



UPSC IAS Exam Age Limit & Eligibility Criteria 2025-26

Description

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) conducts the Civil Services Examination (CSE) every year to select candidates for various prestigious positions, including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and Indian Foreign Service (IFS), among others.

The tough competition and large number of candidates characterize the IAS exam. To appear for this exam, candidates must meet certain eligibility criteria, including educational qualifications, age limits, and the number of attempts allowed. This article explains the eligibility criteria for the IAS exam in 2025, including details about educational qualifications, age limits, the number of attempts, and more.

UPSC Age Limit to Appear IAS Exam

Age is another important factor in determining whether a candidate is eligible for the IAS exam. The age limit depends on the category the candidate belongs to. UPSC calculates the IAS age limit and IAS eligibility based on the candidate's age as of August 1 of the year in which the exam is held.

SN	Class	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Attempt Limit
1	General Category	21 years	32 years	6 attempts
2	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	21 years	35 years	9 attempts
3	Scheduled Castes (SC)	21 years	37 years	Unlimited until 37 years
4	Scheduled Tribes (ST)	21 years	37 years	Unlimited until 37 years
5	Defense Personnel	21 years	35 years	As per respective category
6	Ex-Servicemen (ESM)	21 years	37 years	As per respective category
7	Persons with Disabilities (PWD - General)	21 years	42 years	9 attempts

SN	Class	MinimumAge	MaximumAge	Attempt Limit
8	Persons with Disabilities (PWD & OBC)	21 years	42 years	9 attempts
9	Persons with Disabilities (PWD & SC/ST)	21 years	42 years	Unlimited until 42 years

Minimum Age

- The minimum age to apply for the IAS exam is **21 years**. This means the candidate must have turned 21 years old by August 1 of the year they are appearing for the exam.
- **Example:** For the IAS exam in 2025, the candidate must be born before **August 1, 2004** to meet the minimum age requirement.

Upper Age Limit

The UPSC exam age limit for the exam varies depending on the candidate's category.

- General Category
 - The UPSC age limit for general category candidates is **32 years**. This means the candidate must not be older than 32 years on August 1 of the year of the exam.
- Other Backward Classes (OBC)
 - UPSC allows OBC candidates a 3-year relaxation in the upper age limit. This means the UPSC age limit for OBC is **35 years**.
- Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST)
 - SC/ST candidates get a **5-year relaxation**. This means they can appear for the exam until they are **37 years old**.
- Defense Personnel
 - Candidates who are **disabled during military operations** in foreign countries or disturbed areas and are released from service can apply until they are **35 years old**.
- Ex-Servicemen (ESM)
 - Ex-servicemen who have served for at least **5 years** in the military can apply until they are **37 years old**.
- Persons with Disabilities (PWD)
 - Candidates with disabilities, including blind, deaf, and those with physical disabilities, can get an age relaxation depending on their category.
 - For general category PWD candidates, the upper age limit is **42 years**.
 - OBC PWD candidates can apply until they are **42 years old**.
 - SC/ST PWD candidates can apply until they are **42 years old** as well.

Cumulative Age Relaxation

In some cases, candidates can combine age relaxations. For example, an OBC candidate who is also an ex-serviceman will get an age relaxation of **5 years (OBC) + 7 years (Ex-serviceman)**, allowing them to apply until they are **42 years old**.

Minimum Educational Qualifications to Appear for the UPSC Civil Services Exam

To apply for the IAS exam, candidates need to meet certain educational requirements. These requirements are simple but crucial for eligibility. Following are the UPSC Qualifications required.

1. General Educational Requirement

- Candidates must have a **graduation degree** from a recognized university or college.
- A university established by an Act of Parliament or a State Legislature in India must award the degree.
- Candidates with a foreign degree can apply if a recognized authority considers it equivalent to an Indian degree.

1. Final Year Students

- Candidates who are in their **final year of graduation** can also apply for the exam. However, they need to ensure that they complete their graduation before the interview stage.
- These candidates must provide proof of having passed the exam before they can appear for the final interview.

1. Equivalent Qualifications

- If a candidate has an equivalent qualification to a graduation degree, the UPSC will recognize it, and they will be eligible to apply for the exam. Candidates need to provide a certificate from the university or institution confirming the equivalence.

The UPSC does not require any specific field of study. This means candidates from any background (arts, science, engineering, medicine, etc.) can apply for the exam as long as they meet the educational qualifications.

UPSC Attempt Limit for IAS & Civil Services Exam

The number of attempts allowed to appear for the IAS exam is another important eligibility criterion. The number of attempts varies depending on the category of the candidate.

How Many Attempts are Allowed?

1. General Category:

- Candidates from the general category can appear for the exam **a maximum of 6 times** until they reach the age of 32.

1. Other Backward Classes (OBC):

- OBC candidates are allowed **9 attempts** until they turn **35 years old**.

1. Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST):

- SC/ST candidates can appear for the exam an **unlimited number of times** until they reach the age of **37**.

1. Persons with Disabilities (PWD):

- Candidates with disabilities get more attempts:
 - General category PWD candidates can appear **9 times** until they are **42 years old**.
 - OBC PWD candidates can appear **9 times** until they are **42 years old**.
 - SC/ST PWD candidates can appear for the exam an **unlimited number of times** until they are **42 years old**.

How Are Attempts Counted?

- An attempt is counted when a candidate appears for **any paper** in the UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Exam. If the candidate fills out the application but does not attend the exam, their attempt will **not** be counted.
- Candidates who apply but do not appear for the exam are not considered to have used up their attempt.

Other Requirements and Relaxations

In addition to the educational qualifications, age limits, and number of attempts, UPSC also considers certain medical and physical fitness requirements, especially for services like the IPS (Indian Police Service) and IFS (Indian Foreign Service). These are important to ensure candidates are fit for these physically demanding roles.

1. Nationality:

- A candidate must be a **citizen of India**. However, candidates from **Nepal, Bhutan, or Tibetan refugees** who came to India before January 1, 1962, may also be eligible, under specific conditions.
- Candidates from **Jammu and Kashmir** who belong to the general category must provide proof of domicile to be eligible.

1. Persons with Disabilities (PWD):

- Candidates with disabilities (blind, deaf, or physically handicapped) are given special relaxations in terms of the number of attempts and age limit.
- They may also get help during the exam in the form of a scribe (someone who writes the exam for them) or extra time.

1. Other Medical Requirements:

- Depending on the service they are applying for, candidates may need to meet certain medical standards. For example, candidates applying for the IPS must meet physical fitness standards set by UPSC.

Conclusion

The UPSC Civil Services Examination is one of the most competitive exams in India, and understanding the eligibility criteria is essential for any candidate who wishes to apply for the IAS exam. The educational qualifications, age limit, and number of attempts are important factors in determining whether a candidate is eligible. Candidates should ensure they meet these criteria before applying and plan their preparation accordingly.

It's always a good idea to refer to the [official UPSC notification](#) for the latest updates on eligibility criteria. The UPSC exam process is highly competitive, and being well-prepared with all the information about eligibility will give candidates a better chance to succeed. By understanding the eligibility requirements and preparing accordingly, candidates can embark on their journey toward becoming an IAS officer or joining any of the other prestigious All India Services.