UPSC Civil Services Syllabus 2026 (Prelims & Mains)

UPSC Civil Services Examination 2026 · Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) · UPSC · All India · 2026

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Overview

Official UPSC Civil Services Examination 2026 syllabus and scheme from Examination Notice No. 05/2026-CSE (4 February 2026). The Preliminary examination (two objective papers) screens candidates for the Main examination of nine written papers, followed by a Personality Test. The syllabus is unchanged from 2025.

Important information

Item	Details
Stages	Preliminary (objective, screening) -> Main (written, 9 papers) -> Interview/ Personality Test
Prelims date	24 May 2026
Approximate vacancies	933 (including 33 for Persons with Benchmark Disability)
Negative marking (Prelims)	One-third (0.33) of the marks for that question per wrong answer; more than one answer counts as wrong; no penalty for a blank
GS Paper II (CSAT)	Qualifying — minimum 33%
Prelims marks	Screening only — not counted in the final merit
Candidates for Mains	About 12–13 times the vacancies
Candidates for Interview	About twice the vacancies
Total marks	Written 1750 + Personality Test 275 = 2025
Qualifying language papers	25% in Indian Language (Paper A) and 25% in English (Paper B); not counted for ranking
Medium	Prelims papers in Hindi and English; Mains (except Papers A and B) in any Eighth Schedule language or English

Exam pattern

Paper / Stage	Subjects	Questions	Marks	Duration
Prelims: GS Paper I	General Studies (objective)	—	200	2 hours
Prelims: GS Paper II (CSAT, qualifying 33%)	Comprehension, reasoning, decision making, basic numeracy (objective)	—	200	2 hours
Mains: Paper A (qualifying)	Indian Language	—	300	3 hours
Mains: Paper B (qualifying)	English	—	300	3 hours
Mains: Paper I	Essay	—	250	3 hours

Paper / Stage	Subjects	Questions	Marks	Duration
Mains: Papers II–V	General Studies I, II, III, IV (250 marks each)	—	1000	3 hours each
Mains: Papers VI–VII	Optional Subject Paper 1 and Paper 2 (250 marks each)	—	500	3 hours each
Interview / Personality Test	—	—	275	—

Detailed syllabus

1. Prelims: General Studies Paper I (200 marks)

- Current events of national and international importance
- History of India and Indian National Movement
- Indian and World Geography — physical, social, economic geography of India and the world
- Indian Polity and Governance — Constitution, political system, Panchayati Raj, public policy, rights issues
- Economic and Social Development — sustainable development, poverty, inclusion, demographics, social sector initiatives
- General issues on environmental ecology, bio-diversity and climate change (no subject specialisation required)
- General Science

Objective (multiple choice), two hours.

2. Prelims: General Studies Paper II (CSAT, qualifying) (200 marks)

- Comprehension
- Interpersonal skills including communication skills
- Logical reasoning and analytical ability
- Decision making and problem solving
- General mental ability
- Basic numeracy (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude) — Class X level
- Data interpretation (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency) — Class X level

Qualifying paper: minimum 33%. Objective, two hours. Candidates must appear in both Prelims papers.

3. Mains Paper A: Indian Language (qualifying) (300 marks)

- Comprehension of given passages
- Precis writing
- Usage and vocabulary
- Short essays
- Translation from English to the Indian language and vice-versa

One language from the Eighth Schedule. Matriculation standard; qualifying only (25% needed). Not compulsory for candidates from Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim.

4. Mains Paper B: English (qualifying) (300 marks)

- Comprehension of given passages
- Precis writing
- Usage and vocabulary
- Short essays

Matriculation standard; qualifying only (25% needed).

5. Mains Paper I: Essay (250 marks)

- Essays on multiple topics

Candidates are expected to keep closely to the subject, arrange ideas in an orderly fashion and write concisely.

6. Mains Paper II: General Studies I (Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society) (250 marks)

- Indian culture: salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times
- Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present
- The Freedom Struggle — its various stages and important contributors from different parts of the country
- Post-independence consolidation and reorganisation within the country
- History of the world from the 18th century: industrial revolution, world wars, redrawal of national boundaries, colonisation, decolonisation, political philosophies
- Salient features of Indian society, diversity of India
- Role of women and women's organisations, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanisation
- Effects of globalisation on Indian society
- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
- Salient features of world's physical geography
- Distribution of key natural resources across the world; factors for location of primary, secondary and tertiary sector industries
- Important geophysical phenomena (earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic activity, cyclones); geographical features and changes in critical features, flora and fauna

7. Mains Paper III: General Studies II (Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations) (250 marks)

- Indian Constitution — historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels
- Separation of powers between various organs, dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions
- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries
- Parliament and State legislatures — structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges
- Structure, organisation and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; pressure groups and associations
- Salient features of the Representation of People's Act
- Appointment to various constitutional posts; constitutional bodies
- Statutory, regulatory and quasi-judicial bodies
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors
- Development processes and the development industry — NGOs, SHGs, donors, charities and other stakeholders
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies for their protection
- Issues relating to development and management of social sector/services: health, education, human resources
- Issues relating to poverty and hunger
- Governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance, citizens charters
- Role of civil services in a democracy
- India and its neighbourhood — relations

- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India or affecting India's interests
- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests; Indian diaspora
- Important international institutions, agencies and fora — structure and mandate

8. Mains Paper IV: General Studies III (Technology, Economic Development, Bio-diversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management) (250 marks)

- Indian economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment
- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it
- Government budgeting
- Major crops and cropping patterns, irrigation, storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce; e-technology in aid of farmers
- Farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System; buffer stocks and food security; technology missions; economics of animal-rearing
- Food processing and related industries in India
- Land reforms in India
- Effects of liberalisation on the economy; changes in industrial policy
- Infrastructure: energy, ports, roads, airports, railways
- Investment models
- Science and technology — developments and their applications and effects in everyday life
- Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenisation of technology
- Awareness in IT, space, computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology; intellectual property rights
- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment
- Disaster and disaster management
- Linkages between development and spread of extremism
- Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security
- Internal security challenges through communication networks, media and social networking; basics of cyber security; money-laundering
- Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organised crime with terrorism
- Various security forces and agencies and their mandate

9. Mains Paper V: General Studies IV (Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude) (250 marks)

- Ethics and Human Interface: essence, determinants and consequences of ethics in human actions; dimensions of ethics; human values
- Attitude: content, structure, function; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion
- Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service: integrity, impartiality, non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication, empathy, tolerance, compassion
- Emotional intelligence — concepts, utilities and application in administration and governance
- Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and the world
- Public/civil service values and ethics in public administration; accountability and ethical governance; corporate governance
- Probity in governance: Right to Information, codes of ethics and conduct, citizen's charters, work culture, quality of service delivery, utilisation of public funds, challenges of corruption
- Case studies on the above issues

Questions may use the case study approach.

10. Mains Papers VI & VII: Optional Subject (Paper 1 and Paper 2) (500 marks)

- Agriculture
- Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science
- Anthropology
- Botany
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Commerce and Accountancy
- Economics
- Electrical Engineering
- Geography
- Geology
- History
- Law
- Management
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Medical Science
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Political Science and International Relations
- Psychology
- Public Administration
- Sociology
- Statistics
- Zoology
- Literature of one language: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu or English

Choose one subject; 250 marks per paper. The detailed syllabus of every optional subject is in Section III of the official notification (linked below). Level: broadly honours degree; bachelor's degree level for Engineering, Medical Science and Law.

Official sources

Official syllabus: https://www.upsc.gov.in/sites/default/files/Notif-CSP-2026-Engl-060226Rev.pdf

Official website: https://upsc.gov.in

Online version: https://www.jobnirdesh.com/syllabus/upsc-syllabus-2026

Always confirm the syllabus with the official notification of the conducting body before you prepare or apply.