



What is the Safe Score for UPSC?

Description

Every UPSC aspirant wonders about the “safe score” needed to clear different stages of the Civil Services Examination (CSE). The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) does not fix a specific safe score. However, analysing past trends helps in understanding the minimum marks required to stay ahead in the competition.

Safe Score for UPSC Prelims

The UPSC Preliminary Exam has two papers:

Paper	Total Marks	Qualifying Criteria
General Studies (GS) Paper-I	200	Determines selection for Mains
CSAT (GS Paper-II)	200	Qualifying with 33% (66 marks)

Read [UPSC Syllabus here](#).

Expected Safe Score for Prelims GS Paper-I

The cutoff changes every year based on factors like difficulty level, vacancies, and competition. Here is an estimate based on previous years:

Category	Expected Safe Score
General	110+
OBC	100+
SC	90+
ST	85+

To ensure selection, aim for **110+ marks** in Prelims.

Safe Score for UPSC Mains

The UPSC Mains Exam has nine papers. Seven are counted for merit.

Minimum Qualifying Scores (Compulsory Papers)

Paper	Total Marks	Qualifying Marks
English	300	75 (25%)
Indian Language	300	75 (25%)

Expected Safe Score for Mains (Total Marks: 1750)

The cutoff for the last recommended candidate is usually between 750-850 marks. A safe score to get an interview call is:

Category	Safe Score
General	850-900
OBC	800-850
SC/ST	700-750

Aiming for **900+ marks** ensures a strong chance of selection.

Safe Score for UPSC Interview (Personality Test)

The Interview carries **275 marks**. Candidates score between **140-210**. To be on the safer side, aim for **180+ marks**.

Interview Score	Range	Performance
140-160		Low
160-180		Average
180-200		Good
200+		Excellent

Final Safe Score for UPSC Selection

The final selection depends on **Mains (1750 marks) + Interview (275 marks) = 2025 marks**.

Expected Safe Score for Final Selection

Service	Safe Score
IAS	1000+
IPS	900-950

Other Services 850-900

For IAS under the General category, aim for **1000+ marks**.

Factors Affecting Safe Score in UPSC

1. Difficulty Level of Paper

UPSC changes the difficulty of exams each year. A tough paper lowers the cutoff, while an easy one raises it.

2. Number of Vacancies

More vacancies mean a lower cutoff. Fewer vacancies raise the required marks. Read [vacancy information of 2025](#).

3. Number of Candidates Appearing

A higher number of aspirants increases competition and affects the cutoff score.

4. Reservation Quota

Different categories have different cutoffs. OBC, SC, and ST candidates get relaxation in marks.

5. Scaling in Mains Optional Papers

Some optional subjects get higher scaling, affecting the overall safe score.

How to Achieve a Safe Score in UPSC?

1. Strong Prelims Strategy

- Solve previous years's papers.
- Attempt mock tests regularly.
- Focus on accuracy to avoid negative marking.

2. Effective Mains Preparation

- Practice answer writing daily.
- Follow a structured study plan.
- Cover current affairs along with static subjects.

3. Interview Preparation

- Work on communication skills.
- Stay updated on current affairs.
- Be confident and honest in responses.

4. Time Management

- Allocate time wisely between subjects.
- Follow a daily study schedule.
- Give extra time to weak areas.

5. Choose the Right Optional Subject

- Pick an optional subject with a good success rate.
- Ensure you have interest and understanding in it.

Why Understanding Safe Score Matters?

1. Helps in Goal Setting

Knowing the expected safe score allows aspirants to set realistic targets.

2. Reduces Exam Pressure

Having a clear score target makes preparation more structured and less stressful.

3. Aids in Smart Planning

Aspirants can adjust their strategy based on expected marks.

4. Increases Confidence

When students consistently score above the safe range in mocks, their confidence grows.

Safe Score Trends in Recent Years

The safe score fluctuates each year. Below is a trend analysis:

UPSC Prelims Cutoff Trend (General Category)

Year Cutoff Marks

2023 90+

2022 88+

2021 87+

2020 92+

2019 98+

UPSC Mains Cutoff Trend (General Category)

Year Cutoff Marks

2023 750+

2022 760+

2021 745+

2020 780+

2019 775+

UPSC Final Cutoff Trend (General Category)

Year Cutoff Marks

2023 1000+

2022 980+

2021 970+

2020 990+

2019 1005+

Conclusion

The safe score for UPSC is not fixed. It depends on the year, paper difficulty, and competition. Aiming for **110+ in Prelims, 900+ in Mains, and 180+ in the Interview** increases the chances of selection. Aspirants must focus on preparation strategy, answer writing, and current affairs to secure a rank.

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