

## IAS/IFS

Conducted in 3 stages and covering almost every subject known, UPSC exams are the most competitive of the lot. The ends justify the toughness as those who manage to clear them all get selected for the highly coveted Group A and Group B govt. services.

### Educational Qualification

All candidates must have as a minimum one of the following educational qualifications:

- A degree from a Central, State or a Deemed university
- A degree received through correspondence or distance education
- A degree from an open university

### Eligibility

Eligibility for the examination is as follows:

### Nationality

- For the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service, the candidate must be a citizen of India.
- For other services, the candidate must be one of the following:
  1. A citizen of India
  2. A citizen of Nepal or a subject of Bhutan
  3. A Tibetan refugee who settled permanently in India before January 1, 1962.
  4. A person of Indian origin who has migrated from Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Ethiopia or Vietnam with the intention of permanently settling in India

### Number of attempts

The number of times a candidate can appear for the exam are given below.

- General category candidates = 6.
- OBC category candidates = 9.
- SC/ST candidates = unlimited attempts till 37 years of age.

### Examination structure of Civil Services exams

The Civil Services paper is conducted in 3 stages, the last of which is an interview/ personality test. The first two stages are the Prelims and the Mains. Let's take a systematic look at the syllabus for both these stages.

#### Structure of Prelims Exam

The prelims consist of paper 1 and 2.

- Paper 1 evaluates a candidate's knowledge of Indian history, policy, governance, economics, Indian and world geography, environmental status, science, art, and culture. A student from Arts background would be well versed with most of these subjects, namely history, geography, polity, economics and general environmental issues (both of India and the world)
- Paper 2 is a general exam and is qualifying in nature. It aims to test your analytical and logical reasoning abilities, comprehension skills, mental ability and data interpretation. These subjects or rather broad areas of studies don't fall under any special stream and could be developed on by any student with regular and persistent practice. Furthermore, a student need not worry much about this paper as they need to score only 33% of marks in it to become eligible for grading in Paper 1.

#### Structure of Mains Exam

The Mains are a well-drawn series of 9 papers out of which 2 are qualifying and 7 are ranked. The qualifying papers are named Paper A and B. Paper A is of a list of Indian languages (including English) presented by the commission, out of which the candidate has to choose one. Paper B is of English language.

The papers which are ranked are as follows:

- Paper 1: Essay
- Paper 2: (General studies 1) Indian and world history. Indian heritage and culture. Indian and World Geography.
- Paper 3: (General studies 2) Polity, Public administration, constitution, governance, International relations and social justice.
- Paper 4: (General studies 3) Economics, Science and technology, environment, Ecology, disaster management.
- Paper 5: (General studies 4) Ethics and aptitude
- Paper 6 and 7: Optional subjects to be chosen by the candidate

## **More details on IFS**

The Indian Foreign Service (IFS) is the administrative diplomatic civil service under Group A and Group B of the Central Civil Services of the executive branch of the Government of India.

It is a Central Civil service as Foreign policy is the subject matter and prerogative of Union government. The Ambassador, High Commissioner, Consul General, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and Foreign Secretary are some of the offices held by the members of this service.

On acceptance to the Foreign Service, new entrants undergo significant training, which is considered to be one of the most challenging and longest service trainings in the Government of India and nearly takes more than 3 years to graduate from. The entrants undergo a probationary period (and are referred to as Officer Trainees). Training begins at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie, where members of many elite Indian civil services are trained.

- The majority of subjects for both Prelims and Mains comprise of the syllabus taught to students in the Arts stream. Subjects like History, Polity, Economics, Civics, and Geography are recurring topics all throughout the examination procedure. If one has a clear base of these from beforehand, the battle is already half-won.
- Furthermore, subjects like Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Disaster management and Ethics, which are a crucial part of the Mains paper are available as options for Arts students in their curriculum.