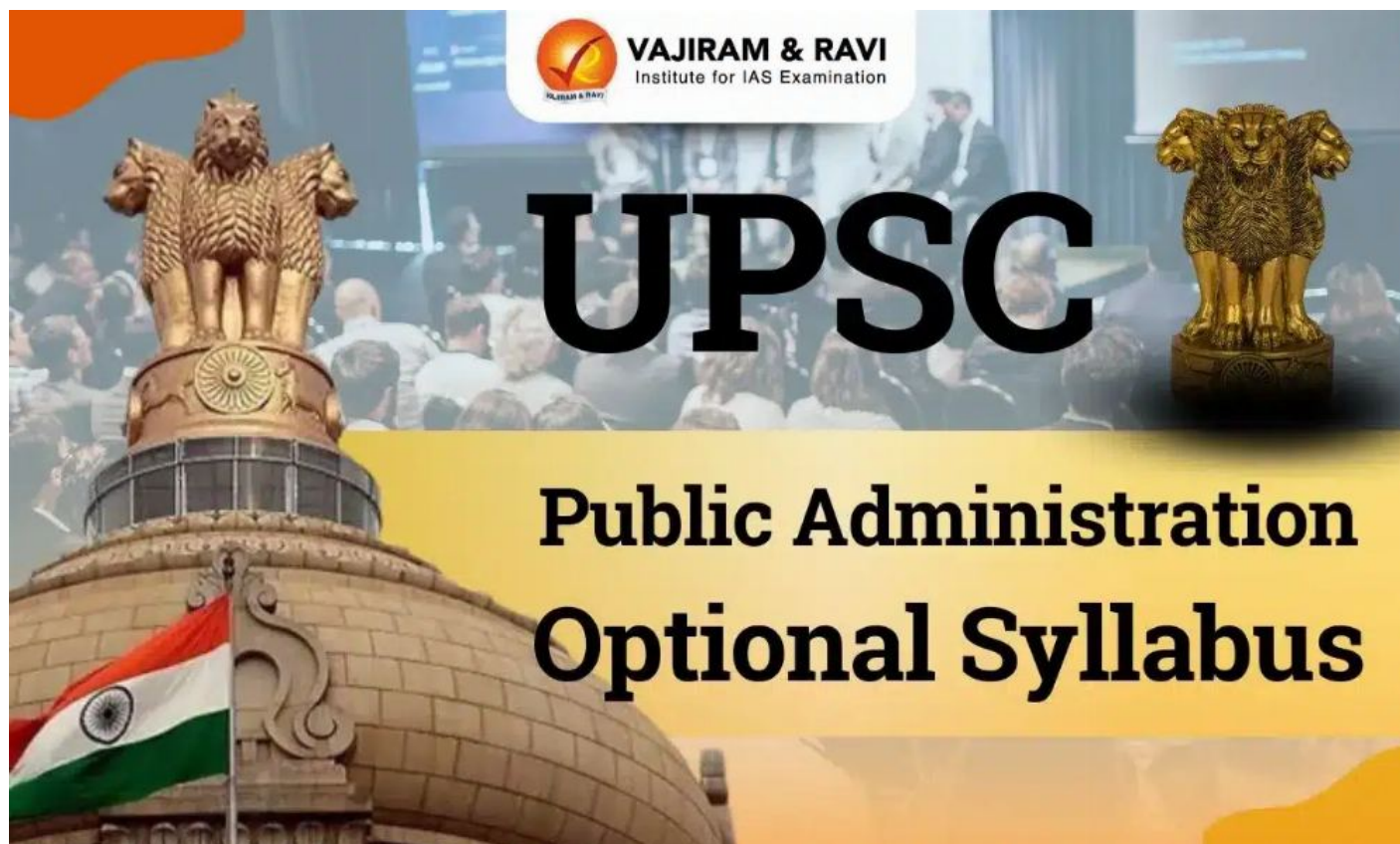


UPSC Public Administration Optional Syllabus 2026, Download PDF

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UPSC Public Administration Syllabus: Being one of the 48 optional subjects in the UPSC Civil Services Mains Exam, Public Administration holds importance for Mains. It consists of two papers, Paper 1 and Paper 2, each with 250 marks. Paper 1 consists of administrative theory, and Paper 2 consists of Indian administration. The Public Administration syllabus for UPSC basically gives you a sense of how the government works. You ought to know this as you will be the administrator in the future.

UPSC Public Administration Optional Syllabus

With 500, out of the 1750 marks in the **UPSC Mains** Exam, the optional subject score can improve your chances for the interview. Public Administration, as an optional subject, is typically thought of as being simple and easy to understand. Public administration has a wealth of available reading material. The general studies papers have a lot of overlap with Public Administration. Studying the Public Administration syllabus will be beneficial for both your UPSC interview and essay. However, some argue that the subject matter is quite extensive. Since the majority of candidates choose this optional subject, there is fierce competition in this field.

UPSC Public Administration Syllabus for Paper 1

The optional paper 1 in the Mains exam consists of questions carrying a total of 250 marks. Check the Public Administration Syllabus for UPSC Mains Optional Paper 1 below:

Administration Theory	
1. Introduction:	Meaning, scope and significance of Public Administration, Wilson's vision of Public Administration, Evolution of the discipline and its present status. New Public Administration, Public Choice approach; Challenges of liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation; Good Governance: concept and application; New Public Management.
2. Administrative Thought:	Scientific Management and Scientific Management movement; Classical Theory; Weber's bureaucratic model, its critique and post-Weberian Developments; Dynamic Administration (Mary Parker Follett); Human Relations School (Elton Mayo and others); Functions of the Executive (C.I. Barnard); Simon's decision-making theory; Participative Management (R. Likert, C. Argyris, D. McGregor.)
3. Administrative Behaviour:	Process and techniques of decision-making; Communication; Morale; Motivation Theories content, process and contemporary; Theories of Leadership: Traditional and Modern.
4. Organisations:	Theories systems, contingency; Structure and forms: Ministries and Departments, Corporations, Companies; Boards and Commissions; Ad hoc, and advisory bodies; Headquarters and Field relationships; Regulatory Authorities; Public-Private Partnerships.
5. Accountability and Control:	Concepts of accountability and control; Legislative, Executive and judicial control over administration; Citizen and Administration; Role of media, interest groups, voluntary organizations; Civil society; Citizen's Charters; Right to Information; Social audit.
6. Administrative Law:	Meaning, scope and significance; Dicey on Administrative law; Delegated legislation; Administrative Tribunals .
7. Comparative Public Administration:	Historical and sociological factors affecting administrative systems; Administration and politics in different countries; Current status of Comparative Public Administration; Ecology and administration; Riggsian models and their critique.
8. Development Dynamics:	Concept of development; Changing profile of development administration; 'Anti-development thesis'; Bureaucracy and development; Strong state versus the market debate; Impact of liberalisation on administration in developing countries; Women and development the self-help group movement.

9. Personnel Administration:	Importance of human resource development; Recruitment, training, career advancement, position classification, discipline, performance appraisal, promotion, pay and service conditions; employer-employee relations, grievance redressal mechanism; Code of conduct; Administrative ethics.
10. Public Policy:	Models of policy-making and their critique; Processes of conceptualisation, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review and their limitations; State theories and public policy formulation.
11. Techniques of Administrative Improvement:	Organisation and methods, Work study and work management; e-governance and information technology; Management aid tools like network analysis, MIS, PERT, CPM.
12. Financial Administration:	Monetary and fiscal policies: Public borrowings and public debt Budgets types and forms; Budgetary process; Financial accountability; Accounts and audit.

Public Administration Optional Syllabus 2026 for Paper 2

The UPSC Public Administration Optional Paper 2 syllabus is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of various aspects of governance, public policy, development administration, and the challenges faced by administrative systems.

Indian Administration	
1. Evolution of Indian Administration:	Kautilya Arthashastra; Mughal administration; Legacy of British rule in politics and administration Indianization of Public services, revenue administration, district Administration, local self-government .
2. Philosophical and Constitutional Framework of Government:	Salient features and value premises; Constitutionalism; Political culture; Bureaucracy and democracy; Bureaucracy and development.
3. Public Sector Undertakings:	Public sector in modern India; Forms of Public Sector Undertakings; Problems of autonomy, accountability and control; Impact of liberalisation and privatisation.
4. Union Government and Administration:	Executive, Parliament , Judiciary-structure, functions, work processes; Recent trends; Intra-governmental relations; Cabinet Secretariat; Prime Minister's Office; Central Secretariat; Ministries and Departments; Boards; Commissions; Attached offices; Field organisations.
5. Plans and Priorities:	Machinery of planning; Role, composition and functions of the Planning Commission and the National Development Council; 'Indicative' planning; Process of plan formulation at Union and State levels; Constitutional Amendments (1992) and decentralised planning for economic development and social justice.

6. State Government and Administration:	Union-State administrative, legislative and financial relations; Role of the Finance Commission; Governor; Chief Minister; Council of Ministers; Chief Secretary; State Secretariat; Directorates.
7. District Administration since Independence:	Changing role of the Collector; Union-State-local relations; Imperatives of development management and law and order administration; District administration and democratic decentralisation.
8. Civil Services:	Constitutional position; Structure, recruitment, training and capacity building; Good governance initiatives; Code of conduct and discipline; Staff associations; Political rights; Grievance redressal mechanism; Civil service neutrality; Civil service activism.
9. Financial Management:	Budget as a political instrument; Parliamentary control of public expenditure; Role of finance ministry in monetary and fiscal area; Accounting techniques; Audit; Role of Controller General of Accounts and Comptroller and Auditor General of India .
10. Administrative Reforms since Independence:	Major concerns; Important Committees and Commissions; Reforms in financial management and human resource development; Problems of implementation.
11. Rural Development:	Institutions and agencies since Independence; Rural development programmes: foci and strategies; Decentralization and Panchayati Raj ; 73rd Constitutional Amendment.
12. Urban Local Government:	Municipal governance: main features, structures, finance and problem areas; 74th Constitutional Amendment; Global-local debate; New localism; Development dynamics, politics, and administration with special reference to city management.
13. Law and Order Administration:	British legacy; National Police Commission; Investigative agencies; Role of Central and State Agencies including paramilitary forces in maintenance of law and order and countering insurgency and terrorism; Criminalisation of politics and administration; Police-public relations; Reforms in Police.
14. Significant issues in Indian Administration:	Values in public service; Regulatory Commissions; National Human Rights Commission ; Problems of administration in coalition regimes; Citizen administration interface; Corruption and administration; Disaster management.

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Public Administration Optional Syllabus 2026 Preparation Strategy

If prepared well, Public Administration as an optional subject is easy to understand. For the preparation of Public Administration, the following points should be taken into consideration.

- In order to successfully prepare for any exam, including the UPSC Public Administration Optional Exam, it is imperative to comprehend the syllabus. The syllabus aids in the planning of your study plan by giving you an overview of the subjects and topics that will be covered in the actual examination.
- The aspirant must be well-versed in the basic concepts and theories, and thinkers. The thinkers on this subject are very important. Sometimes half of the questions in Paper 1 of Mains are based on thinkers. Without conceptual clarity, it is impossible to perform well on the Public Administration optional exam.
- Paper 1 is generally theoretical, and Paper 2 is practical. The aspirant should apply the theoretical part of Paper 1 to Paper 2. It will give a broad understanding of optional subject.
- **Current affairs** hold importance in the preparation of Public Administration. By going through the syllabus, the aspirants should apply essential current topics in the study of Public Administration. Therefore reading newspapers is of immense importance.
- Going through the **UPSC previous year's question papers** on Public Administration will give you an idea about the importance of topics. It will also help you understand how to write mains answers.
- One should have a continuous answer-writing practice. It will help to develop speed as well as cross-conceptual understanding.
- Revision of notes, whether class notes or self-study notes, is important to reinforce understanding of concepts and subject.

Books for UPSC Public Administration Syllabus

If you've chosen Public Administration as your optional subject for the UPSC Civil Services Mains, here are some highly recommended books to enhance your preparation:

- **Vajiram & Ravi Public Administration Books**
- Public Administration by Laxmikanth
- New Horizons Of Public Administration by Mohit Bhattacharya
- Administrative Thinkers by D. Ravindra Prasad
- Contemporary Debates in Public Administration by Dhameja Alka
- Indian Administration by Maheswari
- Public Administration: Administrative Theories and Concepts by Fadia & Fadia
- IGNOU
- ARC Reports
- Indian Administration – Ramesh K. Arora and Rajni Goyal
- Yojana
- Newspaper

Important Topics in Public Administration Optional Syllabus 2026

Though each topic in Public Administration is important, a few topics listed below are regularly asked in the exam. These topics are mostly cross-sectional and cross-disciplinary.

- Introduction to Public Administration
- Administrative Thought
- Accountability and Control
- Development Dynamics
- Public Policy
- Comparative Public Administration
- Evolution of Indian Administration
- Union Government and Administration
- State Government and Administration
- Civil Services
- Rural Development
- Urban Local Government

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