

# UPSC

## (Union Public Service Commission)

### Civil Services Exam

#### Introduction:

Embarking on a journey to join the civil services through the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination is a noble pursuit that demands dedication, perseverance, and strategic planning. As one of the most challenging competitive exams in India, UPSC is a gateway to prestigious positions in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and other esteemed government services. In this blog, we will delve into the intricacies of the UPSC exam, providing a roadmap for aspirants to navigate this challenging but rewarding path.

#### What is UPSC:

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is a constitutional body that conducts the Civil Services Examination (CSE) annually. The exam aims to recruit candidates for various civil services positions in the Government of India. UPSC assesses candidates' aptitude, knowledge, and skills through a rigorous three-stage selection process, comprising the Preliminary Examination, Main Examination, and Interview.

#### How to Prepare for UPSC:

Preparing for UPSC requires a disciplined and structured approach. Begin by understanding the exam pattern, syllabus, and eligibility criteria. Devise a study plan that includes comprehensive coverage of subjects, regular revision, and mock tests. Focus on current affairs, as they play a crucial role in both the Preliminary and Main exams. Joining a reputed coaching institute or relying on self-study are common strategies, but consistency and perseverance are key.

#### Posts Offered

##### Group A

- \* Indian Administrative Service
- \* Indian Foreign Service
- \* Indian Police Service
- \* Indian P & T Accounts & Finance Service, Group 'A'
- \* Indian Audit and Accounts Service, Group 'A'
- \* Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise), Group 'A'

- \* Indian Defense Accounts Service, Group 'A'
- \* Indian Revenue Service (I.T.), Group 'A'
- \* Indian Ordnance Factories Service, Group 'A' (Assistant Works Manager, Administration)
- \* Indian Postal Service, Group 'A'
- \* Indian Civil Accounts Service, Group 'A'
- \* Indian Railway Traffic Service, Group 'A'
- \* Indian Railway Accounts Service, Group 'A'
- \* 14. Indian Railway Personnel Service, Group 'A'
- \* 15. Post of Assistant Security Commissioner in Railway Protection Force, GroupA
- \* 16. Indian Defense Estates Service, Group 'A'
- \* 17. Indian Information Service (Junior Grade), Group 'A'
- \* 18. Indian Trade Service, Group 'A' (Gr. III)
- \* 19. Indian Corporate Law Service, Group "A".

#### **GROUP B**

- \* 20. Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Service, Group 'B' (Section Officer's Grade)
- \* 21. Delhi, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli Civil Service, Group 'B'
- \* 22. Delhi, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli Police Service, Group 'B'
- \* 23. Pondicherry Civil Service, Group 'B'
- \* 24. Pondicherry Police Service, Group 'B'

#### **SELECTION PROCESS**

- **Notification – Feb**
- **Civil Services Prelim Exam – May**
- **Civil Services Mains – Oct -Nov**
- **Interview – March**

- **Results – May**

#### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Category	Minimum Age	Relaxation	Maximum Age
General	21 Years	No Relaxation	32 Years
OBC	21 Years	32+3 Years	35 Years
SC/ST	21 Years	32+5 Years	37 Years
Physically disabled (Blind, Deaf-mute, Orthopedically handicapped)	21 Years	32+10 Years	42 Years
	General: 21 Years	32+3 Years	35 Years
Ex-serviceman discharged from duty due to disability	OBC: 21 Years	32+3+3 Years	38 Years
	SC/ST: 21 Years	32+3+5 Years	40 Years
	General: 21 Years	32+5 Years	37 Years
Ex-serviceman discharged after 5 years duty	OBC: 21 Years	32+5+3 Years	40 Years
	SC/ST: 21 Years	32+5+5 Years	42 Years

For the various categories of SC/ST/OBC/others, various age limit relaxations have been provided which we will look into in the subsequent section.

## UPSC IAS Eligibility Criteria: Number of Attempts

For candidates belonging to different categories, the provision for number of attempts to sit for UPSC exam is as follows:

- The candidates belonging to the general category are granted a maximum of 6 attempts.
- For the OBC candidates, a maximum of **9 attempts**, & for the ST/SC candidates, an **unlimited number of attempts**.
- The maximum number of attempts for the category of PwBD General and OBC candidates is **9 attempts**, whereas, for the ones from the ST/SC categories, the **number of attempts is unlimited**.

To provide a better perspective, I have mentioned all the information about the number of attempts in the table below.

Category	Maximum Age (should not have touched the age of:)
General	6
OBC	9
SC/ST	As many as he/she can until upper age limit reached
Physically disabled (Blind, Deaf-mute, Orthopedically handicapped)	General: 9 attempts OBC: 9 SC/ST: As many as he/she can until upper age limit reached
Ex-serviceman discharged from duty due to disability	As per categories mentioned above, i.e., Gen, OBC, SC/ST, Disabled
Ex-serviceman discharged after 5 years duty	As per categories mentioned above, i.e., Gen, OBC, SC/ST, Disabled

Knowing more about trends in [UPSC cutoff](#) in last few years will help you assess the difficulty level of this exam.

# Duties of IAS officer

- \* The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is the administrative civil service of the executive branch of the Govt. of the Republic of India.
- \* The officers of the IAS play a major role in managing the bureaucracy of both the Union Government (Central Government) and the state governments, with its officers holding strategic posts across the country.
- \* Functions of IAS Officer:
  - \* Policy Formulation
  - \* Policy Implementation
  - \* Civil administration
  - \* Advisors to Ministers
  - \* Managing bureaucracy (Center and State)

## DUTIES OF IPS OFFICER

- \* To fulfill duties in the areas of **maintenance of public peace and order**, crime prevention, investigation, and detection, collection of intelligence, VIP security, counter-terrorism, border policing, railway policing, tackling smuggling, drug trafficking, economic offences, corruption in public life, disaster management, enforcement of socio-economic legislation, bio-diversity and protection of environmental laws etc.
- \* Leading and commanding the Indian Intelligence Agencies like Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI), Crime Investigation Department (CID) etc., Indian Federal Law Enforcement Agencies, Civil and Armed Police Forces in all the states and union territories.

- \* Leading and commanding the Para-Military Forces of India (PMF) which include the Central Police Organizations (CPO) and Central Paramilitary Forces (CPF) such as Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), National Security Guard (NSG), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Vigilance Organizations, Indian Federal Law Enforcement Agencies.

## Exam Pattern for UPSC:

The UPSC exam consists of three stages:

1. **Preliminary Examination:** Objective-type questions testing general awareness and aptitude.
2. **Main Examination:** Descriptive papers assessing candidates' in-depth knowledge of chosen subjects.
3. **Interview (Personality Test):** Evaluating candidates' communication skills, leadership qualities, and overall personality.

## Prelims Syllabus

The UPSC Prelims syllabus can be divided into two parts:

1. General Studies Paper I
2. CSAT or General Studies Paper-II

UPSC Prelims Syllabus 2024	Maximum Marks	Duration Of Exam
<b>General Studies Paper – I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events of national and international importance.</li> <li>• History of India and Indian National Movement.</li> <li>• Indian and World Geography-Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the World.</li> <li>• Indian Polity and Governance – Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.</li> <li>• Economic and Social Development – Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector initiatives, etc.</li> <li>• General issues on Environmental Ecology, Biodiversity and Climate Change – that do not require subject specialisation</li> <li>• General Science</li> </ul>	200 Marks	2 Hours
<b>CSAT/ General Studies Paper-II</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehension</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills including communication skills</li> </ul>	200 Marks	2 Hours

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical reasoning and analytical ability</li> <li>• Decision-making and problem solving</li> <li>• General mental ability</li> <li>• Basic numeracy (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude, etc.) – Class X level)</li> <li>• Data interpretation (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency etc. – Class X level)</li> </ul>		
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- \* Exam is conducted in May each year.
- \* Multiple Choice, Objective Test
- \* Negative Marking
  - \* Penalty for wrong answers is 1/3rd i.e. 0.33 of the marks assigned to that question will be deducted as penalty
  - \* If a candidate gives more than one answer, it will be treated as a wrong answer
  - \* If a question is left blank i.e. no answer is given by the candidate, there will be no penalty for that question
- \* Paper 1 Passing Criteria – 12 to 13 times of the No. of Vacancies
- \* Paper 2 Passing Criteria – 33% Marks out of 200 Marks to qualify
- \* Results are expected in 30- 45 days

## Mains Exam Pattern

- \* Eligibility Criteria - Those who clear the Prelims Exam are eligible to appear for the Mains Exam
  - \* Forms for the Mains exam will be sent by UPSC
  - \* **Civil Services (Main) Examination** is the ‘written stage’ of the examination. It consists of nine papers of which, marks of only seven papers are counted in deciding the final merit list. In the remaining two papers, a candidate has to secure the minimum qualifying marks decided by UPSC each year. The question papers for the Mains examination are of conventional (essay) type.

## UPSC Mains Pattern

Paper	Subject	Duration	Total marks
<b>Paper A</b>	Compulsory Indian language	3 hours	300 (Qualifying)
<b>Paper B</b>	English	3 hours	300 (Qualifying)
<b>Paper I</b>	Essay	3 hours	250
<b>Paper II</b>	General Studies I – Indian Heritage & Culture, History & Geography of the World & Society	3 hours	250
<b>Paper III</b>	General Studies II – Governance, Constitution, Welfare Initiatives, Social Justice & International Relations	3 hours	250
<b>Paper IV</b>	General Studies III – Technology, Economic Development, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Security & Disaster Management	3 hours	250
<b>Paper V</b>	General Studies IV – Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude	3 hours	250
<b>Paper VI</b>	Optional Subject – Paper I	3 hours	250
<b>Paper VII</b>	Optional Subject – Paper II	3 hours	250

## Mains Exam Paper Pattern

## UPSC Mains Syllabus

### Language Papers (Indian language and English)

Although both these papers are only qualifying in nature, candidates should not be complacent as if they fail to score below 25% in either of them, their remaining answer sheets won't even be evaluated. Both the papers follow a similar pattern of questions as given below.

- One essay question for 100 marks – candidates have to select one out of a few given topics
- Reading comprehension and related five-six questions for a total of 60 marks
- Precis writing for 60 marks – the answer sheet will have a separate grid structure where this has to be written
- Translation from English to chosen language for 20 marks
- Translation from chosen language to English for 20 marks
- Grammar and basic language usage such as synonyms, sentence correction etc. for a total of 40 marks

UPSC Mains paper gives an opportunity to candidates where can opt for subjects under a few sections. This acts as an advantage for the aspirants can they can pick their strengths and increase their overall scores. To check out the list of CSE Subjects in the mains examination, candidates can visit the linked article.

## Essay

The UPSC mains syllabus does not have any prescribed syllabus for the essay paper as such. As per the UPSC, “*Candidates are expected to keep closely to the subject of the essay to arrange their ideas in an orderly fashion, and to write concisely. Credit will be given for effective and exact expression.*”

Candidates are required to write two essays from a list of given topics for a combined total of 250 marks.

## GS Paper 1

- Indian Culture – Salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.
- Modern Indian History
  - Significant events, issues, personalities during the middle of the eighteenth century (1750s) until the present.
  - Different stages and important contributors and contributions from various parts of the country in ‘The Freedom Struggle’.
  - Post-independence consolidation and reorganisation within the country.
- History of the world
- Events, forms and effect on society since the 18th century (world wars, industrial revolution, colonisation, redrawal of national boundaries, decolonisation, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism, etc.)
- Society
  - Indian society and diversity – Salient aspects.
  - Role of women and women’s organisations, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanisation, their problems and remedies.
  - Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.
  - Effects of globalisation on Indian society.
- Geography

- Distribution of key natural resources across the world including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent; factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world including India.
- Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
- Geographical features and their location, changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and polar ice caps) and, in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.
- Salient features of world's physical geography.

Given below are the links that can help candidates understand the UPSC Mains syllabus for the GS Paper 1 and strategize a plan for preparation:

## GS Paper II

- Indian Constitution
  - historical underpinnings,
  - evolution, features
  - amendments, significant provisions
  - basic structure doctrine
  - Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.
- Separation of powers between various organs, dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions
- Structure, organisation and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary
- Parliament and State Legislatures
  - structure, functioning
  - conduct of business
  - powers & privileges and issues arising out of these
- Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.
- Salient features of the Representation of People's Act
- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.
- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
- Government policies and interventions aimed at development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- Development processes and the development industry – the role of NGOs, **Self Help Groups**, various groups and associations, institutional and other stakeholders.
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and the States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources
- Issues relating to poverty and hunger

- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures
- Role of civil services in a democracy
- International Relations
  - India and its neighbourhood – International relations
  - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting the Indian interests
  - Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.
  - Important International institutions, agencies, their structure and mandates

Complement your preparation for Mains GS 2 paper with the links given below:

## GS Paper III

- Economy
  - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment.
  - Government Budgeting.
  - Inclusive growth and associated issues/challenges
  - Effects of liberalisation on the economy (post 1991 changes), changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.
  - Infrastructure – Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.
  - Investment models (PPP etc)
  - Agriculture
    - Major cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers
    - Economics of animal rearing.
    - Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.
    - Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions
    - Land reforms in India.
- Science and Technology
  - Recent developments and their applications and effects in everyday life
  - Achievements of Indians in science & technology.
  - Indigenisation of technology and developing new technology.
  - General awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nanotechnology, bio-technology
  - Issues relating to intellectual property rights
- Environment
  - Conservation,

- Environmental pollution and degradation
  - Environmental impact assessment
- Disaster Management (Laws, Acts etc.)
- Security
  - Challenges to internal security (external state and non-state actors)
  - Linkages between development and spread of extremism
  - Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges,
  - Basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention
  - Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organised crime with terrorism
  - Various Security forces and agencies and their mandates

For a better understanding of the GS 3 paper in detail, along with the strategy to be followed for UPSC mains paper preparation, candidates can refer to the links given below:

## GS Paper IV

This Ethics paper in the UPSC mains syllabus includes questions to check the candidates' attitude and approach to issues relating to integrity and probity in public life and his/her problem-solving approach to various societal issues. Questions may utilise the case study approach to determine these aspects and the exam covers area as mentioned in the syllabus given below.

- Ethics and Human Interface
  - Essence of Ethics, Determinants and Consequences of Ethics in Human Interaction
  - Dimensions of Ethics
  - Ethics in private and public relationships
  - Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators
  - Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating moral and ethical values
- Attitude
  - Content, structure and function of attitude
  - Influence of attitude in thought and behaviour
  - Relation of attitude to thought and behaviour
  - Moral and Political attitudes
  - Social influence and persuasion
- Aptitude
  - Aptitude and foundational values of Civil Service
  - Integrity
  - Impartiality and non-partisanship
  - Objectivity

- Dedication to public service
- Empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections of the society
- Emotional Intelligence
  - Concepts of emotional intelligence
  - Utility and application of emotional intelligence in administration and governance
- Contributions of Thinkers and Philosophers
  - Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and the world to the concepts of morality
- Public/Civil Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration
  - Status and associated problems
  - Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions
  - Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance
  - Accountability and ethical governance
  - Strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance
  - Ethical Issues in international relations and funding
  - Corporate governance
- Probity in Governance
  - Concept of public service
  - The philosophical basis of governance and probity
  - Information sharing and transparency in government
  - Right to Information
  - Codes of ethics
  - Codes of Conduct
  - Citizen's Charters
  - Work culture
  - Quality of service delivery
  - Utilization of public funds
  - Challenges of corruption

Also, refer to the following related links:

## Optional Subject (Two Papers)

A candidate has to choose one optional subject (out of a total of 48 options). There will be two papers for a combined total of 500 marks. Selecting the [\\_](#) for UPSC mains should be a careful and considered decision. Refer to the link given above to understand which optional subject will be the best for you.

The IAS mains syllabus is comprehensive and the questions asked in the CSE require not only a certain depth of understanding but also the ability to present the answers in a coherent manner. The syllabus of UPSC mains comprises both static and dynamic aspects. Hence, it is essential for the IAS aspirants to track and sort the current affairs under appropriate papers/headings as per the UPSC mains syllabus.

The Mains exam is for a total of 1750 marks (7 papers \* 250 marks) and,

## **Interview : 275**

- \* Only those Qualifying the Mains Exam will be summoned for the interview @ Dholpur House, New Delhi
- \* The number of candidates to be summoned for interview will be about twice the number of vacancies to be filled
- \* Interview will be for 30 – 60 minutes approximately
- \* Interview panel would include – Retired Judge, Retired Colonel, Ex-Vice Chancellor of University, Subject Matter Expert etc.

### **SKILLS JUDGED IN THE INTERVIEW ROUND**

- \* Smart & Witty Answers
- \* Clarity of expression
- \* Grasp of narrative and argument
- \* Reasoning ability
- \* Appreciation of different points of view
- \* Awareness and concern for socio-economic problems, ranges and depth of interests and personal attributes relevant to interaction with people
- \* In-depth knowledge of Optional Subjects

### **Sample question**

- \* "Why do you want to become a Civil Servant?"
- \* "What are the problems faced by wheat cultivators in your state?"
- \* "Is there a law in physics, which is relevant to administration?"
- \* "Don't you think you can serve your country better by remaining a doctor and treating poor patients? Why do you want to be a civil servant?"

## **Study Material**

The study material and test papers provided by EMGC are highly updated to the changes made by the Civil Service Commission. Provides IAS interactive video sessions to boost confidence among the aspirants. The EMGC CSE Coaching Academy conducts a Personality Development Program for the students to prepare them for the IAS Interview. They provide a weekly AS classes for UPSC for Political and Economics that is frequently asked in IAS Prelims and Mains Examination. EMGC Coaching Center also provide practice paper for the students to improve Their understanding and clear their concepts

## TEST

- \* After undergoing rigorous training sessions, you would undergo 10 Tests per subject
- \* These tests would be of the same level as Civil Services Mains Exam. This helps you to get a hands-on experience of your progress
- \* Review of your performance would be done by our experienced faculty members.
- \* They would identify your grey areas & the areas where you require, extra /personalized coaching will be given.

## How EMGC Classes can Help:

EMGC classes offer a holistic approach to UPSC preparation. With experienced faculty, comprehensive study materials, and a focus on individual strengths and weaknesses, EMGC classes provide a supportive environment for aspirants to excel.

## Conclusion:

Embarking on the UPSC journey is a challenging yet transformative experience. Success in this exam requires dedication, strategic planning, and continuous effort. Understanding the exam pattern, eligibility criteria, and syllabus is crucial. Whether you choose to self-study or join coaching classes, consistency and perseverance will be your allies on the road to success. Best of luck to all UPSC aspirants!