UPSC Civil Services Exam (IAS) 2026–27 – Status, Dates, Eligibility, Attempts, Exam Pattern, Syllabus

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The UPSC Civil Services Examination (CSE) is conducted every year by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to recruit for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and other Central Group A and Group B services. It has three stages: Preliminary, Main and Personality Test (Interview). The Preliminary stage of the Indian Forest Service (IFoS) examination is also held through the CSE Preliminary exam.

Current status (03-11-2026): the CSE 2026 notification (Examination Notice No. 05/2026-CSE) was issued on 04-02-2026. The Preliminary exam was held on **24-05-2026** and its result was declared on 15-06-2026 – **13,343 candidates** qualified for the Main exam. The Main exam was held over 5 days between **21 and 30 August 2026**. **The Main exam result has not been declared yet**, and UPSC has not announced a date for it. Candidates who qualify will be called for the Personality Test (Interview), after which the final result is published.

Next cycle – CSE 2027: as per UPSC's Annual Calendar 2027, the notification is due on **13-01-2027**, the last date to apply is **02-02-2027**, the Preliminary exam is on **23-05-2027** (Sunday) and the Main exam starts on **20-08-2027** (5 days). UPSC may change these dates; we will update this page when the notification is out. The 2027 Prelims is on 23-05-2027 – start a planned preparation now.

This page is compiled from the official UPSC notification (05/2026-CSE), the Preliminary result press note, the Main exam time table and the UPSC Annual Calendar 2027, and is updated whenever UPSC issues a new notice. For final details see upsc.gov.in.

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Important Dates

CSE 2026

Event	Date
Notification (Notice No. 05/2026-CSE)	04-02-2026
Online application	04-02-2026 to 27-02-2026 (6.00 PM) (24-02-2026 in the notification; extended by UPSC to 27-02-2026)
Preliminary exam	**24-05-2026** (Sunday)
Preliminary result	15-06-2026 (roll-number list); list with names 18-06-2026 – 13,343 qualified
Application form for the Main exam (qualified candidates only)	19-06-2026 to 28-06-2026
Main exam	**21, 22, 23, 29 and 30 August 2026** (held)
Main result	**Not declared yet** (as on 03-11-2026)
Personality Test (Interview)	To be announced after the Main result
Final result	After the Personality Test

Main exam 2026 – time table (held)

Date	Forenoon (9.00 AM – 12.00 noon)	Afternoon (2.30 – 5.30 PM)
21-08-2026 (Friday)	Paper I – Essay	–
22-08-2026 (Saturday)	Paper II – General Studies I	Paper III – General Studies II
23-08-2026 (Sunday)	Paper IV – General Studies III	Paper V – General Studies IV
29-08-2026 (Saturday)	Paper A – Indian Language (qualifying)	Paper B – English (qualifying)
30-08-2026 (Sunday)	Paper VI – Optional Subject Paper 1	Paper VII – Optional Subject Paper 2

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CSE 2027 (as per UPSC Annual Calendar 2027)

Event	Date
Notification / application opens	13-01-2027
Last date to apply	02-02-2027
Preliminary exam	**23-05-2027** (Sunday)
Main exam	From **20-08-2027** (5 days)

Source: UPSC Annual Calendar 2027 (PDF, as on 20-05-2026). Note: annual-calendar dates can change; the final dates will be in the CSE 2027 notification.

Vacancies

- The CSE 2026 notification announced **approximately 933** vacancies, including 33 for Persons with Benchmark Disability (blindness and low vision 7, deaf and hard of hearing 11, locomotor disability 8, multiple disabilities 7).
- In its Preliminary result press note (15-06-2026), UPSC stated that **1,016 vacancies** have been notified for CSE 2026.
- UPSC publishes the final service-wise numbers with the final result.

Eligibility

Educational qualification

- A **degree** from a recognised university (or an equivalent qualification).
- Final-year students and those awaiting results can apply and write the exam; if they qualify for the Personality Test, they must produce proof of passing the degree within the time set in the notification.
- For IAS, IFS and IPS, the candidate must be a citizen of India.

Age limit and attempts (CSE 2026 – as on 01-08-2026)

Category	Age limit	Attempts
General / EWS	21 – 32	6
OBC	21 – 35 (+3 years)	9
SC / ST	21 – 37 (+5 years)	No limit (up to the age limit)
Persons with Benchmark Disability (PwBD)	+10 years (cumulative with category relaxation)	General / EWS / OBC – 9; SC / ST – no limit

- A General candidate must have been born not earlier than 02-08-1994 and not later than 01-08-2005.
- Ex-servicemen (subject to conditions) get up to 5 years; defence personnel disabled in operations get up to 3 years.
- Appearing in even one paper of the Preliminary exam counts as an attempt.

- The crucial date for age for CSE 2027 will be given in the 2027 notification.
- Serving IAS / IFS officers cannot apply; candidates already selected for IPS cannot be allotted IPS again – see the notification for the full rules.

Exam Pattern

1. Preliminary exam – screening only

Paper	Marks	Duration	Nature
Paper I – General Studies	200	2 hours	Cut-off for the Main exam is based on this paper
Paper II – CSAT (General Studies II)	200	2 hours	Qualifying – minimum **33%** (66 marks)
Total	**400**		

- Both papers are objective type; question papers are set in Hindi and English only.
- **Negative marking:** one-third (1/3) of the marks for a question is deducted for every wrong answer.
- To qualify for the Main exam you need both: at least 33% in CSAT and the Paper I qualifying marks (cut-off) fixed by UPSC.
- Preliminary marks are not counted for the final ranking. About 12–13 times the number of vacancies are admitted to the Main exam.

2. Main exam – descriptive (9 papers)

Paper	Subject	Marks
Paper A	Indian Language (one language from the Eighth Schedule, e.g. Tamil; Matriculation standard) – **qualifying**	300 (minimum 25%)
Paper B	English (Matriculation standard) – **qualifying**	300 (minimum 25%)
Paper I	Essay	250
Paper II	General Studies I	250
Paper III	General Studies II	250
Paper IV	General Studies III	250
Paper V	General Studies IV (Ethics)	250
Paper VI	Optional Subject – Paper 1	250
Paper VII	Optional Subject – Paper 2	250
Written total	Papers I – VII	**1750**
Interview	Personality Test	**275**
Grand total		**2025**

- Each paper is of 3 hours.
- The other papers are evaluated only if you score at least 25% in both Paper A and Paper B; their marks are not counted for ranking.
- Paper A is not compulsory for candidates from Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim.
- **You can write in Tamil:** except Papers A and B, the papers may be answered in any Eighth Schedule language (including Tamil) or in English. **Literature of Tamil** is also available as an optional subject.
- About twice the number of vacancies are called for the Personality Test; there are no minimum qualifying marks for it.
- Final ranking = written exam (1750) + Personality Test (275) = 2025 marks.

Syllabus Overview

The full official syllabus is in Appendix I of the CSE 2026 notification: UPSC CSE 2026 notification (PDF).

Paper	Main areas
Prelims – Paper I (GS)	Current events of national and international importance; History of India and Indian National Movement; Indian and World Geography; Indian Polity and Governance; Economic and Social Development; Environmental Ecology, Biodiversity and Climate Change; General Science
Prelims – Paper II (CSAT)	Comprehension; interpersonal skills including communication skills; logical reasoning and analytical ability; decision-making and problem-solving; general mental ability; basic numeracy and data interpretation (Class X level)
GS I	Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society
GS II	Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations
GS III	Technology, Economic Development, Bio-diversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management
GS IV	Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude
Essay	Essays on multiple topics
Optional	One subject from the list in the notification (including Literature of Tamil) – two papers

Fee

- Preliminary exam fee: **₹100**.
- Main exam fee: **₹200** – only for candidates who qualify in the Preliminary exam.
- **Women, SC, ST and Persons with Benchmark Disability** – exempted from fee.
- Payment by net banking, debit / credit card or UPI; fee once paid is not refunded.

How to Apply

The CSE 2026 application window is closed. The same steps are expected for CSE 2027 (confirm in the notification):

1. Apply online only at **upsconline.nic.in**.

2. First complete the one-time (once in a lifetime) registration and get your registration number (URN).
3. Then fill the CSE application, pay the fee and choose your exam centre.
4. In CSE 2026, no correction or withdrawal was allowed after submission – fill the form carefully.

Preliminary exam centres in Tamil Nadu (CSE 2026): Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirapalli and Vellore. Face authentication is done at the venue; reach at least 30 minutes before each session.

How we help you prepare

- Free UPSC quiz (Prelims practice)
- UPSC Mains Analysis – two articles daily, GS paper-wise · UPSC concept glossary
- Daily current affairs (English) · Tamil
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- Weekly test · Exam calendar
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Frequently asked questions

What is the UPSC Civil Services Examination?

It is the examination conducted every year by the Union Public Service Commission to recruit for the IAS, IFS, IPS and other Central Group A and Group B services. It has three stages – Preliminary, Main and Personality Test (Interview).

What is the current status of UPSC CSE 2026?

The Preliminary exam was held on 24-05-2026 and 13,343 candidates qualified for the Main exam, which was held between 21 and 30 August 2026. As on 03-11-2026 the Main result has not been declared; the Personality Test and the final result will follow.

When will the UPSC CSE 2027 notification come?

As per UPSC's Annual Calendar 2027: notification on 13-01-2027, last date 02-02-2027, Preliminary exam on 23-05-2027 and Main exam from 20-08-2027. The dates may change; we will update this page when the notification is out.

What are the age limit and number of attempts for UPSC CSE?

For CSE 2026: minimum 21 and maximum 32 years as on 01-08-2026, with relaxation of 3 years for OBC, 5 years for SC/ST and 10 years for Persons with Benchmark Disability. Attempts: General/EWS 6; OBC 9; SC/ST unlimited up to the age limit; PwBD (General/EWS/OBC) 9.

How much do I need in CSAT? Is there negative marking?

CSAT (Preliminary Paper II) is only qualifying – you need at least 33% (66 out of 200). In both Preliminary papers, one-third of the marks for a question is deducted for every wrong answer.

Can I write the UPSC Main exam in Tamil?

Yes. Except the qualifying papers (Paper A – Indian Language and Paper B – English), all papers can be written in any Eighth Schedule language including Tamil. Literature of Tamil is also an optional subject. The Preliminary question papers are only in Hindi and English.

How many papers are in the Main exam and what is the total?

There are 9 papers. Paper A (Indian Language) and Paper B (English) carry 300 marks each and are qualifying (minimum 25%). For ranking: Essay, GS I–IV and two Optional papers – 250 each, 1750 in all. The Personality Test carries 275, making a grand total of 2025.

Who can apply for the UPSC Civil Services exam?

Any graduate from a recognised university. Final-year students can also apply; if they qualify for the Personality Test, they must show proof of the degree within the time set by UPSC. For IAS, IFS and IPS, you must be a citizen of India.

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