

What is CSS?

CSS stands for ****Central Superior Services****, a nationwide competitive exam conducted by the ****Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC)**** to recruit candidates for ****BS-17**** civil service positions in various ****federal government departments**** of Pakistan. It is regarded as one of the most prestigious and difficult exams in the country.

Central Superior Services

The Central Superior Services (CSS; or Civil Service) is a permanent elite civil service authority and the civil service that is responsible for running the bureaucratic operations and government secretariats and directorates of the Cabinet of Pakistan.[1] The Prime Minister is the final authority on all matters regarding the civil service.

The civil service defined itself as "key wheels on which the entire engine of the state has to move." [1] Derived from the colonial legacy of the former British Indian Civil Service, the civil service came into its modern formation immediately after the establishment of Pakistan as a "Civil Service of Pakistan". [2] During its time of formation, the bureaucracy produced Ghulam Ishaq Khan who would go on to become the President of Pakistan. It influenced many of the state's defence, internal, foreign and financial policies. [3] In 1971, it was re-organized and reestablished under "Chapter I: Part-XII, Article 240" of the Constitution of Pakistan which gave it foundation and constitutional status. [4] The civil bureaucracy closely collaborated with the military establishments of Pakistani Armed Forces in issues concerning the national security. [2] The bureaucracy consists of 12 directorates that provide vital office and secretariat related duties to the Government of Pakistan. [5] The provincial bureaucracies are headed by the respective Chief Secretaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan. The highest attainable rank for an officer who serves in the country's bureaucracy is BPS-22 grade.

Pakistan Secretariat Buildings, Islamabad The Civil Service of Pakistan selects only 7.5% of the applicants by merit, education, qualification and experience. In comparison, 92.5% are selected by a quota system. [6] The civil service exams are competitive [1] and provides equal opportunities to males and females, depending on their qualifications. The CSS Examinations are held at the start of every year. The Federal Public Service Commission conducts and supervises the exams. CSS exams have a reputation for a very low pass percentage. In 2020, the passing percentage was only 1.962. In 2021, only 364 (2.11%) of the 17,240 participants cleared the multi-staged exam. In 2022, the passing percentage decreased to 1.85%. [7][8]=

Purpose of CSS

CSS aims to select the most capable individuals for the following:

- * Administration of public services
- * Policy making and enforcement

- * Diplomatic and international representation
- * Law enforcement and revenue collection
- * Economic planning, customs, and taxation

Eligibility Criteria

Requirement	Details
Nationality	Pakistani
Education	Minimum Bachelor's degree (2nd division)
Age Limit	21 to 30 years (relaxation for some categories)
Number of Attempts	3 Maximum

Exam Structure

1. Written Examination (1200 Marks)

- * 600 marks compulsory subjects
- * 600 marks optional subjects (chosen from groups)

2. Medical Examination

- * Physical and mental fitness evaluation

3. Psychological Assessment

- * Personality tests, situational judgments, etc.

4. Viva Voce (Interview) (300 Marks)

- * Conducted by a panel of experts and senior officials

☒ Compulsory Subjects (600 Marks)

Subject	Marks
English Essay	100
English (Precis & Composition)	100
General Science & Ability	100
Current Affairs	100
Pakistan Affairs	100
Islamic Studies OR Comparative Religion	100

☒ Optional Subjects (600 Marks)

Optional subjects must be selected from defined groups by FPSC. Candidates should pick subjects based on:

- * Educational background
- * Interest
- * Scoring trends
- * Availability of study materials

Popular optional subjects include:

- * International Relations (IR)
- * Political Science
- * History (Islamic/World/European)
- * Sociology
- * Criminology
- * Geography
- * Law
- * Psychology
- * Journalism

☒ Timeline & Preparation Plan

****Ideal Preparation Duration:**** 6 to 12 months

Daily Routine:

- * English practice (Essay, précis, comprehension)
- * Current affairs reading (Dawn, The News, etc.)
- * Optional subject revision
- * Past paper practice
- * Group discussion/mock interviews

Resources:

- * CSS academies (optional)
- * Online platforms (YouTube, forums, websites)
- * FPSC recommended books
- * Past papers and solved MCQs

☒ Groups You Can Join After Passing CSS

Group	Description
PAS (Pakistan Administrative Service)	District administration & policymaking
PSP (Police Service of Pakistan)	Police & law enforcement
FSP (Foreign Service of Pakistan)	Diplomacy and foreign relations
IRS (Inland Revenue Service)	Income tax and revenue collection
Customs (PCS)	Border trade, customs duties
PAAS	Government auditing and accounts
IG (Information Group)	Media & public communication
MLCG	Army lands and cantonment areas
OMG (Office Management Group)	Secretariat and clerical services
Postal Group	Postal service management
Railways Group	Railways administration

☒ Common Mistakes to Avoid

- * Underestimating English paper (especially essay)
- * Not reading newspapers and staying updated
- * Ignoring MCQs and General Ability prep
- * Poor time management in paper
- * Depending entirely on academies

☒ Benefits of Clearing CSS

- * High social respect and authority
- * Secure government job with perks (medical, residence, transport)
- * Career advancement to Grade 22 (Federal Secretary level)
- * Opportunity to work internationally (FSP)
- * Power to bring real change in society

☒ Official Links

- * FPSC Website: <https://www.fpsc.gov.pk>
- * CSS Syllabus & Rules: Available on FPSC site
- * CSS Past Papers: Downloadable from online platforms

☒ Final Advice

- * Start early, prepare daily
- * Focus on English and Current Affairs
- * Choose your optional subjects wisely
- * Attempt mock exams regularly
- * Stay calm and consistent

CSS is not just an exam, it is a journey of personal development, discipline, and vision. With proper strategy, dedication, and practice, success is achievable!

☒ Legal Framework & Acts Governing CSS (Central Superior Services), Pakistan

1. Federal Public Service Commission Ordinance, 1977

This is the founding legal document establishing the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC).

Key Provisions:

FPSC is responsible for recruiting civil servants purely on merit.

CSS examination is conducted under the authority of this ordinance.

The ordinance empowers FPSC to conduct exams, interviews, and psychometric assessments.

2. Civil Servants Act, 1973

This is the core law governing all civil servants in Pakistan.

Key Features:

Recruitment, appointments, promotions, and transfers are defined by this act.

Civil servants cannot be removed or demoted without due process.

It ensures security of tenure and protection from political interference.

Layoffs, retirement, and disciplinary procedures are also governed by this act.

3. CSS Competitive Examination Rules

These are annually updated by FPSC and published officially.

Highlights:

Age Limit: Generally 21–30 years (relaxation for certain groups)

Educational Requirement: Minimum bachelor's degree

Examination Phases:

Written Test

Medical Examination

Psychological Assessment

Viva Voce (Interview)

Subjects:

Compulsory (600 marks)

Optional (600 marks from predefined groups)

4. Quota System Regulations

CSS follows a federal quota system to ensure regional representation.

Current quota distribution:

Punjab: 50%

Sindh (Urban): 7.5%

Sindh (Rural): 11.4%

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 11.5%

Balochistan: 6%

GB/FATA: 4%

Azad Jammu & Kashmir: 2%

Minorities (Non-Muslims): 5%

5. Establishment Division Rules

The Establishment Division of Pakistan regulates postings, transfers, promotions, and cadre management of civil servants.

Determines group allocation after CSS success (e.g., PAS, PSP, FSP, IRS)

Handles seniority lists, promotions, and career planning

Responsible for policy guidelines regarding performance and integrity

6. Training Rules (CTP & STP)

All successful CSS officers must undergo formal training:

Common Training Program (CTP):

General training for officers of all groups

Covers public administration, governance, law, economics, etc.

Specialized Training Program (STP):

Group-specific advanced training (e.g., Police, Customs, Foreign Service)

Prepares officers for their professional duties

7. Promotion & Disciplinary Rules

Promotions are governed by the Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs)

Based on seniority, performance, training, and service records

Civil servants can be disciplined under Efficiency and Discipline Rules for misconduct, corruption, or negligence

Penalties may include warning, suspension, demotion, or dismissal

8. Code of Conduct for Civil Servants

All CSS officers must follow a strict code of ethics:

Must avoid political involvement or influence

Must show honesty, neutrality, integrity, and efficiency

Cannot express controversial views in public or on media

Subject to declaration of assets and financial transparency

9. Freedom of Information & Transparency

Civil servants are bound to follow transparency laws in public dealings

Citizens have the right to access information under Right to Information Acts

Officials must maintain public records and justify administrative decisions