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UPSC CSE MAINS

Previous Year Questions

Civil Service Values & Ethics in Administration — GS-IV

Previous Year Questions (verbatim, official syllabus)

34 Questions

Year range: 2013–2025

Verbatim from official UPSC papers

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— Neil Sir, Founder, UnlockIAS

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Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and p...

2025 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q9. Keeping the national security in mind, examine the ethical dilemmas related to controversies over environmental clearance of development projects in ecologically sensitive border areas in the country. (Answer in 150 words) 10

2024 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q8. "The concept of Just and Unjust is contextual. What was just a year back, may turn out to be unjust in today's context. Changing context should be constantly under scrutiny to prevent miscarriage of justice." Examine the above statement with suitable examples.

2024 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q9. Mindless addiction to Form, ignoring the Substance of the matter, results in rendering of injustice. A perceptive civil servant is one who ignores such literalness and carries out true intent. Examine the above statement with suitable illustrations.

2024 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q11. The soul of the new law, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) is Justice, Equality and Impartiality based on Indian culture and ethos. Discuss this in the light of major shift from a doctrine of punishment to justice in the present judicial system.

2023 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q7. In the context of work environment, differentiate between 'coercion' and 'undue influence' with suitable examples.

2022 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q6. Wisdom lies in knowing what to reckon with and what to overlook. An officer being engrossed with the periphery, ignoring the core issues before him, is no rare in the bureaucracy. Do you agree that such preoccupation of an administrator leads to travesty of justice to the cause of effective service delivery and good governance? Critically evaluate.

2021 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q11. Besides domain knowledge, a public official needs innovativeness and creativity of a high order as well, while resolving ethical dilemmas. Discuss with suitable example.

2018 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q7. Suppose the Government of India is thinking of constructing a dam in a mountain valley bound by forests and inhabited by ethnic communities. What rational policy should it resort to in dealing with unforeseen contingencies?

2018 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q8. Explain the process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration.

2017 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q4. Conflict of interest in the public sector arises when (a) official duties, (b) public interest, and (c) personal interest are taking priority one above the other. How can this conflict in administration be resolved? Describe with an example.

2016 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q1. "Max Weber said that it is not wise to apply to public administration the sort of moral and ethical norms we apply to matters of personal conscience. It is important to realise that the State bureaucracy might possess its own independent bureaucratic morality." Critically analyse this statement.

2015 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q4. Public servants are likely to confront with the issues of 'Conflict of Interest'. What do you understand by the term 'Conflict of Interest' and how does it manifest in the decision making by public servants? If faced with the conflict of interest situation, how would you resolve it? Explain with the help of examples.

2013 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q8. It is often said that 'politics' and 'ethics' do not go together. What is your opinion in this regard? Justify your answer with illustrations.

Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance

2023 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q5. Is conscience a more reliable guide when compared to laws, rules and regulations in the context of ethical decision-making? Discuss.

2020 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q13. Distinguish between laws and rules. Discuss the role of ethics in formulating them.

2019 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q2. What is meant by 'crisis of conscience'? How does it manifest itself in the public domain?

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2018 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q9. In doing a good thing, everything is permitted which is not prohibited expressly or by clear implication. Examine the statement with suitable examples in the context of a public servant discharging his/her duties.

2016 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q10. Law and Ethics are considered to be the two tools for controlling human conduct so as to make it conducive to civilized social existence. (a) Discuss how they achieve this objective. (b) Giving examples, show how the two differ in their approaches.

2015 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q9. "A mere compliance with law is not enough, the public servant also has to have a well-developed sensibility to ethical issues for effective discharge of duties." Do you agree? Explain with the help of two examples, where (i) an act is ethically right, but not legally and (ii) an act is legally right, but not ethically.

2013 GS-IV 20M · 300W

Q5. (a) What do you understand by the term 'voice of conscience'? How do you prepare yourself to heed to the voice of conscience? (150 words, 10 marks) (b) What is meant by 'crisis of conscience'? Narrate one incident in your life when you were faced with such a crisis and how you resolved the same. (150 words, 10 marks)

Accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and mo...

2019 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q4. What is meant by the term 'constitutional morality'? How does one uphold constitutional morality?

2016 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q9. What do you understand by the terms 'governance', 'good governance' and 'ethical governance'?

2014 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q12. What does 'accountability' mean in the context of public service? What measures can be adopted to ensure individual and collective accountability of public servants?

Ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate gover...

2025 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q8. Carl von Clausewitz once said, "War is a diplomacy by other means." Critically analyse the above statement in the present context of contemporary geo-political conflict. (Answer in 150 words) 10

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2024 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q1. "It is not enough to talk about peace, one must believe in it; and it is not enough to believe in it, one must act upon it." In the present context, the major weapon industries of the developed nations are adversely influencing continuation of number of wars for their own self-interest, all around the world. What are the ethical considerations of the powerful nations in today's international arena to stop continuation of ongoing conflicts?

2023 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q4. What do you understand by 'moral integrity' and 'professional efficiency' in the context of corporate governance in India? Illustrate with suitable examples.

2023 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q10. 'International aid' is an accepted form of helping 'resource-challenged' nations. Comment on 'ethics in contemporary international aid'. Support your answer with suitable examples.

2022 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q3. In contemporary world, corporate sector's contribution in generating wealth and employment is increasing. In doing so, they are bringing in unprecedented onslaught on the climate, environmental sustainability and living conditions of human beings. In this background, do you find that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is efficient and sufficient enough to fulfil the social roles and responsibilities needed in the corporate world for which the CSR is mandated? Critically examine.

2022 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q8. Russia and Ukraine war has been going on for the last seven months. Different countries have taken independent stands and actions keeping in view their own national interests. We are all aware that war has its own impact on the different aspects of society, including human tragedy. What are those ethical issues that are crucial to be considered while launching the war and its continuation so far? Illustrate with justification the ethical issues involved in the given state of affair.

2021 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q12. Refugees should not be turned back to the country where they would face persecution or human right violation. Examine the statement with reference to ethical dimension being violated by the nation claiming to be democratic with open society.

2020 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q12. The will to power exists, but it can be tamed and be guided by rationality and principles of moral duty. Examine this statement in the context of international relations.

2017 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q12. Corporate social responsibility makes companies more profitable and sustainable. Analyse.

2017 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q13. Strength, peace and security are considered to be the pillars of international relations. Elucidate.

2015 GS-IV 10M · 150W

Q11. At the international level, the bilateral relations between most nations are governed on the policy of promoting one's own national interest without any regard for the interest of other nations. This leads to conflicts and tensions between the nations. How can ethical consideration help resolve such tensions? Discuss with specific examples.