

INTRODUCTION **TO** **COMPETITIVE** **EXAMS**

Unit Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Exams conducted for entry into professional courses
- 15.3 Exams conducted for entry into jobs
- 15.4 Soft Skills required for Competitive Exams
- 15.5 Summary
- 15.6 Unit End Questions

15.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To know the pattern of Various Examinations
2. To get the information about the exams conducted for the entry into jobs
3. To become aware about the various soft skills
4. To use the time effectively
5. To become aware about the goals of life

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Examinations are conducted to evaluate a person of his knowledge or ability. There are different types of examinations like qualifying or competitive exams. Qualifying exams are conducted to evaluate certain kind of knowledge or skills; they are decided as per the course. After completing a particular course or during the

course these exams are conducted. Here the number of students are limited. Competitive exams are conducted either to qualify a candidate for a particular course or to give entry into the institution. Competitive exams are also conducted for selecting a person for a job. Clearing a Competitive exam will help a person to enter into his Dream College or institution or to pursue his dream job. This section will help students to get some vital information about those exams. Some of the major institutions of government conducts these examinations. To clear these exams dedicated efforts along with certain soft skills are required. One should have clear knowledge of one's goals, should know how to use time effectively for getting success in competitive exams.

15.2 EXAMS CONDUCTED FOR ENTRY INTO PROFESSIONAL COURSES

Competitive exams are considered as an integral part for the entry into elite institutions to get an admission. They are also called as entrance exams. There is more number of students and limited numbers of seats, admission tests are the solution for selecting deserving students for the specific course. Through these exams the best talented candidates are selected, entrance exams mainly evaluate quantitative aptitude, verbal reasoning, logical reasoning, aptitude, intelligent quotient, lateral thinking etc. Rigorous training, systematic planning and hard work are the keys to face the entrance exams. In some of the institutions entrance exams are followed by group discussion and interview. . Entrance exams in India are more common to professional courses like MBA. Institutes and

15.2.1 Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

Graduate Record Examination is the basic admission requirement for many graduate schools for the various academic programmes (except management) in United States and in some of the English speaking countries. The exam aims to measure verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, analytical writing and critical thinking skills that have been acquired over a long period of time it is not related to specific study or subject. The GRE General Test is offered as a computer-based exam administered by selected qualified testing centres. To appear for these tests no minimum qualification as such is prescribed but it is expected that candidate must be a graduate or must complete graduation within six months. This exam is conducted by The Educational Testing Service(ETS),

Princeton, New Jersey. The ETS administered the exam under the direction of the Graduate Record Examination Board. ETS sets the questions, conducts the test, and sends each examinee the score report. For the conduct of the test, ETS has appointed Testing Agencies in various countries, which act as franchisee for ETS. In India, this agency is the "Sylvan Testing Services Pvt Ltd" which administers the test at 9 centres in the country: Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bangalore, Calcutta, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, New Delhi, and Trivandrum. GRE do not have same set of question paper for all candidates. The test is held throughout the year, an examinee has to choose the day and timing for the examination.

The computer-based GRE General Test consists of six sections. The first section is about the analytical writing, there are two sections on verbal reasoning and two sections on quantitative reasoning, last section is of experimental or research section. There is no fixed order of these sections. The entire test duration is 3 hours 45 minutes

15.2.2 Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

The Graduate Management Admission Test is a standardized, computer-based assessment. More than 5,400 programs offered by more than 1,500 universities and institutions in 83 countries use the GMAT exam as part of the selection criteria for their programs site. This exam is for getting admission into the business schools for the academic programs like M.B.A, Master of Accountancy and some other programs. This exam is administered throughout the world round the year with the highest level of security. It is conducted in selected test centres in more than 110 countries. According to a survey conducted by Kaplan Test Prep, the GMAT is still the number one choice for MBA aspirants despite the increasing acceptability of GRE scores.

The GMAT exam measures skills that help graduate management students to be able to face the challenges of the academic programme. This exam tests the Quantitative aptitude, the verbal reasoning, integrated reasoning and analytical writing. For testing quantitative and verbal skills multiple choice questions are asked. Total testing time is three and a half hours, but test takers should plan for a total time of approximately four hours, with breaks. The quantitative and verbal sections of the GMAT exam, both multiple-choice, are administered in the computer-adaptive format, adjusting to a test taker's level. This both shortens the time

it takes to complete the exam and establishes a higher level of accuracy than a fixed test. At the start of each multiple-choice section of the exam, test takers are presented with a question of medium difficulty. As they answer each question, the computer scores their answer and uses it—as well as their responses to any preceding questions—to determine which question to present next. Correct responses typically prompt questions of increased difficulty. Incorrect responses generally result in questions of lesser difficulty. This process continues until test takers complete the section, at which point the computer will have an accurate assessment of their ability level in that subject area.

15.2.3 Common Admission Test

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) started these (CAT) exams for selecting the candidates for their business administration programmes. One of the IIMs conducts this exam every year by rotation. According to Asian Survey of examinations CAT is rated as the third toughest test in Asia, after UPSCs Indian engineering services at first and IIT-JEE at the second spot.

Some of the other institutes like Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institute of Science would also use Cat as process of their selection of candidates for their management programmes from the 2012-2013. Passing in the CAT merely short listing the candidates for the second stage of selection which includes written ability test (WAT), Group discussion and personal interviews..

CAT is normally conducted every year during a 20 day testing window in the month of October and November. The test score is valid for admission to the forthcoming academic year only.

The current online test has two separate sections, each consisting 40 questions for which 70 minutes time is given for each section. These two sections are-

- Quarantine ability and data interpretation
- Verbal ability and Logical Reasoning

The candidate must hold a Bachelor's degree with at least 50% marks or equivalent CGPA. However for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) it is 45%. The SAT is a standardised test for college admission in the United States. The

SAT is owned, published and developed by the College Board and the Government of United States. It was first introduced in 1926, first it was called as Scholarship Aptitude test, then it was called as Scholarship Assessment test. It evaluates mainly verbal and writing skills needed for academic success in a college. It also measures analytical and problem solving skills of a candidate. The test contains 3 hours and 45 minutes of actual timed section, including breaks and other like orientation, distribution of material etc it may take four and half hours.

There are different levels of questions including easy, medium and hard level. Easier questions appear at the beginning and harder questions appear at the end of the examinations.

15.3 EXAMS CONDUCTED FOR ENTRY INTO JOBS

15.3.1 Union Public Service Commission

The first Public Service Commission was set up on 1st Oct 1926 for the recruitment into its territory. After independence the need was felt to set up an independent organisation for the recruitment into Government services. On 26th Jan 1950 the federal Public Service Commission was given a constitutional status as an autonomous entity and given the title –Union Public Service Commission. This has been established under the article 315 of the constitution of India. Its main duties are recruitment to services and posts under the Union and the Central Government through conduct of competitive examinations and interviews.

Civil Services Examination

Under the constitution one of the functions of the Commission is to conduct examinations for appointment to Civil Services/Posts of the Union. It conducts their examinations spread over 42 regular centres throughout the country. The Civil Services examination is a single and combined examination for recruitment to Indian Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and the other higher Central Services (i.e. group A and group B).

ELIGIBILITY

A candidate must be a minimum of 21 years and maximum of 30 years of age, however the upper age limit is relaxable for the SC/ST candidates by five years. A candidate must hold a degree from any universities or equivalent, candidates appearing for the

requisite degree qualification are also eligible, however they are supposed to give proof of their passing while submitting the application form for their main examination.

Plan of examination

The exam is conducted at two stages, Preliminary and Main Exams. The notification for preliminary comes in the month of Nov.–Dec and it is conducted during May of the next year. It consists of two papers of General Studies 200 marks each.

Civil services Main written examination is conducted during October–November. There are total nine papers including Indian language, English, essay, two papers of General studies and two papers of first optional subject and two papers of second optional subject. Total marks are 2000, Interview test is of 300 marks.

Candidates have the option to answer all the question papers, except the language papers, viz, Paper-I and Paper-II, in any one of the languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution or in English.

In addition to Civil Services Examination UPSC also conduct examinations for entry to certain Defence Services, through the National Defence Academy, Indian Military Academy, Naval Academy, Air force Academy and the Officers Training Academy. National Defence Academy (NDA) Entrance Exam is held twice a year, generally in the month of April and September. A candidate must be an unmarried male. The course of training is for three years. . NDA awards a Bachelor's degree in Arts, Science or Computer Science on completion of one's training .besides these examination Commission also conducts over a dozen examinations every year on all India basis, these include Examinations for recruitment to services/posts in various fields such as Engineering, Medical and Forest Service etc.

For details please refer to UPSC website

15.3.2 Staff Selection Commission

The Staff Selection Commission is an independent body of recruitment of large number of workforce required by the various government departments. It conducts open examinations regularly for posts for which large number of vacancies from various department exist, these are : Graduate Level- Assistants, Auditors/Jr .Accountants/Upper Division Clerks, Divisional

Accountants, Inspectors of Income Tax/Central Excise, Sub-Inspectors in Central Police Organisations (CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP and SSB) and the CBI, Section Officer (Commercial) and Section Officer (Audit). Matric Level- Stenographer Grade `C`, Stenographer Grade `D`, and Lower Division Clerks.(ii) Direct interviews are held for some posts, called Selection Posts, after inviting applications through advertisements, as and when such vacancies are reported to the Commission. Some of such posts are Statistical Assistant, Store Keeper, Jr/Sr. Computers, Information Assistant, etc.

Scheme of examinations conducted by the Staff Selection Commission.

The Staff Selection Commission conducts Combined (Graduate Level) Examinations every year for various posts the qualification for which is graduation, and Combined (Matric Level) Examinations for posts requiring matriculation or High School. Those candidates who qualify in the prelims are required to appear for the Mains. Followed by an Interview (as specified). Those qualifying in the Matric Level Main Exam are required to pass a Skill test (typing or stenography). For some exams such as the Section Officers, Investigators etc. no prelims are held.

The age limits are different for different posts and they are to be confirmed from the Notice of exam published in the Employment News / RozgarSamachar. Generally, the age limits are 18 to 27 years on the crucial date. There is a upper age concession for SCs/STs up to 5 years, for OBCs it is 3 years and for physically handicapped candidates it is 10 years. For widows, divorced women and judicially separated women, the age limit is 35 years for UR category; 40 years for SC/ST women and 38 years for OBC women.

15.3.3 State Public Service Commission

Each state has its own public service commission with functions similar to the UPSC. The major function of state public service commission is to conduct examinations and recruitments for appointments to the services of state including Civil services and others. Through state service commission the candidates are selected for the following categories viz,

- a) State civil services-class-I(SCS).

- b) State Police Service, class-I (SPS)
- c) Block Development Officer
- d) Tehsildar/Talukedar/Asst collector
- e) Excise &Taxation Officer
- f) District Employment Officer
- g) District Treasury Officer
- h) District Welfare Officer
- i) Asst Registrar Cooperative Societies
- j) District Food and Supplies Controller/ Officer
- k) Any other Class-I/Class-II service notified as per rules by the concerned state.

All these services belongs to the middle level administration, After gaining experience of certain years, the officer of the SCS and SPs may expect to be nominated to the IAS and IPS respectively, with some antedate seniority.

For appearing these examination, candidate must be graduate, and his/her age must be 21 years and the upper age limit ranges from 28 to 35 years, varying from state to state, there is also relaxation of upper age limit to candidates belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Ex-servicemen, physically challenged etc.

The pattern of the state Civil services examination is similar to the Civil Services Examination conducted by the UPSC, However some of the smaller states having smaller number of vacancies do not conduct preliminary examination where preliminary examinations are held it in followed by Main examination is followed by interview(for details regarding the details of examination refer internet).

15.3.4 Bank and Insurance Examinations.

There are mainly three types of Banks in our country; they are Nationalised banks, Co-operative Banks and Private banks.

with the development in Indian Economy banking sector is growing day by day, in near future the growth in this sector will increase the employment opportunity. . The Banking Industry is recruiting in a big way. In the next five years , banks will have to recruit almost 7.5 lakh people Generally, the bank examinations are of the following types :

- A) Common Written Examination (CWE) conducted by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) as a prerequisite for the selection of personnel for Probationary Officer / Management Trainee / Clerk / Specialist Officer posts in 19 Public Sector banks.
- B) Exams conducted by SBI and SBI Associate banks for recruitment to the posts of Clerks and officers.
- C) Exam conducted by Private Sector banks for recruitment to the posts of Clerks and officers
- D) Exams conducted by Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative banks for recruitment to the posts of Clerks and officers.

Except for SBI, almost all the major Public Sector Banks are participating in the CWE. The 19 banks which are participating in the CWE are Allahabad Bank, Andhra Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Canara Bank, Central Bank of India, Corporation Bank, Dena Bank, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Punjab National Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, Syndicate Bank, Union Bank of India, United Bank of India, UCO Bank and Vijaya Bank.

The Common Written Examination will be conducted 5 times in a year, twice for Probationary Officer/ Management Trainee, twice for Clerical Cadre posts and once for Specialist officer posts.

Private sector and co-operative banks conduct their own exams. The major recruiters in private sector include the ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Federal Bank, Centurion Bank of Punjab, Indusind Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Yes Bank, ING Vysya Bank, Bank of Rajasthan, KarurVysya Bank, Karnataka Bank, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, South Indian Bank, Bharat Overseas Bank, etc.

Insurance Sector

In India, by and large, Insurance was under Government Undertaking till the recent years, but after the opening of Indian Market, now-a-days many of the multinational Insurance companies have come to offer more job opportunities in the insurance sector in India. But still the major Indian Government undertaking Insurance Enterprises namely LIC (Life Insurance Corporation), GIC (General Insurance Corporation) and Postal Life Insurance are always in the top place in recruiting the candidates for the placements by giving secured job to its Competitive Exams. People prefer to serve in these Establishments in large number.

In the three major Insurance Companies of Indian Government i.e. Life Insurance, General Insurance and Postal Insurance, following positions are recruited every year basis:

Officer positions

Agent positions

Insurance surveyor positions

Following are some of the important examinations for entry of the jobs into insurance sector

- a) LIC Officers' Exam
- b) LIC Development Officers' Exam
- c) GIC Officers' Exam
- d) GIC Assistants ' Exam

National and State Eligibility Test (NET/SET)

National Eligibility Test (NET) was introduced by the University Grants Commission for bringing Uniformity in the qualification of college teachers and research students. The first National Eligibility Test (NET) was conducted by University Grants commission in December 1989 and in March 1990 commonly to both Lectureship and Junior Research fellowship in two parts.

National Eligibility Test is generally conducted twice a year in the month of June and December. The UGC-CSIR NET for the science subjects such as Life sciences, Physical sciences, Chemical sciences, Mathematical sciences and Earth, Atmospheric,

Ocean and planetary sciences are conducted by Council of scientific and industrial Research (CSIR) jointly with UGC. The notification for the same will be issued separately by Council of scientific and industrial Research (CSIR).

The eligibility criteria for these exams is a candidate must have a master's degree with minimum 55%. The scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/ Physically handicapped(PH) who have secured at least 50% in Master's degree examination are eligible for this test.

Examination Pattern

There are three papers, Paper I is common for all subjects. The questions are objective based with multiple options. Paper II and Paper III is subject based

The same pattern is followed in the State Eligibility Test.