

# **SPECIFICATIONS**

**NATO STANAG 6001 English Language Proficiency Test  
for the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria  
in accordance with NATO STANAG 6001 ed.4**

**11th revised edition**

## CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ASSUMPTIONS	3
PURPOSE OF THE TEST	4
TARGET LANGUAGE USE SITUATION	4
TOPICS	4
DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST FOR LEVELS 1-3	4
1. READING SECTION	5
2. LISTENING SECTION	7
3. WRITING SECTION	10
4. SPEAKING SECTION	13
DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST FOR LEVEL 4	17
1. READING SECTION	17
2. LISTENING SECTION	19
3. WRITING SECTION	21
4. SPEAKING SECTION	23

## ASSUMPTIONS

1. The Bulgarian English Language Test Specifications, in accordance with NATO STANAG 6001, have been amended by the STANAG 6001 English Language Certification Team, at RAKOVSKI National Defense College, and represent the eleventh revised edition.
2. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test Specifications and the English Language Test variants have been designed in complete accordance with NATO STANAG 6001 and the descriptors of the language proficiency levels.
3. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test variants fully comply with the requirements of the BAT test (Benchmark Advisory Test), developed by NATO member countries.
4. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 Test variants measure language skills, **NOT** professional competence. The four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking – are tested separately for all levels.
5. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 English Language Test is a **multilevel** one **for Levels 1–3**.
6. The Bulgarian STANAG 6001 English Language 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.
7. **Level 5 is not tested in Bulgaria** as Level 5 is awarded to well-educated native speakers only.
8. Candidates are issued a certificate of English language competence in accordance with NATO STANAG 6001. The language skills are listed as follows: “listening”, “speaking”, “reading”, “writing”. The assigned levels appear on a band scale from 0 to 4 and could be: 0, 0+, 1, 1+, 2, 2+, 3, 3+ or 4. 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.

## **PURPOSE OF THE TEST**

Bulgaria's full membership in NATO and the Bulgarian Armed Forces participation in multinational military exercises, operations, and missions presuppose 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 in professional environment.

## **TARGET LANGUAGE USE SITUATION**

For Levels 1–3 the domain is broadly defined as “general English” and “workplace English”, which means using English for everyday communication 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 personal, public, and professional domains (e.g. daily routines, free time activities, the environment, military education and career), as well as other military, scientific and socio-political issues.

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

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST FOR LEVELS 1 – 3**

The test consists of four sections, testing the four language skills. The “reading” and “listening” tests are only computer delivered. For the “writing” skill, the candidate can choose between a paper-and-pen or a computer test.

The time allowed for each section is as follows:

Reading	135 minutes
Listening	60 minutes
Writing	120 minutes
Speaking	20 – 30 minutes

Each skill is assessed 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, finding specific information, identifying the main idea and the supporting details, 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;
- identifying separate time aspects;
- understanding explicit meaning;
- understanding implicit meaning;
- understanding cohesion and coherence of 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 the most common cultural references to major English-speaking countries;
- 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, names of people and places.

#### **0+ - memorized proficiency**

The candidate knows the alphabet, reads and understands numbers, isolated words and phrases, names of people, places, streets and shops. Can understand memorized or common phrases but cannot understand whole sentences.

**1 – survival**

The candidate shows sufficient comprehension in reading simple and short texts related to everyday survival and workplace situations such as: short notes, 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 easy and short authentic or edited texts, related to everyday survival and workplace situations, such as advertisements and short biographical facts. Can experience difficulties in understanding longer factual texts, including detailed descriptions of people, places and objects, as well as narrations about current, past, and future events.

**2 – functional**

The candidate understands authentic or edited texts covering familiar common topics. Can comprehend straightforward, factual texts describing people, places and objects in detail; 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 fully understands concrete, factual authentic or edited texts on familiar topics. Can also understand more complex authentic texts on general and professional topics. The candidate can also understand vocabulary on concrete and abstract topics from authentic periodicals, personal and job-related correspondence. Can easily recognize the main idea of a text and discriminate between main idea and specific details, can also draw conclusions from texts on unfamiliar topics.

**3 – professional**

The candidate demonstrates very 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. Can determine the author's opinion and can read "between the lines". Apprehends official policy

presentation and argumentation.

<b>TASK TYPES</b>	Multiple-choice questions with 4 options.
<b>NUMBER OF ITEMS</b>	about 60 items
<b>TIME</b>	135 minutes
<b>TEXT TYPES</b>	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 taken from the sphere of politics, economics, culture, science, and technology.
<b>LENGTH OF TEXTS</b>	The total number of words of all texts in the Reading Section for Levels 1-3 is approximately 3500.
<b>RUBRICS</b>	Before the start of the READING SECTION, all candidates are given detailed oral instructions in Bulgarian. The task rubrics are written in English. They inform the candidates about the text type of the task.
<b>MARKING SCHEME</b>	<p>Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. A base level, indicated by a whole number (1, 2 or 3), is achieved if 70% of the questions for the level are answered correctly. A plus level (level +) is awarded if 50% of the questions for the next higher level are answered correctly.</p> <p><b>If a candidate is rated at a given level on this scale, it is assumed that he/she has attained all preceding lower levels.</b> For example, Level 3 is achieved 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.</p>

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

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE LISTENING PROFICIENCY LEVELS 0 – 3**

<b>0 – no proficiency</b>	The candidate has no practical ability to comprehend communication. Understanding is difficult and limited to occasional isolated words and/or short memorized utterances.
<b>0 + - memorized proficiency</b>	The candidate understands separate words and/or short common phrases and sentences necessary to survive in a foreign language environment. Needs repetition and pauses, as well as simplifying the language.
<b>1 – survival</b>	The candidate understands common familiar phrases and short simple sentences related to surviving in English-speaking 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.
<b>1+ — survival +</b>	The candidate understands short texts on everyday job-related and social topics. Can understand not only dialogues, based on short questions and answers, but also longer conversations on concrete topics. Shows limited understanding of texts related to descriptions of people, places, or objects; as well as 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, can follow main points of a discussion or a speech in his/her professional field, can 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 informal speech on everyday, social, and general job-related topics. Can understand not only texts on various concrete topics related to descriptions of people, places, or objects; as well as narrations of current, past and future events, but also a lot of formal speech texts from the mass media, as well as talks and lectures on general and professional topics. Can partially follow the main parts of a discussion or other text on professional topics.

## **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 cause-and-effect links of events. The candidate can fairly accurately follow opinion argumentation and hypothesizing; can understand official policy presentation and interpretation. Can well differentiate between various styles. Can comprehend high-frequency idioms. Can recognize the speaker's attitude towards the subject matter.

## **TASK TYPES**

Multiple-choice questions (4 options).

## **NUMBER OF ITEMS**

about 60 items

## **TIME**

60 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

Before the start of the LISTENING SECTION, all candidates are given detailed oral instructions in Bulgarian. The task rubrics are written in English. Candidates read the task rubrics by themselves and determine the speed of their work individually, within the time stipulated for the test. The time to read the rubric and the task is fixed, depending on the level tested and the task type.

There is only one task per each recording.  
Candidates listen to the recordings once only.

## MARKING SCHEME

Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. A base level, indicated by a whole number (1, 2 or 3), is achieved if 70% of the questions for the level are answered correctly. A plus level (level +) is awarded if 50% of the questions for the next higher level are answered correctly.

**If a candidate is rated at a given level on this scale, it is assumed that he/she has attained all preceding lower levels.** For example, Level 3 is achieved 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 the consequences of events;
- describing activities and processes;
- describing changes over a period of time;
- narrating a sequence of events;
- explaining cause-and-effect processes;
- presenting an opinion through offering 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**

<b>0 – no proficiency</b>	The candidate has no practical proficiency to communicate in written form.
<b>0 + - memorized proficiency</b>	The candidate can write letters, numbers, dates, personal names, address, nationality, etc. in a registration form. Can write memorized words and phrases, often with some mistakes. Cannot express ideas clearly at sentence level.
<b>1 – survival</b>	The candidate can communicate by writing short personal notes, postcards, short informal letters, phone messages, invitations, short descriptions and narration. Conveys thoughts on a given topic through short, simple sentences and phrases. Uses basic grammatical structures and high frequency vocabulary. Frequent errors in spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation often distort meaning.
<b>1+ — survival +</b>	The candidate can communicate by writing short personal correspondence – notes, letters, postcards, phone messages, invitations, as well as by filling in registration forms. Can write routine workplace correspondence but is not good enough in stating facts; giving instructions; describing people, places and objects; and narrating past, current, and future events. May have difficulties in linking sentences in a complete paragraph. Errors in spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation may sometimes distort meaning.
<b>2 – functional</b>	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, present, and future activities in complete logical paragraphs. Can use basic cohesive devices 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 concrete 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 (formal and informal) and routine workplace correspondence. Can give details when narrating events, describing, stating facts, comparing things or giving instructions. Can express opinion on abstract and professional topics but with certain difficulty and inconsistency. Not always uses the appropriate vocabulary and punctuation, and rarely uses complex grammatical structures correctly.

**3 – professional**

The candidate is able to write complete coherent texts on social and professional topics. Can write effectively formal and informal correspondence. Can express opinion on abstract and professional topics. Can convey main ideas and supporting facts, using a wide range of cohesive devices. Can use appropriate style and register to comment on a topic, give arguments to support opinion, agree/disagree with a statement, analyze, hypothesize, give detailed explanations / narration / description. Conveys messages accurately, using appropriate vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, and correct punctuation. Errors in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation are occasional and do not interfere with comprehension.

**NUMBER OF TASKS**

To achieve Level 1, a candidate will have to complete **two** Level 1 tasks.  
To achieve Level 2, a candidate will have to complete one of the Level 1 tasks and one of the Level 2 tasks – on a civilian or military subject.  
To achieve Level 3, a candidate will have to complete one of the Level 1 tasks, one of the Level 2 tasks, and one of the Level 3 tasks – military or civilian.

**TIME**

120 minutes

**TYPES OF TASKS**

**Level 1 tasks:** a short text, e.g. a short note or message, a greeting card, a short e-mail, a memo of about **50 – 80** words.

**Level 2 tasks:** a coherent text on a given topic, e.g. description, narration, report, letter or e-mail of about **150 – 200** words.

**Level 3 tasks:** detailed commentary on a given topic, argumentation of an opinion or position, interpretation of a quote, agreement / disagreement with a statement of about **300 – 350** words.

## RUBRICS

The instructions for Level 1 and 2 tasks are in Bulgarian. The instructions for Level 3 tasks are in English.

The rubrics 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 raters, using a standard assessment scale, based on the STANAG 6001 language descriptors. In case of different marks, given by the two raters, the paper will be assessed by other members of the examination board or by experts from the HRDM Directorate at the Ministry of Defense, with a Master's Degree in English Philology.

Papers are assessed according to the following criteria: task completion, textual organization, vocabulary and grammar, style and register, spelling and punctuation. Candidates are assigned **Level 0** for a given task if there is no task completion or there is deviation from the topic.

## 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 use efficiently the target language to fulfill a number of communicative tasks through various discourse patterns and strategies, appropriate grammatical structures and vocabulary (relevant to the tested proficiency level), 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;
- eliciting information about people, objects and events;
- expressing likes and dislikes;
- expressing opinions, intentions, attitudes, moods, emotions;
- hypothesizing;
- giving advice on how a situation or a problem should be solved;
- speculating on future events and their consequences;
- 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 proficiency** The candidate has limited proficiency for oral communication only in everyday survival situations. Can use short memorized words and phrases, such as greetings, personal data, numbers, adverbs of time, objects. Attempts to maintain conversation at sentence level usually fail. Pronunciation, stress and intonation are often wrong and hamper understanding.
- 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 often distort meaning.
- 1+ — survival +** The candidate can participate in communication on everyday topics. Can begin, maintain, and close short conversations by asking and answering simple questions. Finds difficulties in holding longer conversations even on concrete topics. Communicates in strings of sentences but cannot link them into paragraphs. Can easily give detailed biographical information; request help, information or clarification; express agreement, disagreement or confirmation. Finds it difficult to describe people, places, and objects; narrate present, past and future activities; state facts, compare and contrast; give instructions and directions. Frequent errors in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar sometimes distort meaning.
- 2 – functional** The candidate can talk on concrete topics in everyday social and workplace situations. Can give detailed descriptions of people, places, and objects; narrate present, past and future events, while successfully linking sentences in short paragraphs with the help of common cohesive devices. Can state facts, compare

and contrast; give instructions and directions. Can ask with ease various questions on everyday and job-related topics. 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 the use of more specific vocabulary may sound unusual or imprecise.

## **2 + — functional +**

The candidate can communicate in formal and informal conversations for practical, social, and professional needs. Can speak on social and professional topics but with certain difficulty and inconsistency. Can effectively describe people, places, and objects; narrate present, past and future events, state facts, compare and contrast, give detailed instructions and directions. Finds it difficult to clarify or justify decisions, respond to challenges, and support opinions. The candidate is not effective enough to participate in meetings, discussions, workshops, and seminars on unfamiliar topics. Can talk about abstract notions and discuss complex issues but rarely uses abstract vocabulary precisely and usually makes mistakes with complex, less common grammatical structures.

## **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 and justifying decisions, responding to challenges, supporting opinions, stating and defending official policy. Demonstrates language competence when conducting meetings / discussions / workshops / seminars, 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. Manages to make well-grounded statements in various subject areas.

## **TYPES OF TASKS**

The Speaking Section consists of three stages.

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

**2. Main part** – 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:

– everyday topics, like place of birth, family, traveling, free time and leisure activities, sports, environment;

– military and professional topics, such as 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. Asking questions** – The candidate chooses a card with a topic on it and is expected to ask the examiner relevant questions. The candidate is assessed on his/her ability to make correctly structured questions. For higher levels, candidates are assessed on the variety and appropriateness of the questions asked.

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

**2.6. Comparison and contrast** – The candidate is asked to compare and contrast people, places, events, facts and give arguments for or against (for higher levels).

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

**2.8. Role play** – The role play can be performed as a dialogue with one of the examiners or as a monologue. 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. Expressing opinion and giving comments** – The candidate is asked to give comments on a topic, state his/her personal opinion or official policy, supporting it with appropriate facts and examples.

**2.10. Hypothesizing** – The candidate is introduced into an imaginary situation and asked to hypothesize about it.

**2.11. Explaining abstract notions** – The candidate presents his/her interpretation of simple abstract notions (e.g. success, ambition, happiness, faith, etc.).

**2.12. Interpreting quotations** – The candidate is asked to read aloud and then give his/her interpretation and comments on a quote 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 interviewers, using a marking scheme developed in accordance with STANAG 6001 descriptors. The following criteria are taken into account: communicative skills, control of vocabulary and grammatical structures, register, style, pronunciation, and fluency.

The candidate's political, ethnic, religious, etc. views on the discussed topics are **not** subject to assessment.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE LEVEL 4 TEST**

The Level 4 test is only paper-based. It consists of four sections, testing the four language skills.

The time allowed for each section is as follows:

Reading	120 minutes
Listening	about 40 minutes
Writing	120 minutes
Speaking	30 – 40 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, within a limited period of time, the ability to recognize the cohesive devices building the text, to draw inferences and conclusions based on the text, to detect and interpret the subtle meanings of the linguistic units, as well as follow sudden shifts in the author's thoughts and ideas.

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 the author's viewpoint and attitude;
- understanding a variety of cultural references;
- recognizing stylistic nuances.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE READING PROFICIENCY LEVEL 4**

### **3 + — professional +**

The candidate is able to read and fully understand a variety of authentic texts in English. Can also comprehend all styles and forms of the written language with very high difficulty, used for professional purposes, such as newspapers, magazines and professional literature, written for the well-educated reader. Usually demonstrates understanding of highly abstract concepts and linguistic formulations, as well as texts on complex topics from general or their own specialized professional sphere of life. The candidate readily distinguishes between different nuances of written language, recognizes emotional overtones and can “read between the lines”. Recognizes different styles and stylistic nuances in texts on various topics and problems of general nature; can follow some unpredictable turns of the author's thought.

### **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 comprehend explicit and implicit meaning. Recognizes the subtle meaning of lexical units and complex grammatical structures. Demonstrates firm grasp of stylistic nuances and register in texts on general issues from various areas. Can easily follow the sudden turns in the author's thoughts and ideas. Easily recognizes emotional overtones in a text. The candidate's speed of reading is similar to that of an educated native speaker.

### **TASK TYPES**

Multiple-choice questions (with 3 or 4 options), short-answer questions, gap-fill texts, sentence completion,

multiple-matching tasks; reading comprehension tasks followed by an oral analysis of the text before the examination board, etc.

<b>NUMBER OF ITEMS</b>	about 25 items
<b>TIME</b>	120 minutes
<b>TEXT TYPES</b>	All texts are from authentic sources: newspapers and magazines, reports, accounts, manuals/guidebooks, documents, analyses, lectures, military briefings, politics, economics, culture, science and technologies.
<b>LENGTH OF TEXTS</b>	The total number of words of all texts in the Reading Section for level 4 is approximately 3000.
<b>RUBRICS</b>	The instructions and the example for each task are in English. They inform the candidates about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the task type;</li><li>• what they are required to do and how to mark the right answer.</li></ul>
<b>MARKING SCHEME</b>	Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. Level 4 is achieved if 70% of the questions are answered correctly. Level 3+ is assigned if the candidate has got at least 50% correct answers to the questions for level 4.

## **LISTENING SECTION**

### **LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED**

This section tests the candidate's ability to demonstrate extremely good listening comprehension of various complex texts with a variety of communicative goals. 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 audiences.

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 the 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 registers, tones and stylistic nuances, addressed to specific audiences;
- general comprehension of dialect forms.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE LISTENING PROFICIENCY LEVEL 4**

### **3 + — professional +**

The candidate can understand formal and informal speech on practical, social and professional topics from various fields of competence. Candidates can easily follow extended discourse, used for personal and professional purposes, such as justifying opinions and decisions, responding to challenges and defending policy. Candidates understand a significant amount of highly sophisticated language, produced by well-educated native speakers of English, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics. They usually demonstrate good understanding of highly abstract concepts, containing specific terminology, idiomatic expressions and cultural references. Understands nuances of the meaning of lexical units, as well as complex grammatical structures. Recognizes styles and stylistic nuances as well as cultural references.

### **4 – expert**

The candidate is extremely proficient in understanding and recognizing all styles of speech for professional purposes, delivered at a speed typical of native speakers. Understands highly varied and complicated speech on unfamiliar general or professional topics. Can understand language specifically tailored for various types of audiences, including persuading and counseling at a highly formal level, 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 apprehending slang or dialects.

<b>TASK TYPES</b>	Multiple-choice questions (with 3 or 4 options), short-answer questions, sentence completion, summary gap filling, multiple matching, etc. There is only one task type per each text.
<b>NUMBER OF ITEMS</b>	about 20 items
<b>TIME</b>	about 40 minutes
<b>TEXT TYPES</b>	All texts are from authentic sources. They can be monologues, dialogues or discussions and could include commentaries, analyses, interviews, briefings, radio and TV broadcasts, lectures, reports, speeches, etc.
<b>RUBRICS</b>	<p>All instructions and the example, accompanying each task, are in English. The recording, once started, does not stop until the test is over. Candidates listen to the recording only once.</p> <p>The instructions inform candidates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the type of text they are going to listen to;</li> <li>• what they are expected to do and how to mark the right answer;</li> <li>• the length of the pauses and the time they are given to read through the questions on the Answer Sheet;</li> <li>• how much time they are given to check their answers.</li> </ul>
<b>MARKING SCHEME</b>	Candidates are awarded one point for each correct answer. Level 4 is sustained if 70% of the questions are answered correctly. Level 3+ is assigned if the candidate has got at least 50% correct answers to the questions for level 4.

## **WRITING SECTION**

### **LANGUAGE SUB-SKILLS TESTED**

The section assesses the communicative ability of the candidate to write fluently and effectively on professional and general topics, including unfamiliar ones. The candidate is expected to produce coherent and meaningful texts, and to 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, while addressing specific audiences;
- presenting official policy;
- analyzing and hypothesizing on a certain situation;
- persuading that a certain viewpoint is important and correct;
- elaborating on abstract ideas and concepts.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITING PROFICIENCY LEVEL 4

### 3 + — professional +

The candidate can produce effectively all types of formal and informal correspondence and papers on practical, social and professional topics from unfamiliar and highly specialized spheres of life. Can easily use the written language to justify opinions and defend policies, to produce effective argumentation and analysis. The candidate is able to use complex grammatical structures and abstract linguistic formulations. Usually organizes extended texts well, conveys meaning effectively and produces writing that is stylistically appropriate for the specific audience and topic. Sometimes may not be able to use syntactic and rhetorical variety.

### 4 – expert

The candidate is extremely proficient in writing texts for all professional purposes, including texts stating official policy or personal opinion, 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

120 minutes

### TYPES OF TASKS

The Writing Section consist of:

**Task 1:** a commentary on a given topic or quotation; supported opinion or official policy argumentation; agreement / disagreement with a statement; analysis;

hypothesis; detailed explanation/ narration/ description.

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

Each task must contain a minimum of 400 words.

## **TOPICS**

The topics cover military professional area, as well as areas such as 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, range and appropriateness 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 with regard to the target audience; to employ a variety of discourse patterns and strategies, as well as grammatical structures, a wide range of 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**

**3 + — professional +** Candidates can effectively participate in any kind of formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics from their and other fields of expertise. Candidates can easily use the English language to justify opinions and defend policies, give arguments and make analyses, using abstract linguistic formulations and complex grammatical structures. Usually organize discourse well, convey meanings effectively and use styles appropriate for the topic and audience. However, sometimes they may not be able to use the right tone and vocabulary in their communication with native speakers from various strata of society and age groups.

**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, defend effectively one's point of view, elaborate on various abstract concepts and ideas. Conveys subtle meaning effectively, using rich, precise and appropriate vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. Organizes discourse very 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. Main part** – The following sub-stages can be included:

**2.1. Expressing opinion and giving comments** –Candidates are shown a short video on a topical issue. They are expected to demonstrate the ability to analyze, support, and comment extensively on his/her personal opinion or official policy, using appropriate facts and examples.

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

**2.3. 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.

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

**2.5. Interpreting idiomatic expressions** – The candidate is asked to pick two cards with English idioms and is expected to give examples, illustrating their meaning in context.

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

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

**TIME**

30 – 40 minutes

**MARKING SCHEME**

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

If possible, an educated native speaker is included in the examination board.