

SHERLOCKING SIMULATOR · FULL-LENGTH TEST

# General Studies — Paper IV

## SET A

Time Allowed : Three Hours | Maximum Marks : 250

Roll No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Medium of Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. This paper has **two sections**. **Section A** (Questions 1–6) carries theory questions; **Section B** (Questions 7–12) carries case studies. **All questions are compulsory.**
2. The number of marks carried by a question or its part is indicated against it. Answer theory parts in about 150 words each and case studies in about 250 words each.
3. Answers must be written in the medium authorized, stated clearly in the space provided above. No marks will be given for answers written in an unauthorized medium.
4. Word limit, wherever specified, should be adhered to.
5. Any page or portion of the page left blank in this booklet must be clearly struck off.



SCAN TO ENROL

Sherlocking Mains Comprehensive Module

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# General Studies – Paper IV – Set A

TIME ALLOWED : THREE HOURS | MAXIMUM MARKS : 250

**Note:** All questions are compulsory. Marks are indicated against each question or part. Section A theory parts: about 150 words each. Section B case studies: about 250 words each.

## SECTION A · THEORY (QUESTIONS 1–6)

- Q1. (a)** A rising power is no longer merely a claimant in global governance but increasingly a maker of its rules. As its capacity grows, it begins to set the terms that weaker nations must live by, in finance, in technology and in humanitarian aid, terms those nations have little power to refuse. Examine the ethical responsibilities such a power carries towards those it now leads. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- (b)** What are the principal sources of ethical guidance available to a public servant? Discuss how they shape conduct when they pull in different directions. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- Q2. (a)** Is compassionate rule-bending ever ethically defensible, or does it inevitably corrode probity by setting a precedent? Discuss with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- (b)** What do you understand by intergenerational justice? Explain its bearing on a present-day development decision. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- Q3. (a)** "In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness, in their welfare his welfare." (Kautilya). What does this quotation mean to you in the present context? (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- (b)** "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved." (B. R. Ambedkar). What does this quotation mean to you in the present context? (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- (c)** "Ethics is nothing else than reverence for life." (Albert Schweitzer). What does this quotation mean to you in the present context? (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- Q4. (a)** When rules, conscience and public sentiment conflict, which of the three should an officer place first? Is there a defensible ordering among them, or must it shift with the situation? Give reasons in support of your answer. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- (b)** Differentiate between impartiality and non-partisanship in public service, with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- Q5. (a)** The components of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, empathy and social skill, are tested most not in calm times but under crisis pressure, public anger and the slow grind of burnout. Discuss how a civil servant can draw on them to stay effective in such moments. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- (b)** Critically analyse, in the present context of AI-assisted administration, the claim that where a citizen's benefit or liberty is at stake, an algorithm must never be the final authority. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- Q6. (a)** Examine why well-designed anti-corruption institutions often underdeliver in practice. (Answer in 150 words) **10**
- (b)** "The wider an officer's discretion, the greater the transparency it demands." Examine the measures needed to keep discretionary power accountable. (Answer in 150 words) **10**

## SECTION B · CASE STUDIES (QUESTIONS 7–12)

- Q7.** Arjun is the Deputy Commissioner of a remote hill district. Late in a punishing monsoon, after days of 20  
unrelenting rain, a flash flood tears through the worst-hit blocks of the district in the dead of night. A  
swollen mountain stream bursts its banks, the only causeway linking those blocks to the headquarters  
is washed away, and a landslide buries the single approach road. The waters also snap the telephone  
and data links to the affected blocks, so Arjun has no working line to the state headquarters and no  
quick way to reach the field officers and rescue teams stranded on the far side of the broken causeway.  
Hundreds of people are marooned on higher ground without shelter or dry food, several are injured  
and bleeding, and the relief stores, medicines and rescue equipment they need must reach them within  
the next few hours or lives will certainly be lost. The only fast way to release the emergency funds and  
move the equipment is to invoke a procedure that the rules do not permit without prior sanction from  
the state headquarters, which Arjun simply cannot obtain in time. Acting on his own authority now will  
save lives but breach the rule and may later be questioned; waiting for the sanction is lawful but may  
cost lives he could otherwise have saved. As he weighs this, a single call gets through from a hospital in  
another city: his young child, admitted there for an urgent condition, has taken a sudden turn for the  
worse, is asking for him, and his family is pleading with him to leave for the bedside at once.  
Connectivity is patchy and breaking up, the next few hours are decisive both for the relief operation at  
the epicentre and for his child far away, and Arjun cannot possibly be in two places. (a) What are the  
options available with Arjun in the above situation? (b) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by  
Arjun? (c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Arjun. (d) Which of the  
options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Arjun to adopt and why? (Answer in 250 words)
- Q8.** You are the District Magistrate of an ecologically fragile coastal district. On your desk is a clearance file 20  
for a large, strategically important port-and-logistics project that will divert forest land used for  
generations by a small, isolated tribal community. The file carries the community's written 'consent' to  
relocation, obtained through a project contractor. When you visit, the tribal elders deny ever agreeing,  
several signatures look identical, and the resettlement promised on paper does not match what people  
on the ground describe. The forest is rich in biodiversity and central to the tribe's livelihood and  
identity. A senior official, citing the project's national and economic importance and a tight timeline,  
presses you to certify the consent and forward the file quickly, hinting that delay will be held against  
you. (a) Can a written 'consent' you have strong reason to believe was manufactured ever be certified in  
the name of a strategically important national project? Justify your answer. (b) What suitable actions  
can be taken in view of the mutually compatible interests of the tribal community, the project and the  
public? (c) What substantial alternatives or safeguards can be proposed to ensure that both the  
integrity of the consent process and the development goal are protected? (Answer in 250 words)
- Q9.** You are the Secretary finalising a large public contract for an AI-based e-governance platform, a 20  
flagship project the government is watching closely and is keen to roll out without delay. During the  
final evaluation you find that one of the shortlisted bidders, which has bid through a holding company  
rather than in its own name, is a start-up your spouse co-founded and still retains a stake in. On the  
committee's scoring the bid does appear to be technically the strongest of the lot. Your spouse insists  
the firm has won purely on merit, that routing a bid through a holding company is normal and  
perfectly legal, and that disclosing the family link at this late stage will needlessly disqualify a  
deserving bid, stall a project the public needs and embarrass the family. No one else on the evaluation  
committee knows of the connection. (a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case? (b) What  
should be your course of action? (c) How would you justify what you choose to do? (Answer in 250  
words)

- Q10.** Meera is an Administrative Officer with nine years of service, posted in a public-sector undertaking and due for her next promotion within the year. That promotion turns on her performance appraisal, and the appraisal is written by her immediate superior, who is also her reporting officer. One morning he calls her in and directs her to award an IT-services purchase to a particular vendor of his choosing. The full order, she finds, exceeds her delegated financial sanction limit, beyond which the matter would have to go to a higher authority for approval and would attract audit scrutiny. To keep the award at her own level, her reporting officer wants the order split into several smaller purchase orders, each kept just below the threshold so that none crosses it. On examining the quotation, Meera also notices that this vendor's rate is clearly above the prevailing market rate for the same items. Her reporting officer makes plain that he expects the whole matter handled quietly at her level and will not appreciate any hesitation on her part. Splitting orders to bypass a sanction limit is against the financial rules and could later come to the adverse notice of audit, but resisting her reporting officer may cost Meera the appraisal grading on which her promotion, and the financial and career progression riding on it, depend. (a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case? (b) Evaluate the conduct of Meera's reporting officer from an ethical point of view. (c) What course of action should Meera adopt and why? (Answer in 250 words) 20
- Q11.** You are the district officer in charge of a fully digitised welfare scheme in which eligibility for benefits is decided automatically by Aadhaar-linked software, with little human checking in between. While reviewing complaints, you discover that the system has been auto-rejecting a number of genuinely poor and eligible families because of small data mismatches in their records: a name misspelt by a data-entry operator, an address that was never updated, a date of birth keyed in wrongly, or a biometric authentication that repeatedly fails for an elderly labourer whose fingerprints have worn down. None of these families did anything wrong, yet each has silently lost the foodgrain, pension or cash benefit it is entitled to, and several are among the very poorest in the district, now in real distress. A private contractor who manages the scheme's database quietly approaches you and offers to 'clean' and correct the affected records for a fee, outside the sanctioned process, promising the problem will simply disappear. Meanwhile your own superior, proud that the scheme's leakage and exclusion figures have fallen sharply on paper and have won the district public praise and a state award, wants the rejected cases left exactly as they are, arguing that reopening them will dent the very statistics that earned the district its recognition. The digital-state and data-protection setting is the backdrop to all this; but the human cost of the exclusion is immediate, and some of the affected families are already gathered at your office gate asking why their benefits have stopped. (a) What is your reaction to the above situation, and how would you restore the rightful flow of benefits to the wrongly excluded families? (b) What are the ethical issues involved in this case? (c) What measures would you institute to prevent such automated exclusion from recurring in your district? (Answer in 250 words) 20
- Q12.** Hours before a respected senior colleague is to take a sensitive official decision, a video surfaces online appearing to show that colleague accepting a bribe. It spreads fast and an online crowd demands instant action, calling for the colleague to be removed before the decision is taken. The colleague denies it outright, says the clip is fabricated, and asks for time to prove it. There are signs the video may be a deepfake, but the official labelling and takedown system is slow and authenticated verification will take days. As the officer responsible, you are pressed either to suspend the colleague and reassign the decision at once to calm the outrage, or to stand by due process at the risk of appearing to shield wrongdoing. The framework on labelling synthetic media is the backdrop; no real incident is involved. (a) How would you react to the situation? (b) What are the ethical issues involved? (c) What would be your course of action and why? (Answer in 250 words) 20

**Q1 (a).** A rising power is no longer merely a claimant in global governance but increasingly a maker of its rules. As its capacity grows, it begins to set the terms that weaker nations must live by, in finance, in technology and in humanitarian aid, terms those nations have little power to refuse. Examine the ethical responsibilities such a power carries towards those it now leads. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q1 (b).** What are the principal sources of ethical guidance available to a public servant? Discuss how they shape conduct when they pull in different directions. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q2 (a).** Is compassionate rule-bending ever ethically defensible, or does it inevitably corrode probity by setting a precedent? Discuss with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q2 (b).** What do you understand by intergenerational justice? Explain its bearing on a present-day development decision. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q3 (a).** "In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness, in their welfare his welfare." (Kautilya). What does this quotation mean to you in the present context? (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q3 (b).** "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved." (B. R. Ambedkar). What does this quotation mean to you in the present context? (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q3 (c).** "Ethics is nothing else than reverence for life." (Albert Schweitzer). What does this quotation mean to you in the present context? (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q4 (a).** When rules, conscience and public sentiment conflict, which of the three should an officer place first? Is there a defensible ordering among them, or must it shift with the situation? Give reasons in support of your answer. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q4 (b).** Differentiate between impartiality and non-partisanship in public service, with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q5 (a).** The components of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, empathy and social skill, are tested most not in calm times but under crisis pressure, public anger and the slow grind of burnout. Discuss how a civil servant can draw on them to stay effective in such moments. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q5 (b).** Critically analyse, in the present context of AI-assisted administration, the claim that where a citizen's benefit or liberty is at stake, an algorithm must never be the final authority. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q6 (a).** Examine why well-designed anti-corruption institutions often underdeliver in practice.  
(Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q6 (b).** "The wider an officer's discretion, the greater the transparency it demands." Examine the measures needed to keep discretionary power accountable. (Answer in 150 words) **(10 marks)**

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**Q7.** Arjun is the Deputy Commissioner of a remote hill district. Late in a punishing monsoon, after days of unrelenting rain, a flash flood tears through the worst-hit blocks of the district in the dead of night. A swollen mountain stream bursts its banks, the only causeway linking those blocks to the headquarters is washed away, and a landslip buries the single approach road. The waters also snap the telephone and data links to the affected blocks, so Arjun has no working line to the state headquarters and no quick way to reach the field officers and rescue teams stranded on the far side of the broken causeway. Hundreds of people are marooned on higher ground without shelter or dry food, several are injured and bleeding, and the relief stores, medicines and rescue equipment they need must reach them within the next few hours or lives will certainly be lost. The only fast way to release the emergency funds and move the equipment is to invoke a procedure that the rules do not permit without prior sanction from the state headquarters, which Arjun simply cannot obtain in time. Acting on his own authority now will save lives but breach the rule and may later be questioned; waiting for the sanction is lawful but may cost lives he could otherwise have saved. As he weighs this, a single call gets through from a hospital in another city: his young child, admitted there for an urgent condition, has taken a sudden turn for the worse, is asking for him, and his family is pleading with him to leave for the bedside at once. Connectivity is patchy and breaking up, the next few hours are decisive both for the relief operation at the epicentre and for his child far away, and Arjun cannot possibly be in two places.

- (a) What are the options available with Arjun in the above situation?
- (b) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by Arjun?
- (c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Arjun.
- (d) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Arjun to adopt and why? (Answer in 250 words)

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(a) Can a written 'consent' you have strong reason to believe was manufactured ever be certified in the name of a strategically important national project? Justify your answer.

(b) What suitable actions can be taken in view of the mutually compatible interests of the tribal community, the project and the public?

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**Q9.** You are the Secretary finalising a large public contract for an AI-based e-governance platform, a flagship project the government is watching closely and is keen to roll out without delay. During the final evaluation you find that one of the shortlisted bidders, which has bid through a holding company rather than in its own name, is a start-up your spouse co-founded and still retains a stake in. On the committee's scoring the bid does appear to be technically the strongest of the lot. Your spouse insists the firm has won purely on merit, that routing a bid through a holding company is normal and perfectly legal, and that disclosing the family link at this late stage will needlessly disqualify a deserving bid, stall a project the public needs and embarrass the family. No one else on the evaluation committee knows of the connection.

- (a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
  - (b) What should be your course of action?
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**Q10.** Meera is an Administrative Officer with nine years of service, posted in a public-sector undertaking and due for her next promotion within the year. That promotion turns on her performance appraisal, and the appraisal is written by her immediate superior, who is also her reporting officer. One morning he calls her in and directs her to award an IT-services purchase to a particular vendor of his choosing. The full order, she finds, exceeds her delegated financial sanction limit, beyond which the matter would have to go to a higher authority for approval and would attract audit scrutiny. To keep the award at her own level, her reporting officer wants the order split into several smaller purchase orders, each kept just below the threshold so that none crosses it. On examining the quotation, Meera also notices that this vendor's rate is clearly above the prevailing market rate for the same items. Her reporting officer makes plain that he expects the whole matter handled quietly at her level and will not appreciate any hesitation on her part. Splitting orders to bypass a sanction limit is against the financial rules and could later come to the adverse notice of audit, but resisting her reporting officer may cost Meera the appraisal grading on which her promotion, and the financial and career progression riding on it, depend.

- (a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
- (b) Evaluate the conduct of Meera's reporting officer from an ethical point of view.
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- (a) What is your reaction to the above situation, and how would you restore the rightful flow of benefits to the wrongly excluded families?
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- (c) What measures would you institute to prevent such automated exclusion from recurring in your district? (Answer in 250 words)

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**Q12.** Hours before a respected senior colleague is to take a sensitive official decision, a video surfaces online appearing to show that colleague accepting a bribe. It spreads fast and an online crowd demands instant action, calling for the colleague to be removed before the decision is taken. The colleague denies it outright, says the clip is fabricated, and asks for time to prove it. There are signs the video may be a deepfake, but the official labelling and takedown system is slow and authenticated verification will take days. As the officer responsible, you are pressed either to suspend the colleague and reassign the decision at once to calm the outrage, or to stand by due process at the risk of appearing to shield wrongdoing. The framework on labelling synthetic media is the backdrop; no real incident is involved.

- (a) How would you react to the situation?
- (b) What are the ethical issues involved?
- (c) What would be your course of action and why? (Answer in 250 words)

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