

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

Civil Services Mains Examination (CSE) Syllabus

The UPSC Civil Services Mains Examination is the second stage of the prestigious civil services exam in India. It consists of nine descriptive papers, including four General Studies papers, an Essay, two language papers, and two optional subject papers. This stage tests a candidate's in-depth knowledge, analytical ability, and writing skills necessary for administrative responsibilities.

Qualifying Paper		
Paper	Subject	Marks
Paper-A	Indian Language (from Eighth Schedule of the Constitution)	300
Paper-B	English	300
Counted for Merit		
Paper	Subject	Marks
Paper-I	Essay	250
Paper-II	General Studies-1 (Indian Heritage & Culture, History & Geography of the World & Society)	250
Paper-III	General Studies-2 (Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice & International Relations)	250
Paper-IV	General Studies-3 (Technology, Economic Development, Biodiversity, Environment, Security & Disaster Management)	250
Paper-V	General Studies-4 (Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude)	250
Paper-VI	Optional Subject – Paper 1	250
Paper-VII	Optional Subject – Paper 2	250
Written Test Subtotal		1750
Interview (Personality Test)		275
Grand Total		2025

Note:

- The marks obtained in the two qualifying papers are not added for ranking purposes.
- Both qualifying papers are of 300 marks each. The minimum qualifying marks for these two papers are 25 percent (75 marks).
- The main examination papers are published simultaneously in both English and Hindi, but candidates are allowed to answer in any of the 22 languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Candidates must write the answers to all the papers of the main examination in the language they have indicated as their medium of examination in the Civil Services Examination form. An exception is made only for literature subjects, where the candidate writes the answers in the script of that language, even if it is not their chosen medium. For example, if a candidate with English as their medium chooses Hindi Literature as an optional subject, they will write their answers in Devanagari script (Hindi). In all other cases, candidates are not permitted to write the answers to different papers in different languages.

Paper -I

In this question paper, the candidate will have to write an essay on a specified topic. Candidates will be given a choice of topics and are expected to express their thoughts in a coherent and systematic manner, keeping their ideas relevant to the essay topic. Credit will be given for effective and precise expression.

Note: The essay paper is mainly divided into two parts (concrete and abstract). Candidates have to choose one topic from each of the four options given in each part, writing a total of two essays (125 marks each). The word limit for each essay is approximately 1000-1200 words.

Paper -II

General Studies Paper 1: Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society

1. Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.
2. Modern Indian history from about the middle of the 18th century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.
3. The Freedom Struggle- its various stages and important contributors/contributions from different parts of the country.
4. Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country.
5. History of the world will include events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.- their forms and effect on the society.
6. Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.
7. Role of women and women's organizations, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.
8. Effects of globalization on Indian society.
9. Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.
10. Salient features of world's physical geography.

11. 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).

12. Important geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, cyclones etc., geographical features and their location-changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

Paper -III

General Studies Paper 2: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations

1. Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
2. 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.
3. Separation of powers between various organs, dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.
4. Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.
5. Parliament and State legislatures- structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.
6. Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.
7. Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.
8. Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.
9. Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
10. Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
11. Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.
12. Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
13. Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
14. Issues relating to poverty and hunger.
15. Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.
16. Role of civil services in a democracy.
17. India and its neighborhood- relations.
18. Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
19. Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

20. Important International institutions, agencies and fora-their structure, mandate.

Paper -IV

General Studies Paper 3: Technology, Economic Development, Bio-diversity, Environment, Security & Disaster Management

1. Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.
2. Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.
3. Government Budgeting.
4. Major crops- 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.
5. 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; economics of animal-rearing.
6. Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.
7. Land reforms in India.
8. Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.
9. Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.
10. Investment models.
11. Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.
12. Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.
13. Awareness in the fields of IT, space, computers, robotics, Nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.
14. Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.
15. Disaster and disaster management.
16. Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
17. Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.
18. 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.
19. Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organized crime with terrorism.
20. Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Paper -V

General Studies 4: Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude

This paper will include questions to test the candidate's attitude and approach to issues relating to integrity, probity in public life and his problem-solving approach to various issues and conflicts faced by him in dealing with society. Questions may utilize the case study approach to determine these aspects. The following broad areas will be covered.

1. Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of ethics in human actions; 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 values.
2. Attitude: content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.
3. Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service-integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.
4. Emotional intelligence- concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
5. Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
6. Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and 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.
7. Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; 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.
8. Case Studies on above issues.

Paper -VI

Optional Subject – Paper 1

Paper -VII

Optional Subject – Paper 2

UPSC Civil Services Main Examination: Optional Subject List

Agriculture	Mathematics	Geography	Philosophy	Kannada	Punjabi
Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science	Civil Engineering	Geology	Bengali	Kashmiri	Sanskrit
Zoology	Mechanical Engineering	History		Konkani	Santhali
Botany	Electrical Engineering	Law	Dogri	Maithili	Sindhi
Medical Science	Anthropology	Management	Gujarati	Malayalam	Tamil
Chemistry	Psychology	Public Administration	Assamese	Manipuri	Telugu
Physics	Economics	Sociology	Nepali	Marathi	Odia
Statistics	Commerce & Accountancy	Political Science & IR	Hindi	Urdu	English

Paper 'A' (Qualifying -I)

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Hindi or any language included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution

One of the Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution is to be selected by the candidate for Paper 'A'.

This paper will not be compulsory for candidates residing in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim.

This paper carries a total of 300 marks, with a qualifying mark of 75 marks (25 percent).

The pattern of questions will broadly be as follows:

1. Comprehension of given passages
2. Précis Writing
3. Word usage and vocabulary
4. Short Essay
5. Translation from English to the Indian language and vice-versa

Question Paper - 'B' (Qualifying - II)

English Language

This question paper carries a total of 300 marks, with a qualifying mark of 75 marks (25 percent).

The pattern of questions will broadly be as follows.

1. Comprehension of given passages
2. Précis Writing
3. Usage and Vocabulary
4. Short Essay

Note:

The question papers in Indian languages and English (Paper 'A' and Paper 'B') will be of Matriculation (Class 10) or equivalent level, and only qualifying marks are required in these papers. The marks obtained in these papers will not be included in determining the rank.

Candidates are required to answer the qualifying English and Indian language papers in English and the respective Indian language only (unless otherwise specified in a particular question).

The essay, general studies, and optional subject papers of all candidates will be evaluated along with the qualifying Indian language and English papers. However, the essay, general studies, and optional subject papers will be considered only in the case of candidates who secure the minimum qualifying marks of 25 percent in the Indian language and 25 percent in English in these qualifying papers.