

UPSC Interview (Personality Test) Overview

The UPSC Civil Services Interview, also called the **Personality Test**, is the final stage of the selection process after the Preliminary and Mains exams. It carries **275 marks**, making it decisive in the final ranking.

Unlike the written exams, the interview does **not test knowledge directly**, but evaluates personality traits, decision-making, and suitability for a career in public service.

Composition of the Interview Board

- Conducted at **UPSC office, New Delhi**.
- Board is headed by a **Chairperson (a UPSC member)** and 4–5 other members (often academicians, retired civil servants, subject experts).
- Duration: **20–40 minutes typically**, though it can vary.

Evaluation Criteria

The board assesses whether the candidate has the qualities required for effective administration. Some of the major parameters:

1. **General Demeanour**
 - Confidence, clarity of expression, calmness.
 - Body language and attentiveness.
2. **Intellectual Qualities**
 - Depth and balance of judgment.
 - Ability to analyze complex situations.
 - Awareness of current affairs and issues.
3. **Social Traits**
 - Leadership qualities.
 - Ability to work in a team.
 - Tolerance and adaptability.
4. **Moral Integrity & Ethics**
 - Honesty, impartiality, objectivity.
 - Empathy for marginalized groups.

5. Suitability for Public Service

- Administrative aptitude.
- Commitment to values enshrined in the Constitution.

Types of Questions Asked

1. Personal Background

- Education, hometown, work experience, hobbies.
- Questions are often drawn from the **Detailed Application Form (DAF)**.

2. Current Affairs

- National and international issues.
- Recent government policies, socio-economic problems.

3. Situational/Behavioral Questions

- “What would you do if you were the District Magistrate facing a flood crisis?”
- Tests problem-solving under pressure.

4. Abstract/Opinion-based

- Ethical dilemmas, philosophical takes on governance.

5. Subject-related

- Linked to optional subject or graduation discipline.

Marking Style

- No strict marking key; evaluation is **holistic**.
- Emphasis is on **balanced thinking, positive attitude, and practical problem-solving** rather than “right answers.”
- Extreme opinions, arrogance, or ignorance of basic issues may reduce marks.

Traits that Impress the Board

- ✓ Calm and composed attitude.
- ✓ Balanced opinions — not too rigid, not too vague.
- ✓ Awareness of both **facts and context**.

- ✓ Respectful communication with the board.
- ✓ Display of integrity, empathy, and administrative practicality.

Common Misconceptions

- ✗ It's not a **knowledge test** — factual errors are tolerated if handled gracefully.
- ✗ Fluent English is **not mandatory**; clarity of thought matters more.
- ✗ It's not a stress interview; the goal is to understand personality.