

WHY UPSC CHANGED

RE-APPEARING RULES & CADRE POLICY?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Context:.....	2
1. What are the category-wise attempt limits for the UPSC Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026?	3
2. What are the key restrictions imposed on serving IAS, IPS and IFS officers?	3
3. What is a one-time exemption clause in UPSC 2026 application?	4
4. What are various Special provision for candidates allocated through CSE 2025 or earlier?	4
5. How do the revised attempt and eligibility rules of UPSC affect the strategic planning and career choices of civil services aspirants?.....	5
6. Why has UPSC provided exemption from the Indian language paper to candidates from select Northeastern states?	5
7. What are strengthened identity verification measures in taken by UPSC in 2026 application?	6
8. What is facial recognition?	6
9. How does facial recognition work?.....	7
10. What are various challenges faced by UPSC?	9
11. What is UPSC New Cadre Policy?	11
12. What is Old Zonal System?	11
13. What is New Cadre Policy?	12
14. Why is the New Cadre Policy introduced?	13

15.	What is Rotational System?.....	14
16.	Mention the key benefits of the new cadre policy in the context of Indian federalism?	15
17.	Enlist key recommendations of Baswan committee wrt UPSC examination pattern?	17
18.	Highlight key changes made by UPSC since its formation?.....	19
19.	Suggest reforms to make UPSC more relevant to 21st-century governance?.....	22
20.	What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?	23



Context:

- The **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** has introduced clearer and more **detailed rules on eligibility and attempts for candidates** already serving in the civil services, as outlined in the **Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026 notification issued on Febuary 4th, 2026.**

1. What are the category-wise attempt limits for the UPSC Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026?

- The **updated attempt limits for the Civil Services Examination 2026** are designed to ensure fairness for aspirants from different categories while maintaining the **integrity of competition**.

According to the notification:

General (UR) category:	Maximum 6 attempts
Other Backward Classes (OBC):	Maximum 9 attempts
Persons with Benchmark Disability (PwBD):	Maximum 9 attempts
Scheduled Castes (SC) / Scheduled Tribes (ST):	Unlimited attempts

- These limits apply across the **Civil Services Preliminary and Main examinations**, where an attempt at the preliminary stage counts as an attempt for the **overall CSE process**.

2. What are the key restrictions imposed on serving IAS, IPS and IFS officers?

UPSC has introduced specific eligibility restrictions for candidates who have already been appointed to **premier services**:

- **Candidates** appointed to **IAS or IFS through a previous UPSC CSE** and continuing as members of the respective service are not eligible to appear in **UPSC CSE 2026 — even if they qualify the preliminary exam**.
- If the appointment to **IAS or IFS occurs after UPSC CSE Prelims but before the Mains**, the candidate will not be allowed to sit for the Main examination.
- **IPS officers** already selected through a prior exam are barred from being allocated the IPS again through the **CSE 2026 results**; however, they may be eligible for other **services depending on rank and preference**.
 - Candidates who have already been selected or appointed to the **Indian Police Service (IPS)** through an earlier examination cannot opt for or be allocated **IPS again through CSE 2026**.

3. What is a one-time exemption clause in UPSC 2026 application?

UPSC has also introduced a **tailored framework for aspirants who have received service allocations:**

- Candidates allocated to **IPS or any Central Service Group 'A' through CSE 2026** can appear in **CSE 2027 as a one-time opportunity**, provided they **secure an exemption from joining training** for their current allocation.
- If a **candidate neither joins training nor obtains the exemption**, the **service allocation based on CSE 2026** will be cancelled.
- Aspirants recommended in CSE 2027 will have the opportunity to **choose between the services allocated in 2026 or 2027**, with seniority determined by final service acceptance.
- To appear in UPSC CSE 2028 or later examinations, **candidates are required to resign from any previously allocated service** if they wish to re-contest.
- In certain cases, they **may be allowed to utilise a remaining attempt without resigning immediately**, though subsequent attempts could require leaving the service.
- The measure attempts to **balance aspirants' desire for rank improvement** with administrative stability.

4. What are various Special provision for candidates allocated through CSE 2025 or earlier?

- Candidates allocated to any **service based on CSE 2025 or earlier will be given a one-time opportunity** to appear in **either CSE 2026 or CSE 2027 without resigning**.
- However, to appear in CSE 2028 or beyond, **resignation from the allocated service will be mandatory**.
- With these changes, **UPSC has formalised a structured improvement window** and limited repeated attempts after service allocation.
- Aspirants **currently in service must now carefully evaluate** their options before planning another attempt.

5. How do the revised attempt and eligibility rules of UPSC affect the strategic planning and career choices of civil services aspirants?

- These **revised attempt and eligibility rules** reflect UPSC's efforts to **clarify boundaries for repeat attempts, service reallocation** and career planning for aspirants.
- The approach **balances access for new candidates with defined limits** for those with prior service appointments, and it ensures that **aspirants make strategic decisions** regarding timing and service acceptance.
- **UPSC's updated norms** are expected to **influence candidate preparation strategies**, especially for those who have previously **qualified preliminaries or have service allocations** from earlier examinations.
- The **UPSC CSE 2026 notification signals a more structured and disciplined exam framework**, with clearer rules on attempts, service eligibility and verification.
- As **competition remains intense and vacancies are limited**, aspirants must approach the exam with awareness of evolving.
- Understanding the updated provisions early can **help candidates plan their attempts wisely**, make informed choices and align their long-term strategy with the changing expectations of **India's most competitive recruitment process**.

6. Why has UPSC provided exemption from the Indian language paper to candidates from select Northeastern states?

- Candidates from **Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim** continue to be exempted from the compulsory **Indian Language paper (Paper A)** in the **Main Examination**.
- The move **recognises linguistic diversity** and aims to make the examination more **inclusive for candidates** from these regions.

7. What are strengthened identity verification measures in taken by UPSC in 2026 application?



- **UPSC** has introduced **face authentication at examination venues**, meaning candidates may **undergo digital facial verification** alongside traditional **ID checks on exam day**.
- Earlier in September 2025, the **Commission conducted a pilot programme to test AI-enabled facial authentication technology** for swift and secure candidate verification during two examinations.
- The pilot was conducted with the assistance of **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**.
- UPSC said the initiative seeks to **strengthen the integrity of the examination process** and enhance the ease of entry for candidates at examination centres.
- The pilot was carried out at **select centres in Gurugram, Haryana** where the **facial images of candidates were digitally matched with the photographs** submitted in their registration forms.
- The new system **reduced verification time to an average of just 8–10 seconds per candidate**, significantly **streamlining the entry** process while adding an extra layer of security.
- The new update means that **aspirants during future examinations** will have to **undergo face authentication at the exam centres**.

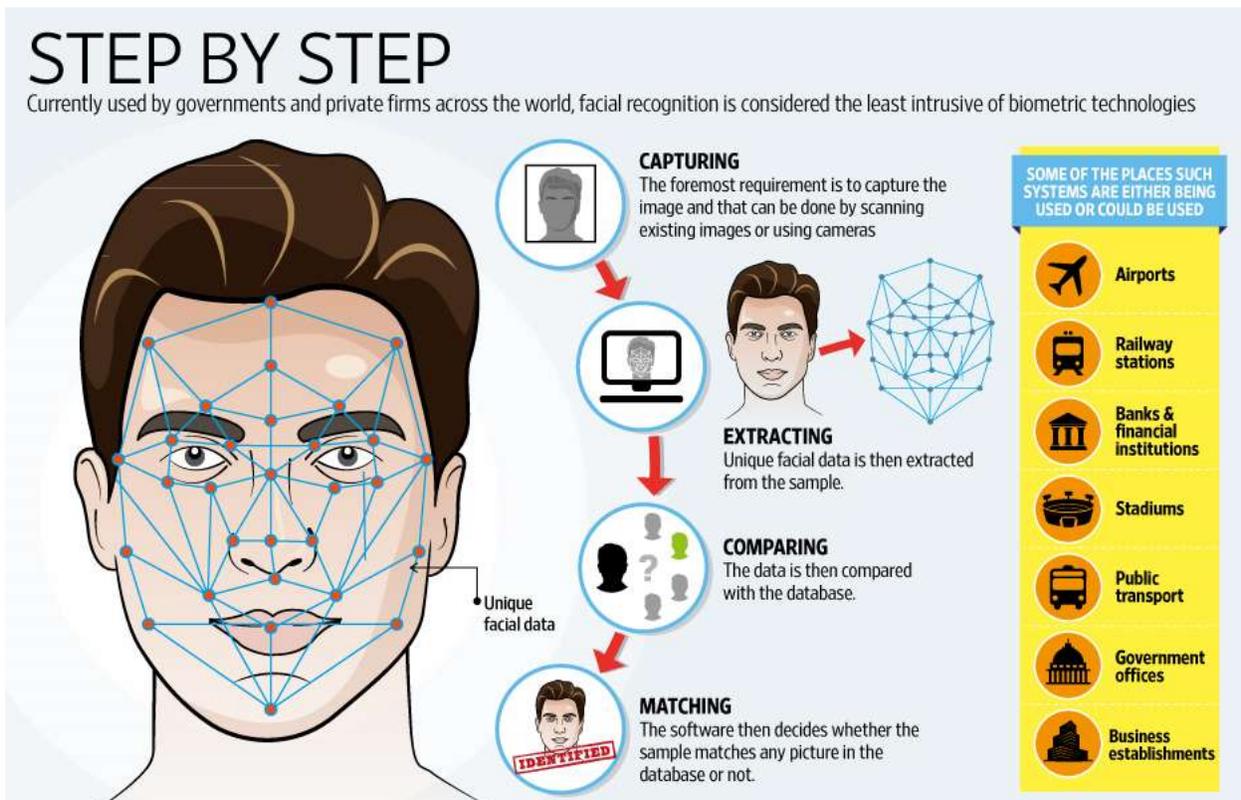
8. What is facial recognition?

- **Facial recognition** is a way of **identifying or confirming an individual’s identity using their face**.

- Facial recognition systems can be used to **identify people in photos, videos, or in real-time.**
- Facial recognition is a category of **biometric security.** Other forms of biometric software include **voice recognition, fingerprint recognition, and eye retina or iris recognition.**
- The technology is mostly used for **security and law enforcement,** though there is increasing interest in other areas of use.



9. How does facial recognition work?



<p>Face Detection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facial recognition begins with face detection, where algorithms scan images or video frames to locate and isolate human faces. • Techniques like Haar cascades, Histogram of Oriented Gradients (HOG), and deep learning-based Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) are commonly used for accurate detection.
<p>Feature Extraction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once faces are detected, key facial features such as eyes, nose, mouth, and face contours are extracted. • Various methods like Principal Component Analysis (PCA), Local Binary Patterns (LBP), or deep learning-based feature extraction networks map these features into mathematical representations known as feature vectors.
<p>Feature Representation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature vectors encode the unique characteristics of each face into numerical data. • These representations are crucial as they enable comparisons and recognition across different faces.
<p>Database Comparison</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extracted feature vector of a detected face is compared against a database of known faces. • This database stores pre-registered feature vectors along with corresponding identities or metadata.
<p>Matching and Recognition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During matching, the system calculates the similarity or distance between the feature vector of the detected face and those stored in the database. • If a close match is found (based on a threshold set by the system), the identity of the person is recognized.
<p>Decision Making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the matching results, the system makes a decision regarding the identity of the detected face. • This decision can include identity verification (one-to-one matching) or identification (one-to-many matching).

10. What are various challenges faced by UPSC?

- In recent days, **both the UPSC and the system of its recruitment have come under public criticism**, thanks to incidents of abuse and misuse of quota by a few candidates.
- This has put into **question the credibility of not only the examination process but also of the UPSC as an institution.**
- The **UPSC examination system, pattern and process have often been called outdated.**
- Going from preliminary exams to the **final result of the interview round takes almost a year.**
- The **curriculum and exam pattern**, which has remained unchanged for decades now, don't align with the **needs of governance and public administration in today's world.**
- Even the **syllabus is criticised for not reflecting contemporary realities.**
- This **mismatch creates a gap between the skills** required in today's world and what the **examination actually tests.**
- Another **significant criticism of the UPSC examination** is its tendency to promote a culture of rote learning.
- The **UPSC's heavy reliance on factual knowledge has led to the rise of "crammers"**, that is, candidates who excel in memorising information but may **lack deeper understanding, critical thinking abilities, creativity and a spirit of innovation.**
- This leads to the **selection of individuals who are less suited to the dynamic and complex nature of public administration.**
- The **unpredictability of the UPSC exams, particularly the prelims test, adds to the stress and uncertainty faced by aspirants.**
- Questions **can vary widely in difficulty and scope**, making it challenging for **candidates to prepare effectively.**
- This often benefits those who are **better at guessing rather than those who possess a deep understanding of subjects.**
- **Lack of transparency** in the evaluation process is also a concern.

- Candidates have **limited access to their answer sheets** and don't know the **rationale behind the scores they are awarded**.
- This opacity fuels suspicion about the **fairness of the evaluation process**.
- Even though the **selection process is rigorous**, the UPSC has been criticised for **failing to produce competent and effective officers consistently**.
- **Ms Pooja Khedkar was found guilty of cheating and wrongly availing Other Backward Classes (OBC) and disability quota benefits**.



- The **current system also does not adequately assess candidates' personality traits and soft skills**.
 - **The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted raids on December 23, 2025, at multiple locations in Surendranagar, including the residences of senior district officials, in connection with a ₹1,500 crore land non-agricultural (NA) conversion scam.**
- Finally, **one of the most neglected duties of the UPSC - giving advice about the nature and quantum of punishment for a deviant civil servant - should be discharged in a timely manner**.
- **The UPSC is slow, tardy and status quoist in its approach**.
- **We need a faster, more transparent and clearer procedure so that erring bureaucrats are given appropriate punishments**.



11. What is UPSC New Cadre Policy?

- The government has revised the cadre allocation policy for candidates selected through the **Civil Services Examination (CSE)**, bringing in key changes to how **IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officers** will be assigned their **state cadres from 2026 onwards**.
- The new rules, notified by the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)**, replace the **earlier zonal system** and aim to make the **process more balanced and transparent**.

12. What is Old Zonal System?

- The **2018 cadre policy for All India Services (IAS, IPS, IFoS)** introduced a new system of grouping state cadres alphabetically into four categories to replace the **previous five-zone, geographically-clustered model**.
- This **policy, designed to enhance national representation**, was challenged for potentially allowing manipulation of preferences.

Zones	States
Zone-1	• AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram-Union Territories), Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Haryana.
Zone-2	• Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha.
Zone-3	• Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.

Zone-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam-Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, and Nagaland.
Zone-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.



13. What is New Cadre Policy?

- The new framework, notified by the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)** after **consultations with state governments**, revises the system that had been in **place since 2017**.
- It introduces a new grouping structure that replaces the earlier **zonal arrangement for allocation of cadres to successful candidates of the civil services examination**.

- **“To ensure a fair and transparent system,** all State Cadres and Joint Cadres have been arranged alphabetically and divided into four groups,” the DoPT said in the notification.
- The allocation will now be **based on these four groups,** with candidates expressing preferences among them.

News Cadre Policy	States
Group I	AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territories), Andhra Pradesh, Assam-Meghalaya, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh.
Group II	Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh.
Group III	Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, and Tamil Nadu.
Group IV	Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

- Earlier, **Zone-I had seven cadres** – AGMUT, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana.
- **Zone-II** consisted of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha, while
- **Zone-III** comprised of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
- **Zone-IV** comprised of West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam-Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura and Nagaland constituted, while
- **Zone-V** had Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

14. Why is the New Cadre Policy introduced?

- Officials from **DOPT said the restructured framework seeks to maintain national integration** within the civil services while addressing concerns raised by several state governments regarding uneven vacancy distribution under the previous policy.
- Sources in the DoPT indicated that the **Centre expects the new allocation model to streamline administrative processes and enhance inter-state**

exposure for young officers, in line with the original spirit of the All-India Services.

- Under the revised guidelines, the cadre-controlling authorities – **DoPT for IAS, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for IPS, and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for IFoS** – will annually determine the number of vacancies in each service.
- These vacancies will be distributed among various categories, including **Unreserved (UR), Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC)**.
- The new framework, issued by the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)**, aims to **bring greater transparency and consistency to the system of vacancy determination and cadre allocation**.

15. What is Rotational System?

- Under the new policy, an official said **now cadre allocation will proceed through a rotational cycle system**, corresponding to the **25 states and joint cadres** with each cycle covering 25 candidates in merit order.
- **“If multiple candidates fall within the same cycle, allocation priority will go to the one with the higher rank, while the others move to subsequent cycles,”** the official added.
- An official said after insiders are placed, allocation for outsider candidates will be done per the roster system in two stages – **first for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwBD) and then for others**.
- **“The move is expected to bring greater objectivity to the cadre allocation process**, which has long been a sensitive subject among aspirants and state governments alike.
- The revised system aligns with the **government’s broader goals of promoting fairness and administrative efficiency in the all-India services**,” the official said.

16. Mention the key benefits of the new cadre policy in the context of Indian federalism?

Key Benefits	Analysis
Strengthening Cooperative Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Addressing State Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy aims to alleviate concerns raised by state governments regarding the skewed, uneven distribution of top-ranked officers. ● Equitable Distribution of Talent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By replacing zonal preferences with an alphabetical, four-group structure, it ensures that all states, particularly those that struggled to attract top candidates, receive a better mix of highly qualified officers. ● Reduced Litigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new, more mathematical "cycle-based" allocation system (25 candidates per cycle) reduces ambiguity and minimizes grievances between the Center and states.
Promoting National Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breaking Regionalism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy limits the concentration of officers in their home states or neighboring regions, encouraging them to serve in areas with different cultures and languages. ● Strengthening All India Services (AIS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy reinforces the original vision of the AIS as a unifying force, ensuring officers possess a national perspective rather than a purely regional focus.
Enhancing Administrative Efficiency and Neutrality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reducing Local Bias: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By placing officers outside their home state, the policy minimizes the influence of local politics and personal connections, improving the neutrality of administration.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wider Exposure for Officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Officers are exposed to diverse socio-economic conditions and governance challenges across different regions, which helps build a more adaptable and experienced bureaucracy. ● Time-Bound Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy mandates that states submit vacancy requisitions by January 31, ensuring a more organized and efficient, time-bound allocation.
<p>Increased Transparency and Meritocracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Algorithm-Driven Allocation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of an algorithm based on merit, preferences, and availability minimizes human intervention and subjective bias. ● Clear Rules for "Insiders": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy clearly defines "insiders" (those in their home state) and "outsiders," requiring a mandatory, explicit "willingness" to serve in their home state, reducing confusion. ● Transparency in EWS Representation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy clarifies that EWS vacancies are treated within the Unreserved (UR) category, ensuring a clean and fair roster.
<p>Benefits for Smaller/Hill States</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Better Officer Availability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new, fairer distribution system helps in overcoming staff shortages in states that previously had difficulty recruiting, improving governance at the grass-roots level.

17. Enlist key recommendations of Baswan committee wrt UPSC examination pattern?

- The **Baswan Committee** was an **expert panel** established by the **Central Government in 2015** to review the pattern, syllabus, and **eligibility criteria for the Civil Services Examination (CSE)**.
- The committee was **chaired by B.S. Baswan**, a former **Human Resource Secretary and retired IAS officer**.
- It comprised a diverse group of experts, **including academicians, technocrats, and senior bureaucrats**, bringing a multidisciplinary perspective to the review process.

Under consideration
 Recommendations made by Baswan Committee, which is yet to be made public

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendations forwarded to Department of Personnel for final decision • Suggestion to remove optional paper being considered a major reform 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirants feel it may prove a game-changer given the huge difference in the award of marks in the optionals, while some subjects have innate advantages • Trainers of Civil Services' aspirants feel the removal of optionals may work to the advantage of urban youngsters • Languages, popular for scoring high, may lose relevance 	<p>ON THE POSITIVE SIDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes are expected to provide a level-playing field for all aspirants • Cross domain-movement to reduce drastically

 **The government is expected to effect the reduction only after extending a sufficient window to the existing aspirants. Changes in the pattern can be effected by the UPSC any time without any advance notice.**

GOPALA KRISHNA, DIRECTOR, BRAIN TREE

Proposed Reforms	Description
Preliminary Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aptitude Test: The committee recommended that the CSAT be retained but with a reduced weightage to ensure that it serves as a screening tool without overshadowing the General Studies paper. • Language Paper: Suggestions were made to make the language paper qualifying in nature to prevent it from becoming a barrier for candidates from non-English backgrounds
Mains Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Studies Papers: Recommendations included revising the syllabus to make it more relevant to the contemporary administrative challenges and to reduce overlap with the General Studies papers of the Preliminary Examination. • Optional Subjects: The committee suggested a review of the optional subjects to ensure they are relevant and do not require excessive specialization.
Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age Limit: The committee proposed revising the upper age limit and the number of attempts allowed to make the examination more accessible to a broader range of candidates. • Educational Qualifications: Recommendations were made to ensure that the educational qualifications required are aligned with the duties and responsibilities of civil servants.
Examination Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency and Fairness: The committee emphasized the need for greater transparency in the examination process and suggested measures to ensure fairness and inclusivity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation System: Recommendations included revising the evaluation system to make it more objective and to reduce subjectivity in the assessment of candidates.
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18. Highlight key changes made by UPSC since its formation?

Key Changes	Analysis
<p>1950s–1960s: Early Years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single exam system: The UPSC CSE largely followed the ICS (Indian Civil Services under British) model, with a focus on classical subjects (History, Political Science, Law, etc.). • Language: Exams were conducted only in English until 1961. • Interview (Personality Test): Similar to ICS tradition, with emphasis on assessing personality, confidence, and communication.
<p>1970s: Language & Inclusivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional languages introduced (1979 onwards): Candidates could write in any of the 22 Indian languages listed in the Constitution. • Optional Subjects: Candidates had to choose two optionals, often creating an advantage for those from humanities backgrounds. • Age & Attempt relaxations for SC/ST and OBC candidates gradually introduced.
<p>1980s–1990s: Syllabus Expansion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Studies (GS) expanded to cover more current affairs, science, and economy. • Essay Paper introduced (1992): To assess articulation and coherent thought. • Optional subjects retained (two required), but criticism grew about unequal advantages depending on subject choice.

<p>2000s: Shift Towards General Studies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prelims: Still had one GS paper + one optional paper. ● Mains: Two optionals continued. ● Growing demand to make the exam less biased towards humanities and to test analytical ability. ● Till 2009, the UPSC prelims mainly focused on current affairs, history and geography. But from 2010 onwards, the focus shifted to science, polity, environment, history, etc. ● The rough structure of the GS prelims paper before 2010 was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History: 20 questions ▪ Geography: 30 to 40 questions ▪ Science: 40 questions
<p>2011–2013: Biggest Structural Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) introduced (2011): Prelims became two papers as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GS Paper I (History, Polity, Geography, Current Affairs, etc.) ▪ GS Paper II (Aptitude, Reasoning, Comprehension, Decision-Making). ● 2013 reforms in Mains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two optionals reduced to one. ▪ GS papers expanded from 2 to 4. ▪ Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude paper (GS Paper IV) introduced. ▪ Essay paper weight increased.
<p>2014 Reforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The number of essays increased to two. Unlike earlier, where there was one section with four optional choices, the change resulted in two sections with four optional choices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total number of permissible attempts for the exam was increased from four to six. • Also, the maximum permissible age limit for general candidates was increased from 30 years to 32 years
<p>2015 onwards: Normalization & Tweaks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSAT made qualifying only (33% minimum) after protests, as it was seen to disadvantage non-English / rural students. • Greater weight to GS Paper I in Prelims. • Before 2015, both CSAT and GS results were accounted for merit. • In 2015, only GS marks were considered for merit and CSAT was considered for qualifying exam. • Interview continues with more focus on situational awareness and governance issues.
<p>Changes made in 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2018 notification of UPSC did not discuss any changes in the exam pattern. Instead, it discussed the vacancies and introduced a new section in their existing interview scheme. • UPSC vacancies have been observed to decrease year on year and this year recorded the lowest vacancies compared to the previous years. • It announced 782 vacancies which are 198 less than last year and 511 jobs less than the best year-2014 • The latest introduction in the interview scheme allows the UPSC authorities to share the details and results of the appearing candidates with other public and private recruiting agencies. • The introduction is to aid any unsuccessful candidate to find a suitable job for themselves. • However, the introduction also allows any candidate to opt out of this if they are not interested.

19. Suggest reforms to make UPSC more relevant to 21st-century governance?

- To remain relevant in the 21st century, UPSC must **evolve** from being a **memory-intensive exam to a future-oriented, skill-based, and inclusive recruitment system** that equips civil servants to handle complex governance challenges like **technology, globalization, and sustainability**.
- Also, **The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (Chair: Mr. Sushil Kumar Modi)** submitted its report on **‘Review of Functioning of Recruitment Organisations of Government of India’**, on **August 3, 2023**.
- The Committee examined the present working procedure followed by various recruitment organisations including the **Union Public Services Commission (UPSC)** and gave few suggestions.

Reforms	Description
Increase Frequency of Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Mains exams twice a year to provide candidates more opportunities to improve their scores without having to restart the entire process from the first stage
Valid Preliminary Score	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the validity of the Preliminary exam score for a couple of years, allowing candidates to focus on the Mains stage without having to clear Prelims every time.
Prelims answer key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2025, a Parliamentary Standing Committee suggested the release of answer key by the UPSC immediately after the preliminary examination to enhance credibility, fairness, and candidates' confidence.
Timeline of recruitment exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parliamentary Standing Committee observed that each recruitment exam conducted by UPSC takes anywhere between six months to one year to complete. • It noted that the entire process should not be more than six months. • The Committee inquired whether UPSC had considered any changes to curtail the length of the examination cycle.

Computer-Based Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parliamentary Standing Committee suggested that the UPSC should conduct computer-based tests for its recruitment exams to significantly shorten the overall examination timeline.
Scrap Optional Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the compulsory optional subjects to ensure a more uniform examination for all candidates and reduce the subjective element in the selection process.
Reform Personality Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to enhance the Personality Test (interview round) and include methods that can assess leadership qualities, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making. • The interview board must include a jury comprising the common public too, as it is they who are the 'end-sufferers' in this system. • There can be reduction in overall weightage of marks in personality test so as to ensure level playing field.

20. What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

- **For Prelims:** Constitutional and Non Constitutional Bodies, Optical Mark Recognition (OMR).
- **For Mains:** Role and Functions of UPSC and SPSC, Civil Services Reforms.

Some previous years mains questions.

Q1. “Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment but a product of civil education and adherence of the rule of law.” Examine the significance of constitutional morality for public servants, highlighting the role in promoting good governance and ensuring accountability in public administration. (2025-10 Marks)

Q2. “For any kind of social re-engineering by successfully implementing welfare schemes, a civil servant must use reason and critical thinking in an ethical framework.” Justify this statement with suitable examples. (2025-10 Marks)

Some questions from this year and previous years interview transcripts.

Board Dinesh Dasa sir:

- You are from IIT.
- You could have gone to foreign or private sector where you could have earned high packages.
- Why you want to join civil services after IIT?

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- Why do you want to join civil services?
- Don't you think this is waste of resource?

Board Preeti Sudan mam:

- Why do more number of engineering graduates appear for civil services
- What is your justification?

Some questions for QUIZ.

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding UPSC.

1. UPSC advises the President on disciplinary matters of civil servants,
2. UPSC can be directed by the Parliament to recruit members for state legislative services.
3. The Prime Minister of India appoints the Chairman and Members of UPSC.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Ans: (a)

Some questions for POLL.

- Q1. Do you think UPSC functions independently without political influence?
- (a) YES
 - (b) NO
 - (c) Can't say.
- Q2. Is the current UPSC examination process effective in selecting competent civil servants?
- (a) YES
 - (b) NO
 - (c) Can't say.
- Q3. Is the current UPSC syllabus aligned with real-world administrative challenges?
- (a) YES
 - (b) NO
 - (c) Can't say.
- Q4. Do you believe UPSC maintains transparency in recruitment and results?
- (a) YES
 - (b) NO
 - (c) Can't say.
- Q5. Should UPSC do more to create awareness about its functions and recruitment process among students?
- (a) YES
 - (b) NO
 - (c) Can't say.

