

UPSC ESE / IES Syllabus 2026

Union Public Service Commission — Engineering Services Examination

Vacancies	Announced yearly across Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Electronics & Telecom disciplines
Age Limit	21–30 years (as on 1 January of the exam year; relaxation per government norms)
Qualification	Engineering degree in the relevant discipline from a recognised university/institute (or equivalent professional qualification)
Application Fee	■200 (General/OBC male candidates). Women and SC/ST/PwBD candidates are exempted.
Official Website	upsc.gov.in
Last Reviewed	30 Apr 2026

Overview

UPSC ESE (commonly called IES) recruits engineering graduates into Group A/B central engineering services across four disciplines — Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, and Electronics & Telecommunication. It mirrors the UPSC CSE's multi-stage structure but with a fully technical syllabus: an objective Preliminary stage, a descriptive-and-conventional Main examination in the candidate's own discipline, and a Personality Test. Because both stages test deep, discipline-specific engineering knowledge, ESE preparation overlaps heavily with core degree coursework and GATE-level conceptual clarity.

What's New in the 2026 Cycle

- Four disciplines only — Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, and Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering — no other branches are currently covered.
- Prelims Paper I (General Studies & Engineering Aptitude) is common to all disciplines; Paper II is fully discipline-specific.
- Mains has two fully conventional/descriptive discipline-specific papers, distinct from the MCQ-based Prelims.
- Final merit combines Prelims, Mains and Interview marks — unlike CSE, Prelims marks do count toward the ESE final score.

Exam Pattern

Preliminary Examination

Mode: Offline, objective MCQ | Duration: Paper I: 2 hours; Paper II: 3 hours

Section	Questions	Marks
Paper I — General Studies & Engineering Aptitude	100	200
Paper II — Discipline-specific Engineering	—	300

Negative marking: 1/3rd mark deducted per wrong answer | **Nature:** Used to shortlist for Mains; Prelims marks also count toward the final aggregate.

Main Examination

Mode: Offline, conventional/descriptive, discipline-specific | Duration: 3 hours per paper (2 papers)

Section	Questions	Marks
Paper I — Discipline-specific Engineering	—	300
Paper II — Discipline-specific Engineering	—	300

Negative marking: Not applicable — descriptive paper | **Nature:** Counted for final merit.

Personality Test (Interview)

Mode: Board interview | Duration: —

Section	Questions	Marks
Personality, technical competence & suitability for engineering services	—	200

Negative marking: Not applicable | **Nature:** Counted for final merit.

UPSC ESE / IES — Detailed Subject-Wise Syllabus

Prelims Paper I — General Studies & Engineering Aptitude

A comparatively low-effort, high-return section if prepared consistently — don't neglect it in favour of only technical revision.

- Current issues of national & international importance
- Engineering aptitude — logical reasoning & analytical ability
- Engineering mathematics & numerical analysis
- General principles of design, drawing & safety
- Standards & quality practices
- Basics of energy, environment, project management
- Basics of material science & digital electronics
- Ethics & values in the engineering profession

Civil Engineering (Prelims Paper II & Mains)

Structural and geotechnical topics carry heavy recurring weight across both Prelims and Mains.

- Building materials, structural analysis & RCC/steel design
- Geotechnical engineering & foundation design
- Surveying
- Hydraulics, irrigation & water resources engineering
- Environmental engineering
- Transportation engineering
- Construction technology, planning & management

Mechanical Engineering (Prelims Paper II & Mains)

Thermal engineering and machine design are consistently high-weightage areas year on year.

- Theory of machines, machine design & vibration
- Engineering mechanics & strength of materials
- Thermodynamics, IC engines & heat transfer
- Fluid mechanics & turbomachinery
- Manufacturing science & industrial engineering
- Refrigeration & air conditioning

Electrical Engineering (Prelims Paper II & Mains)

Power systems and electrical machines dominate — build strong circuit-theory fundamentals first.

- Electric circuits & fields
- Electrical & electronic measurements
- Power electronics & drives
- Control systems
- Electrical machines
- Power systems — generation, transmission & protection
- Analog & digital electronics

Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering (Prelims Paper II & Mains)

Communication systems and signals & systems carry disproportionate weight relative to other topics.

- Basic electronics engineering & materials science
- Analog & digital circuits
- Signals & systems
- Control systems
- Communication systems
- Electromagnetic theory
- Advanced electronics & communication topics

Selection Process

- 1 Preliminary Examination — General Studies & Engineering Aptitude (Paper I) plus discipline-specific Paper II.
- 2 Main Examination — two discipline-specific conventional/descriptive papers.
- 3 Personality Test (Interview).
- 4 Final merit based on combined Prelims + Mains + Interview marks.

Salary & Job Profile

ESE-recruited engineers typically start at Pay Level 10 (₹56,100 basic) in Group A engineering services, with promotion to senior engineering and administrative roles over a career, plus Dearness Allowance, HRA and other applicable allowances.

Best Books for Preparation

- Discipline-specific GATE/ESE standard textbooks (e.g. RCC Design, Fluid Mechanics, Power Systems, as per branch)
- UPSC ESE Previous Years' Papers — discipline-wise (various publishers)
- General Studies & Engineering Aptitude — Made Easy Publications
- NCERT Class 11–12 Physics & Mathematics (for foundational revision)

Previous Cut-off Trends (Approximate)

UPSC ESE cut-offs vary sharply by discipline (Civil/Mechanical/Electrical/Electronics & Telecom) and by stage (Prelims/Mains/final), since each branch has a different vacancy count and applicant pool every year. Always check the discipline-wise official cut-off release rather than assuming a common figure.

Preparation Tips

- Revise your core degree subjects methodically discipline-by-discipline rather than relying only on generic MCQ practice — Mains rewards depth and correct engineering fundamentals.
- Since Prelims marks count toward the final total (unlike UPSC CSE), don't treat Prelims as disposable — every mark there carries into the aggregate.
- Practise writing full conventional answers with labelled diagrams for Mains; presentation and clarity matter as much as correctness.
- Keep the General Studies & Engineering Aptitude paper light-touch but consistent — current affairs and basic aptitude questions are scoring opportunities relative to preparation time required.

Exam Day Guidelines

- Carry the e-Admit Card and a valid original photo ID to the centre for every stage.
- Carry your own geometry box, pens and permitted stationery for the descriptive Mains papers.
- Only black ballpoint pens are permitted for the OMR sheet in Prelims.
- No electronic devices, including calculators, are allowed inside the examination hall unless explicitly permitted in that year's notification.

Frequently Asked Questions

Which engineering disciplines does UPSC ESE cover?

Only four — Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering.

Do UPSC ESE Prelims marks count toward the final result?

Yes — unlike UPSC CSE, ESE's Preliminary Examination marks are included in the final aggregate along with Mains and Interview marks.

Is the ESE Mains exam objective or descriptive?

Descriptive/conventional — candidates write full technical answers with derivations and diagrams, unlike the MCQ-based Prelims.

Is there negative marking in UPSC ESE?

Yes, in the objective Prelims papers — 1/3rd of the marks allotted to a question is deducted for every wrong answer; the descriptive Mains papers have no negative marking.

What is the age limit for UPSC ESE?

Candidates must be between 21 and 30 years of age as on 1 January of the exam year, with standard relaxations for reserved categories.

Compiled and reviewed by Syllabus Hub against the official Union Public Service Commission notification as of 30 Apr 2026. Exam patterns, vacancies and dates are subject to change — always cross-check with the official notification at upsc.gov.in before applying. © 2026 Syllabus Hub.