

Observations of Examiners on Performance of Candidates in CSS CE-2018:

Examiners' assessment reports for Central Superior Services (CSS) Competitive Examination (CE) 2018 are being posted on FPSC website for general information and guidance of candidates. Extracts of observations of the Examiners on the candidates' performance in compulsory and optional papers under CSS Competitive Examination 2018 are given below:

A. Observations of Examiners regarding the Compulsory Subjects:

1. Essay:

Candidates were at their best in topics involving critical and subjective approach i.e. in topics like Democracy in Pakistan: Hopes and Hurdles, Rule of Law, Safeguarding Human Rights & Civil Liberties during Fight against Terrorism and Corruption etc. On the other hand, in topics that were of objective nature (Global Warming / CPEC), reliance on crammed knowledge, dull monotony and repetition of stereotypical information was observed. A significant number of the candidates did not have a clear sense of the essentials of a comprehensive essay or the features which differentiate an essay from other forms of writing. Candidates must know about the qualities of a standard Essay and the standard expected by the Commission in the Competitive Exam.

2. GK-I (General Science & Ability):

Most candidates had a gap in their knowledge of space sciences. Majority lacked analytical skills required for section-II of the paper. Many did not even know the direction of a simple compass, confusing North with South and East with West. Some were not familiar with even elementary mathematical skills. Candidates are advised that their answers should be precise, neat, clean, readable and no extra, unnecessary explanation was required from them. Extra care must be taken while selecting a question to answer. Candidates should elaborate their answers using graph/diagram/table where required. Answers of all parts of a question should be systematic and cohesive; not written randomly in scattered places of different pages.

3. GK-II (Current Affairs):

Overall the attempt of the paper by candidates was satisfactory. It was observed that candidates' expression was descriptive and general in nature. The candidates tried to write more and more instead of remaining to the point and focused. Some of the candidates' handwriting and usage of English language and grammar was very poor. Future candidates are advised to cover contemporary topics in newspapers / magazines and research articles on daily basis. Apart from the national newspapers, consulting international media would also be beneficial for awareness of alternative opinions.

4. Comparative Study of Major Religions (For Non-Muslims):

The understanding of the subject was very poor. It seemed as if the candidates had never consulted good textbooks and had relied only on superficial information despite the availability of prescribed syllabus and the recommended books by FPSC. Students were totally unaware of the modern issues as well as historical perspective in the field; hence, the attempt of the questions demonstrated lack of understanding. The importance of proper study before the examination cannot be stressed enough.

B. Observations of Examiners regarding the Optional Subjects:

1. Accountancy & Auditing (Paper-I):

Performance of candidates was found to be average. Majority of the candidates were confused while attempting the questions that indicated lack of critical thinking / analytical approach. Candidates were found to be better in numerical aspects of their answers. Candidates are advised to enhance their technical/analytical skills and also improve their theoretical knowledge and understanding of the subject. They should also try to manage time properly to attempt required number of questions within the stipulated time.

2. Agriculture & Forestry:

The candidates were asked to discuss the status of current serious issues of climate change, food security, malnutrition, deforestation and ecosystem improvement; and to offer workable solutions for public and private sectors through integration of science and technology. Most of the candidates were aware of these problems and displayed good effort of brain storming. In the topic of Biotechnology, most of the candidates showed poor and superficial knowledge. The candidates are advised to learn about current issues using all available resources.

3. Anthropology:

Most of the candidates were poor in English in terms of spelling and grammar. There was lack of conceptual clarity. Some of them failed to allocate proper time to each question. CSS candidates should have the capability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical issues. Most candidates were non-serious, but some exceptional candidates were able to relate anthropological knowledge/findings with practical issues of Pakistan and produced good answers depicting the real social situation. Candidates are recommended to go through comprehensive study of anthropological concepts for improving their analytical skills and applying them on practical issues to understand social structure and culture of Pakistan.

4. Applied Mathematics:

The performance was not satisfactory.

5. Botany:

The performance of the candidates, especially in questions on Genetics and Evolution, was poor. Candidates lacked critical thinking mainly because of the education system in the country, which promotes learning of facts. Candidates only know one use of information which they have learned and don't try to think that information may be used in a number of ways to solve different problems.

6. British History:

The performance of the candidates was by and large fairly good & satisfactory. It was observed that some of the attempts were too bookish, merely reproducing facts and figures without going into depth and lacking analytical skill. Others confined themselves to generalization. The candidates are advised to be argumentative & evaluative while dealing with the facts in the field of history in particular.

7. Business Administration:

The major reason behind poor performance was lack of conceptual clarity and critical thinking ability. Candidates were unable to connect pieces of information that they remember to pieces of information that are asked. Candidates performed quite poorly on numerical questions. The candidates depend heavily on past papers and severely lack in understanding of brands and business concepts.

8. Chemistry:

The performance of candidates in this paper was poor. Their concepts were not clear. The standard of written expression in English Language was very poor. Numerical questions were simple but only few candidates could attempt these correctly. Many candidates tried to prolong the answers of theoretical questions by writing irrelevant stories / material. Some candidates have shown exceptional performance.

9. Computer Science (Paper-B):

General observation was the lack of expression and discussion of too many irrelevant details in attempting the questions. Candidates are expected to demonstrate their depth of knowledge on a given topic; secondary discussions should not overshadow the primary themes of the questions. Too much focus on secondary details and ambiguous/generic statements reflects lack of confidence in crisply and explicitly stating what is required. Candidates intending to undertake the Competitive Examination in future are recommended to ensure an appropriate expression of facts in terms of grammar, sentence structure and crisply state what is asked for by supporting main idea with the secondary details.

10. Criminology:

The understanding of criminological concepts in its true sense was lacking. The answers were not up to the mark, serious grammatical errors were observed and some answer books were pathetic. Candidates relied on local books instead of consulting books written by foreign authors. However, overall response of the candidates was encouraging.

11. Economics (Paper-I):

Candidates relied on short cut solutions and did not prepare the whole course/syllabus. There was hardly any attempt to comprehend the concepts. There is a lack of training for critical thinking and the habit of lifetime learning is absent.

12. Economics (Paper-II):

An overview of the answer-sheets reflected that most of the applicants had not made any serious effort in the subject of economics. Candidates know nothing about structural changes in the economy in the process of economic development. The candidates should make a comprehensive effort during preparation for examination and review recent economic surveys as well as world development indicators.

13. English Literature:

Most of the candidates who opted for English Literature were incapable of even writing correct English. Majority did not know the skills of developing an argument. Instead of writing a logical answer to the given questions, they merely gave a summary of the work. Candidates seem to be severely lacking in critical thinking skills.

14. European History:

The overall performance seems to be quite dismal. The major issue was their communication skills. Lack of training in Essay writing is the major reason for poor writing skills. Many candidates have written in headings or bullets, hence, they could not come up with any cogent argument. Most relied on memorized factual information and reproduced it. Historical analysis is conspicuously missing in their answers.

15. Environmental Science:

Overall performance of candidates was not satisfactory. Candidates gave the impression that they do not have even the basic knowledge about the environment. In the question relating to smog, candidates tried to provide all irrelevant information and giving the impression that they just wanted to fill the answer books.

16. Governance & Public Policies:

Majority of the candidates attempted the paper in such a way that ideas were not coherent, organized and focused on the question. Candidates lacked the knowledge and creativity which might be expected from the candidates of CSS Examination. Almost all the scripts were full of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. Overall, the standard of scripts was highly unsatisfactory.

17. Geography:

Substantial improvement is needed in the standard of English language, spellings, grammar and comprehension. Some candidates wrote 'draft' instead of 'drought' and 'earthquack' instead of 'earthquake'; displaying abysmal linguistic capability. CSS officers must have working knowledge of Geography of Pakistan, the country they are expected to serve and represent at the international level.

18. Geology:

Except a few, most of the answers were of extremely poor quality. It seems that majority of the candidates have no knowledge of the subject. Drawing figures is very important in the subject but most candidates either haven't drawn at all, or have drawn poorly. However, few candidates performed better.

19. Gender Studies:

The overall performance of the candidates was poor. The weakest part in most papers was poor/incorrect language, incorrect spellings, grammar and structure of the sentences. Majority of the candidates were not well versed with the contents of Gender Studies and were subject illiterate. Candidates lacked the skills of building/establishing an argument and supporting it with examples as well as relevant material.

20. History of USA:

Reading habit, hard work and writing practice was widely missing in the answer sheets. The overall impression of the candidates showed very low standard. They opted for general questions demanding discussion and comments merely without mention of historical facts and figures. Majority was unable to analyze the global impact of historical process with special reference to Pakistan. Mainly the understanding of history, critical analysis, communication in English and repetition of ideas were the problems of the majority of the candidates. Principally the candidates could not utilize their knowledge and writing power. Most of the candidates consulted the substandard books and guides for preparation. Credible detailed academic writings were not studied.

21. History of Pakistan and India:

The candidates had good preparation to appear in the Competitive Examination but large number of candidates were non-serious. Many deficiencies and shortcomings in understanding of the subject were

viewed during marking of the scripts. The candidates either did not know how to attempt the questions or lacked in depth knowledge to attempt the questions. Relevant answers were missing; most responses were based on limited or superficial knowledge of the subject. The candidates lacked critical thinking which is required in the subject of history.

22. International Relations (Paper-A):

Overall performance was satisfactory. Specific deficiency, other than knowledge of the subject mostly related to the English language and expression. Most of the candidates described the terms, neo-realism and constructivism but failed to present points of divergence and convergence. Candidates described determinants of Pakistan's strategic culture without providing any proper definition of the term "strategic culture" and provided irrelevant facts about Globalization without focusing on its impacts on national culture and politics. They also seemed unfamiliar with the concepts of strategic culture and pre-emptive self-defense. Approach and content in answers was similar, reflecting the reliance on CSS academies instead of own mind / thinking.

23. Islamic History & Culture:

General performance of the candidates was poor. Level of knowledge was below average and analytical sense was missing. One of the major weaknesses was the ability to express in English language.

24. International Law:

Overall performance was not up to the mark. Poor written English was a major issue. Most candidates failed to understand the questions, hence, resorted to hypothetical and irrelevant answers without reference to the relevant legal provisions. In some cases, the candidates left their answer sheets blank and mixed stories in the answer sheets ironically. Some tried to duplicate the question paper in the answer sheets and it seemed that they sat in the exam just for fun.

25. Journalism & Mass Communication:

Majority of the candidates had not seriously studied the subject. The questions of general nature were attempted by every candidate and were main marks catching option. The question paper turned out to be relatively more subject specific rather than general in nature. It is a good trend in a way that Media studies must be taken as a subject requiring scholarship and serious attention of the candidates owing to its growing significance in the contemporary world.

26. Law:

A significant number of candidates reproduced superficial answers without understanding the requirements of questions. Some candidates never tried to elaborate the answer, which is important for the

subjective examination. Many scripts contained countless spelling mistakes and grammar blunders. Very few candidates tried to answer the relevant material, rest only wasted paper for nothing significant. Relevance of answer is vital for an exam of this standard and requires thorough study of relevant positive law and case law.

27. Mercantile Law:

Candidates could not understand the questions. They attempted it without considering what was actually being asked in the question. This was the major problem throughout the papers. Irrelevance, lack of clear concepts and reproduction of crammed material were some of the issues.

28. Muslim Law and Jurisprudence:

Candidates are supposed to read the original course material prescribed/recommended but the candidates relied on guides/notes for their preparation. This trend needs to be discouraged. The questions were drawn from the books recommended by the Commission but the answer did not possess any qualitative resemblance with the source material as if candidates could not identify the origin of the questions. Candidates at this level are expected to write lucid, relevant and logical answers demonstrating their analytical skills. This cannot be done unless candidates turn towards the recommended/prescribed course material. They remained unsuccessful in highlighting the formative role of Pre-Arabic customs in development of Islamic Law and their main thrust had been to criticize the Pre-Arabic bad customs. Not comprehending the question properly was bound to impact adversely on the quality of answers and that was manifested evidently.

29. Political Science (Paper-A):

The general standard of the answers was extremely poor with few exceptions. The problem was poor understanding of the subject, possible low standard of teaching in educational institutes and non-seriousness of the candidates. Poor, illegible handwriting of the candidates creates problems for examiners. Some candidates combined answers of all 4-5 questions, which is not appropriate.

30. Psychology:

Assessment of copies indicated that some of the candidates were well prepared, showing competent abilities and thorough insight in answering the questions deeming them suitable candidates for appointment. Examining some of the copies showed reproduction of bookish material with no skills of creative witting. Some of the candidates even used irrelevant material. Candidates should take competitive exam seriously. They should develop ability to analyze theories and questions thoroughly.

31. Philosophy:

The overall performance of the candidates was poor or below average. Most candidates lacked proper background of philosophy & philosophical problems and gave the impression that they have never been exposed to philosophy. However, some displayed excellent performance. They need to be careful while answering the questions. Philosophy cannot be self-taught, it needs mentoring and hard work. One cannot venture into it without proper background.

32. Physics (Paper-I):

The overall performance of the candidates was poor. Only about 5% candidates performed well and responded with the correct and relevant answers whereas the remaining provided irrelevant and poor answers. Majority of the candidates failed to provide required knowledge/facts and analysis. Specific deficiency was observed in solving the numerical questions. The examiner recommended that the candidates must consult recommended books instead of using guide books/notes for performing better in the subject.

33. Physics (Paper-II):

Irrelevant answers were written in response to questions. This was due to lack of understanding of the subject. Majority of the candidates failed to solve correctly the numerical problems which showed lack of proper and serious preparation. In some cases it appeared that the candidates sit in CSS Exam just for fun. They either leave their answer sheets as blank or resort to irrelevant details. Some of the candidates forgot to write question number correctly which he/she has attempted that makes problems in properly marking/evaluating the paper.

34. Pure Mathematics:

Knowledge of candidates who appeared in this paper was very poor. They did not know the basics of Mathematics.

35. Public Administration:

The aspirants' breadth of knowledge and understanding of the course contents were good. Majority of aspirants were lacking in understanding about the historical perspective of Public Administration. To address the issue, aspirants may be encouraged to study historical perspective or evolution of the relevant subject. Few aspirants lacked in the ability to apply content knowledge to circumstances/situations postulated within the question paper. Aspirant must learn or be aware of the requirements of the scenarios being given in the question paper. Similarly, few aspirants were grammatically so weak that they could even not write a single sentence correctly.

36. Punjabi:

Most of the candidates prepared for the exam by using guide books and answered without understanding the nature of questions.

37. Persian:

Persian is a very easy language. Its grammar is also quite concise. Our entire educational and cultural heritage is also stored in this language. Most of the candidates answered in Urdu instead of Persian which is not acceptable at all.

38. Sociology:

The General performance of the candidates in this examination was good. However, there were few candidates who appeared for the sake of fun or were non-serious. Writing power has declined.

39. Statistics:

Overall, the general performance of the candidates was not good. Statistics is a technical subject whereas most of the candidates tried to answer even the subjective part in routine, everyday writing. Candidates who have good grip over graduate level Statistics have performed well and most of the candidates who never tried to read even graduate level books on Statistics obtained poor marks.

40. Zoology:

The overall performance of the candidates appearing in Zoology was assessed thoroughly. The general impression was that the attempt by most of the candidates was average. Drafting and spelling mistakes were common errors. Another impression was that candidates answered questions without understanding of what was asked which ultimately diverted their discussion in a direction that was not relevant. Papers with poor hand writing were difficult to read. The candidates appearing in the competitive examination are advised to focus upon their weaknesses in preparation, writing skills, grammar and spelling errors.