



UPSC Exam Eligibility: A Comprehensive Guide

The **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** conducts the **Civil Services Examination (CSE)**, which is regarded as one of the most prestigious exams in India. Every year, thousands of candidates from across the country compete for various civil services positions, such as the **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)**, **Indian Police Service (IPS)**, **Indian Foreign Service (IFS)**, and more. Given the competitive nature of this examination, it's essential for candidates to thoroughly understand the **eligibility criteria** that the UPSC has set forth to ensure that they meet all the necessary requirements before applying.

In this article, we will break down the eligibility criteria in great detail, covering aspects such as **nationality, age limits, educational qualifications, number of attempts**, and **physical standards** (where applicable).

1. Nationality

The nationality requirement for the UPSC CSE varies depending on the service for which a candidate is applying. The eligibility for nationality is outlined below:

A. For Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and Indian Forest Service (IFoS):

- **A candidate must be a citizen of India.**

B. For other services like Indian Foreign Service (IFS), and various Group A and Group B services:

- A candidate can be:
 1. **A citizen of India**, or
 2. **A subject of Nepal or Bhutan**, or
 3. **A Tibetan refugee** who came to India before **January 1, 1962**, with the intention of settling permanently in India, or
 4. **A person of Indian origin** who has migrated from countries such as **Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, East African countries** (Kenya, Uganda, etc.), **Vietnam**, and other countries, with the intention of permanently settling in India.

Table 1: Nationality Requirements for Different Services

Service	Nationality Requirement
IAS, IPS, IFoS	Must be a citizen of India
Other Services	Must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A citizen of India- A subject of Nepal or Bhutan- A Tibetan refugee who arrived before January 1, 1962- A Person of Indian Origin from specific countries



2. Age Limit

The **age limit** for the UPSC Civil Services Examination is one of the most important eligibility criteria. The age requirements are defined in terms of both **minimum** and **maximum age** limits, which differ across various categories (General, OBC, SC/ST, PwD, etc.).

A. Minimum and Maximum Age

The minimum age to appear for the UPSC exam is **21 years**, and the maximum age limit varies according to the category:

- **General Category:**
The candidate must be **between 21 and 32 years** of age on **August 1** of the year of the examination.
- **OBC (Other Backward Classes):**
The upper age limit is relaxed by **3 years**, so candidates from the OBC category can appear for the exam between the ages of **21 and 35** years.
- **SC/ST (Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes):**
The upper age limit is relaxed by **5 years**, making it **21 to 37 years** for SC/ST candidates.
- **Differently-abled (PwD):**
Candidates who fall under the **PwD (Persons with Disabilities)** category are granted additional relaxation in the upper age limit:
 - **10 years** for **General** candidates,
 - **13 years** for **OBC** candidates,
 - **15 years** for **SC/ST** candidates.

B. Number of Attempts

Candidates are permitted a limited number of attempts to appear for the UPSC Civil Services Exam:

- **General Category:**
Candidates are allowed a **maximum of 6 attempts**.
- **OBC Category:**
Candidates from the OBC category are allowed **9 attempts**.
- **SC/ST Category:**
Candidates in the SC/ST category can appear **unlimited times** until they reach the maximum age limit of **37 years**.

Table 2: Age Limit and Number of Attempts

Category	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Number of Attempts
General	21	32	6
OBC	21	35	9
SC/ST	21	37	Unlimited



Category	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Number of Attempts
PwD (General)	21	42	6
PwD (OBC)	21	43	9
PwD (SC/ST)	21	45	Unlimited

3. Educational Qualification

Candidates must fulfil the educational qualification requirements in order to be eligible for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. Here's a detailed look at the academic criteria:

A. Basic Educational Qualification

- **Bachelor's Degree:**

The candidate must hold a **bachelor's degree** from a recognized university or its equivalent in any discipline. It does not matter which subject the candidate has specialized in during their undergraduate studies, as long as they have a degree recognized by the government.

B. Candidates in the Final Year of Graduation

- **Final Year Students:**

Candidates who are in the final year of their graduation or awaiting their final exam results can also apply for the UPSC CSE, provided they can submit proof of their graduation at the time of the **Main Examination**.

C. Professional/Technical Qualifications

- **Professional Degrees:**

Candidates who possess **professional or technical qualifications** recognized by the government as equivalent to a **bachelor's degree** are eligible to apply.

D. Qualification Equivalency

- **Equivalence of Degree:**

In some cases, candidates may have obtained their degrees from **foreign universities**. These candidates will be considered eligible only if the degree is recognized as equivalent to an Indian degree by the **Association of Indian Universities (AIU)**.

Table 3: Educational Qualification Requirements

Qualification	Eligibility Criteria
Bachelor's Degree	Must possess a degree from a recognized university



Qualification	Eligibility Criteria
Candidates in Final Year	Can apply, but proof of qualification must be submitted at the Main Examination stage
Professional and Technical Degrees	Candidates with qualifications recognized by the Government of India

4. Physical Standards (For IAS and IPS)

For services like the **Indian Police Service (IPS)**, physical fitness standards are essential. Candidates need to meet certain criteria, such as height, chest girth, and vision.

A. For IPS (Indian Police Service)

Category	Height (Men)	Height (Women)	Chest (Men)	Chest (Women)	Vision
General/OBC	165 cm	150 cm	84 cm (unexpanded)	79 cm (unexpanded)	6/6 vision
SC/ST (Men)	160 cm	150 cm	79 cm (unexpanded)	74 cm (unexpanded)	6/6 vision

- **Vision Requirements:** A minimum **6/6 vision** in both eyes is required for the IPS post.

B. For IAS (Indian Administrative Service)

For the IAS post, there are no specific physical standards, but candidates must be fit enough to handle the demands of the service.

5. Exemptions and Relaxations

A. Exemption for Candidates from Jammu & Kashmir

Candidates who were domiciled in **Jammu & Kashmir** between **January 1, 1980**, and **December 31, 1989**, are exempted from the **number of attempts** restrictions. However, they must meet all other eligibility requirements.

B. Exemption for Disabled Candidates

Candidates with disabilities (PWD) are given specific relaxations in age limits and the number of attempts.

6. UPSC Exam Selection Process

The **UPSC Civil Services Examination** is conducted in three stages:

1. **Preliminary Examination (Prelims):**
 - o The Prelims consists of **two objective-type papers**: General Studies (GS) and Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT).
2. **Main Examination (Mains):**



- The Main exam consists of **9 papers**, including **General Studies, Essay**, and **Optional Subjects**. This is a **descriptive-type exam**.
- 3. **Interview/Personality Test:**
- After qualifying the **Mains**, candidates are called for an **interview** where their **personality, knowledge**, and **suitability** for a career in civil services are assessed.

Conclusion

The eligibility criteria for the **UPSC Civil Services Examination** are extensive and require careful consideration. Candidates must meet specific requirements concerning **nationality, age, educational qualifications**, and **physical standards** to be eligible for the exam. Understanding these criteria and planning accordingly can help aspirants ensure they meet all the prerequisites before they begin their preparation journey.

By staying informed about the **latest updates and guidelines** from UPSC, candidates can avoid any confusion and streamline their preparation. It's always advisable to refer to the official **UPSC notification** every year for any changes in the eligibility criteria, as these can sometimes be updated.