BOOK 1 · UPSC SERIES

UPSC ROADMAP 2027

The Complete Beginner's Guide to the Civil Services Examination



ANOOP GUPTA

UPSC Roadmap 2027

The Complete Beginner's Guide to the UPSC Civil Services Examination (Book 1)

Book 1 of the UPSC Series

Exam pattern · Syllabus maps · 12-month plan · Answer writing · Interview

ANOOP GUPTA

UPSC Roadmap 2027: The Complete Beginner's Guide to the UPSC Civil Services Examination (Book 1)

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Important disclaimer: Examination facts in this book (age limits, attempts, pattern, marks, qualifying standards, fees and the application process) follow the official UPSC Civil Services Examination 2026 notification dated 4 February 2026. UPSC can change rules, dates and procedures every year. Always check the latest official notification and any corrigenda at upsc.gov.in and upsconline.nic.in before you apply or make decisions.

This is an independent guide. It is not published, endorsed or approved by the Union Public Service Commission or any government body. Preparation strategies, timetables and booklists are educational suggestions and do not guarantee selection.

All practice questions are original. Diagrams created by the author.

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Start Here: Your First Win in 20 Minutes

You do not need to read this whole book before you begin. Do these five steps today. They take about 20 minutes and will give you a clear starting point.

Step 1 (3 minutes): Check your age. For CSE 2026, a candidate had to be at least 21 and below 32 on 1 August 2026 (born between 2 August 1994 and 1 August 2005). Relaxations apply to SC/ST (5 years), OBC (3 years), PwBD (10 years) and some ex-servicemen. Check the notification for the year you are targeting.

Step 2 (2 minutes): Count your attempts. General/EWS candidates get 6 attempts, OBC and PwBD (General/EWS/OBC) candidates get 9, and SC/ST candidates have no limit, all within the age limit. Appearing in even one Prelims paper uses an attempt.

Step 3 (5 minutes): Visit the official sites. Bookmark upsc.gov.in (notifications, syllabus, question papers) and upsconline.nic.in (the only place to apply).

Step 4 (5 minutes): Read the exam structure. Look at Figure 1 below. Prelims screens, Mains and the interview rank.

Step 5 (5 minutes): Set your daily slot. Choose a fixed time of day for study and write it down. A fixed slot you keep is better than a long one you skip.

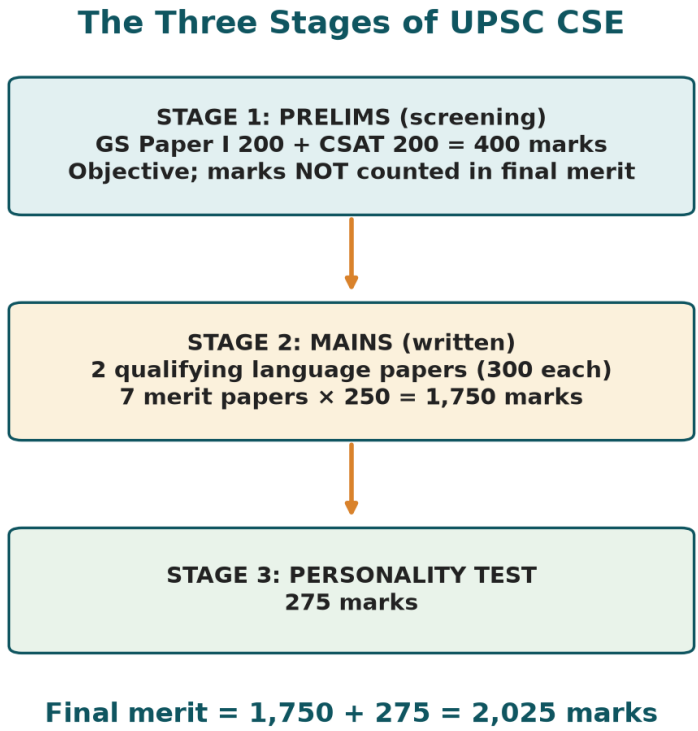

Figure 1: The three stages of the Civil Services Examination

Done? You now know whether you are eligible, how many attempts you have, where to find official information and how the exam works. Many aspirants spend weeks before they get this far. Now start with Chapter 1.

How to use this book

- **Complete beginners:** read the chapters in order.
- **Already preparing:** go to the chapter you need, then use the Key Takeaways and the **Do This Today** box at the end of every chapter.
- **Short on time:** read Chapters 2, 3, 10 and 18 first, then the 30-day launch plan at the end of the book.

Always check the official notification. *UPSC can change rules, dates, eligibility conditions, fees and the syllabus every year. The facts in this book follow the Civil Services Examination 2026 notification (published 4 February 2026). Before you apply, read the latest notification at upsc.gov.in. Where this book and the official notification differ, the notification is correct.*

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to UPSC Civil Services Examination

In This Chapter

- What is UPSC?
- What is the Civil Services Examination (CSE)?
- Difference between UPSC and other government examinations.
- Major civil services in India.
- Roles and responsibilities of IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS and other officers.
- How the UPSC selection process works.
- Why understanding the examination is the first step towards preparation.

1.1 What Is UPSC?

UPSC stands for the **Union Public Service Commission**. It is India's central recruiting agency responsible for conducting examinations and selecting candidates for various prestigious government services and posts.

UPSC is an independent constitutional body established under the Constitution of India.

Its primary purpose is to ensure that recruitment to important government positions takes place through a fair, transparent and merit-based selection process.

UPSC conducts several examinations, including:

1. Civil Services Examination (CSE).
2. Indian Forest Service Examination.
3. Engineering Services Examination.
4. Combined Defence Services Examination.
5. National Defence Academy Examination.
6. Combined Medical Services Examination.
7. Central Armed Police Forces Examination.
8. Indian Economic Service and Indian Statistical Service Examination.

Among these, the Civil Services Examination is one of the most widely known and competitive examinations in India.

Constitutional Foundation of UPSC

The Union Public Service Commission is established under Part XIV of the Constitution of India.

Constitutional Article	Subject
Article 315	Public Service Commissions for the Union and States
Article 316	Appointment and term of office of members
Article 317	Removal and suspension of members
Article 318	Regulations regarding conditions of service
Article 319	Restrictions on future employment
Article 320	Functions of Public Service Commissions
Article 321	Power to extend functions
Article 322	Expenses of Public Service Commissions
Article 323	Reports of Public Service Commissions

Important: Article 320 deals with the functions of Public Service Commissions, including conducting examinations for appointments to the services of the Union.

1.2 What Is the Civil Services Examination?

The Civil Services Examination (CSE) is a national-level competitive examination conducted by UPSC to recruit candidates for various civil services of the Government of India.

Through this examination, successful candidates may be appointed to services such as:

- Indian Administrative Service (IAS)
- Indian Police Service (IPS)
- Indian Foreign Service (IFS)
- Indian Revenue Service (IRS)
- Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IA&AS)
- Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS)
- Indian Information Service (IIS)
- Indian Trade Service (ITS)

The exact services and vacancies depend on the relevant year's official notification.

Why Is the Examination Important?

India is a large and diverse country with millions of people, different cultures, languages, economic conditions and administrative requirements.

The government needs qualified officers to implement policies, maintain law and order, manage public resources and deliver essential services.

Civil servants play an important role in this administrative system.

For example:

- An IAS officer may supervise district administration.
- An IPS officer may oversee policing and internal security responsibilities.
- An IFS officer may represent India in diplomatic assignments abroad.
- An IRS officer may work in direct or indirect taxation administration.

The Civil Services Examination identifies candidates who demonstrate the knowledge, analytical ability, judgment and personality required for these responsibilities.

1.3 Difference Between UPSC and Civil Services Examination

Many beginners use the words UPSC and IAS examination interchangeably. However, they are not the same.

UPSC	Civil Services Examination
A constitutional body	A competitive examination
Conducts multiple examinations	One of the examinations conducted by UPSC
Responsible for recruitment-related functions	Recruits candidates for specified civil services
Conducts examinations throughout the year	Conducted according to its annual examination schedule

Remember: UPSC is the commission; CSE is the examination.

1.4 Major Civil Services in India

Before preparing for the examination, aspirants should understand the services they are competing for.

1. Indian Administrative Service (IAS)

The Indian Administrative Service is one of India's premier administrative services.

IAS officers work at different levels of government, including district, state and central administration.

Major responsibilities:

- District administration.
- Implementation of government policies.
- Public service delivery.
- Revenue administration.
- Development programme supervision.
- Coordination between government departments.
- Policy formulation at senior levels.

Example:

A District Magistrate or District Collector may coordinate disaster relief, supervise development programmes, review public services and work with different departments to address local administrative problems.

2. Indian Police Service (IPS)

The Indian Police Service is responsible for senior leadership in police organisations.

IPS officers work in areas related to law enforcement, public safety and internal security.

Major responsibilities:

- Maintaining law and order.
- Crime prevention and investigation supervision.
- Police administration.
- Internal security.
- Counter-terrorism responsibilities.
- Traffic and public safety management.
- Leadership of police organisations.

Example:

An IPS officer serving as a Superintendent of Police may supervise police stations, coordinate investigations and develop strategies to prevent crime.

3. Indian Foreign Service (IFS)

The Indian Foreign Service represents India in international relations.

IFS officers serve in Indian embassies, high commissions, consulates and the Ministry of External Affairs.

Major responsibilities:

- Diplomatic relations.
- International negotiations.
- Protecting Indian citizens abroad.
- Promoting India's economic interests.
- Cultural diplomacy.
- Representing India in international organisations.

Example:

An Indian diplomat working at an embassy may assist Indian citizens, participate in diplomatic discussions and promote cooperation between India and the host country.

4. Indian Revenue Service (IRS)

The Indian Revenue Service has two principal streams:

- IRS (Income Tax).
- IRS (Customs and Indirect Taxes).

These services play an important role in tax administration and revenue collection.

Major responsibilities:

- Administration of direct taxes.
- Tax assessment and investigation.
- Prevention of tax evasion.
- Customs administration.
- Enforcement of relevant tax laws.
- Administration of indirect taxation.

Example:

An IRS officer in the Income Tax Department may supervise tax assessments, investigate suspected tax evasion and ensure compliance with applicable tax laws.

1.5 Other Important Civil Services

Apart from IAS, IPS, IFS and IRS, several other services are recruited through CSE.

Service	Primary area of work
Indian Audit and Accounts Service	Government auditing and accounting
Indian Civil Accounts Service	Government financial accounting
Indian Corporate Law Service	Corporate law administration
	Defence financial management

Service	Primary area of work
Indian Defence Accounts Service	
Indian Information Service	Government communication and information
Indian Postal Service	Postal administration
Indian Railway Management Service	Railway administration and management
Indian Trade Service	International trade administration

The services listed in the examination notification may change over time.

1.6 How Does the UPSC Selection Process Work?

The Civil Services Examination has three stages.

Stage 1: Preliminary Examination

The Preliminary Examination is the first stage.

It consists of two objective-type papers:

Paper	Subject	Marks
General Studies Paper I	General Studies	200
General Studies Paper II	CSAT	200
Total		400

Important points:

- Both papers are objective-type.
- Both papers are compulsory.
- CSAT is qualifying in nature.
- Candidates need at least 33% in CSAT.

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