuals/guidebooks, documents, analyses, lectures, military briefings, politics, economics, culture, science and technologies.

LENGTH OF TEXTS

The total number of words of all texts in the Reading Section for level 4 is approximately 2000.

RUBRICS

The instructions and the example for each task are in English. They inform the candidates about:

- the task type;
- what they are required to do and how to mark the right answer.

MARKING SCHEME

Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. Level 4 is sustained if 70% of the questions are answered correctly.

LISTENING SECTION LEVEL 4

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

This section tests the skill of the candidate to have extremely good listening comprehension of various complex texts with a variety of communicative goals. In limited-time conditions, while listening, the candidate has to demonstrate skills to draw inferences very quickly, recognize the subtle meaning of language units, as well as identify the style and register of the speaker addressing specific listener groups.

The Listening Section tests language sub-skills such as:

- understanding the main idea;
- identifying the stages of an argument or discussion;
- drawing inferences and conclusions;
- comprehending complex abstract concepts;
- identifying speaker's viewpoints and attitudes to a certain topic;
- recognising emotional overtones;
- interpretation of hypotheses;
- understanding a variety of language tools appropriate for proposing, counseling and persuasion;
- recognising various register, tone and stylistic nuances addressed to specific listener groups;
- general comprehension of dialect forms.

DESCRIPTION OF LISTENING PROFICIENCY LEVEL 4

4 - expert

The candidate is extremely proficient in understanding and recognizing all styles of speech for professional purposes delivered at a speed typical for native speakers. Understands highly varied and complicated speech on general or professional topics. Can understand language specifically tailored for various types of audiences, including official level persuading and counseling, or performing representative functions. Can easily adjust to shifts of subject matter and tone. Understands extremely well a variety of abstract social and professional topics in discussions. Can readily comprehend mass media discourses and quickly recognize nuances of meaning while listening to native speakers. Fairly well understands different accents. May sometimes have difficulty with slang or dialects.

TASK TYPES

Multiple-choice questions (3 or 4 options), short-answer questions, sentence completion, gap filling, matching, etc. There is only one task per each text.

NUMBER OF ITEMS	about 20 items
TIME	about 40 minutes
TEXT TYPES	All texts are from authentic sources and can be monologues, dialogues and discussions and include commentaries, analyses, interviews, briefings, radio and TV broadcasts, lectures, reports, speeches, etc.
RUBRICS	All instructions and the example accompanying each task are in English. The tape, once started, does not stop until the test is over. Candidates listen to the tape only once. The instructions inform candidates on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the type of text they are going to listen to; • what they are expected to do and how to mark the right answer; • the length of the pauses and the time they have to read through the questions in the Answer Sheet; • how much time they have to check their answers.
MARKING SCHEME	Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. Level 4 is sustained if 70% of the questions are answered correctly.

WRITING SECTION

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

The section assesses the communicative ability of the candidate to write fluently and effectively on professional and general (including unfamiliar) topics. The candidate is expected to produce coherent and meaningful texts and demonstrate very good competence in various styles, appropriate formats, grammatical and lexical structures.

The Writing Section tests language sub-skills such as:

- explaining cause and effect processes;
- stating official or personal opinion using arguments, evidence and examples;
- stating official policy;
- analyzing and hypothesizing on a situation;
- persuading that an opinion is important and correct ;
- elaborating on abstract ideas and concepts.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITING PROFICIENCY LEVEL 4

4 — expert

The candidate is extremely proficient in writing texts for all professional purposes including texts stating official policy or personal stance as well as texts expressing personal point of view on unfamiliar social topics. The candidate is fully proficient in writing reports and formal documents which aim to persuade the reader or to elaborate on abstract concepts and ideas. Can easily organize extended complicated texts and use rich and appropriate vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. Can use a wide range of idiomatic language and express shades of meaning. Shows a firm grasp of various levels of style and register, appropriate for a given situation or target audience.

NUMBER OF TASKS

The tasks are two.

TIME

90 minutes

TYPES OF TASKS

The writing section consist of:

Task 1: a commentary on a given topic/quotation; opinion or official policy argumentation; agreement/disagreement with a statement; analysis; hypothesis; supposition; detailed explanation/narration/description;

Task 2: giving expert opinion, writing a briefing or a presentation on a specialized professional topic.

Each of the tasks must contain a minimum of 300 words.

TOPICS

The topics cover military professional area, as well as areas like politics, security, economics, culture, science, technologies, etc.

RUBRICS

The instructions for each task are in English.

MARKING SCHEME

The written papers are read and marked by a board of minimum two qualified examiners who use a standard assessment scale based on the STANAG 6001 language descriptors. Papers are assessed according to the following criteria: task completion, style, textual organization, richness and propriety of vocabulary, wide spectrum of suitable grammatical structures, correct spelling and punctuation.

SPEAKING SECTION

LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED

The candidate is expected to demonstrate ability to use the language for achieving a variety of communicative goals; to speak fluently and effectively on both professional and general topics, tailoring his/her speech to the target audience; to employ a variety of discourse patterns and strategies, as well as grammatical structures, vocabulary, register and style relevant to the context.

The Speaking Section tests language sub-skills such as:

- eliciting and analyzing information about people, places, objects, events;
- giving advice on how to solve a difficult situation or a problem;
- speculating on future events and their consequences;
- expressing opinions, intentions, attitudes, moods, emotions;
- hypothesizing;
- persuading and negotiating;
- elaborating on abstract ideas and concepts;
- conversing with appropriate for the target audience register and style;
- making appropriate cultural references.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKING PROFICIENCY LEVEL 4

4 — expert

The candidate can use language with extremely great precision, accuracy and fluency for various professional purposes and when stating official policy or point of view. Demonstrates excellent language skills to profoundly counsel, persuade, negotiate, lecture, brief, debate, elaborate on various abstract concepts and ideas. Conveys subtle meaning effectively using rich, precise and appropriate vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. Organizes discourse extremely well, speaking fluently with a firm grasp of various overtones of styles for professional needs. Errors seldom occur and they do not hinder comprehension.

TYPES OF TASKS

This part of the exam consists of three stages.

1. Introduction - The candidate is asked short direct questions about his/her background to allow him/her to get accustomed to the examiner's voice and accent.

2. Core - The following sub-stages can be included:

2.1. Role play - A dialogue with one of the examiners. The candidate is asked to choose a situation card and is expected to adopt a role in a non-routine situation.

2.2. Hypothesizing - The candidate is introduced into an imaginary situation and asked to hypothesize about it.

2.3. Expressing opinion and giving comments - The candidate should demonstrate the ability to analyze, support, and comment extensively on his/her personal opinion or official policy, using appropriate facts and examples.

2.4. Interpreting quotations - The candidate is expected to give his or her profound interpretation of a quotation by a famous person.

2.5. Advocating a position – the candidate is introduced into an imaginary problematic situation and is expected to persuade the examining board, using suitable arguments, that his/her point of view is valid.

3. Wind-down - A few sentences giving a smooth conclusion to the interview.

TIME

about 30 minutes

MARKING SCHEME

Candidates are assessed by a board of minimum two qualified examiners who use a scale developed in accordance with STANAG 6001 standards and take into consideration the following criteria: communicative skills, control of vocabulary and grammatical structures, register and style, pronunciation, fluency.