

Observations of Examiners on Performance of Candidates in CE-2016: The Examiners have made the following observations on the candidates' performance in compulsory and optional papers opted in written part of the CSS Competitive Examination 2016:

A. Compulsory Subjects

Essay: The performance in English Essay was unsatisfactory. Out of the total 9643 candidates that appeared, a significant majority 7841(81%) failed in the subject. Ideas presented were random. The argument was without any logical reasoning or research based facts. There was neither coherence nor creativity. The candidates were neither able to build an argument from multiple angles nor substantiated it with facts. The outline of Essay was not properly structured. In many answer scripts, aspects mentioned in the outline were not discussed in the Essay.

English (Précis & Composition): The Précis writing ability of the candidates was poor. Some basic mistakes related to not writing in third person or past tense, capitalization, punctuations and spellings. A significant majority did not have the command over syntax, phraseology or etymology of words. There were also issues of first language interference. About 8894 (92%) candidates could not pass the said paper. The Examiner underlined that it was imperative to communicate to the institutions of higher education to take appropriate measures to enhance English language proficiency at the graduate level.

Islamic Studies: The candidates were able to solve the paper in following merit: 2% - extra ordinary, 3% - excellent, 20% - very good, 30% - good, 40% - ordinary and 5% - failed in the paper. Candidates who performed exceptionally well seemed to be well read and had cited references from various books. Common mistakes noted were that question numbers were not written on the answer scripts and Ahadis/Quranic Ayyahs written in Arabic had errors. The Examiner emphasized the need to improve Arabic writing skills.

Comparative Study of Major Religious (Non Muslims): The overall understanding of the subject and comprehension of the question paper was high average. The responses to the question on interfaith harmony, attempted by 90% of the candidates, were high average. One candidate attempted the paper in Sindhi language and failed. Introduction of this subject was also appreciated.

Optional Subjects

Accountancy and Auditing-I: A significant majority of the candidates who opted for the subject seemed to have no prior knowledge or familiarity and therefore their performance remained below average. The assessment of the answer script conveyed lack of understanding of basic Accounting concepts and principles. Only a few candidates could perform well. In Q.No.2 (Preparation of Financial Statement), most of the examinees treated payment of dividend as normal business expenses, treated unearned revenue as an asset and instead of preparing statements of retained earnings, prepared the statement of equity. In Q.No.3 (Dissolution Partnership) candidates had no knowledge of opening a "Realization Account" for determination of the loss/gain on disposal of assets to transfer it to partner's capital account. In Q.No.4, candidates had no understanding of the Double Declining Depreciation Method. However the simpler part of the same question, part b, (Ratios computation) was answered well. Q.No.5 relating to preparation of cost of goods manufactured and sold statement and income statement was responded well. In Q.No.6 (a) (Labour Incentive Plan) & Q.No.6 (b) cost flow in job order costing system, the performance remained poor. In part a) candidates multiplied labor hourly rate with number of units for calculating the incentive and in part b of the same question they were not able to determine the cost of opening work in process, finished goods and costs of goods sold. Q.No.7 (a) (Breakeven), it was observed that candidates were unfamiliar with the concepts. Some were able to calculate only the contribution margin and loss but could not calculate the product wise break-even sale. Under Q.No.8

(Process costing), instead of applying weighted average cost method, candidates applied first in first out method. Only a few solved it correctly.

Accountancy and Auditing-II: Performance in Part II of the subject was also not satisfactory. Q.No.2. relating to control objectives for an auditor should consider in the absence of internal control system of an entity, majority could not attempt the question within the specific context and only a minority attempted the correct way. Q.No.3. on materiality & its significance in planning and performance of an audit in relation to ISA-30, the responses were mixed. There was conceptual clearance about materiality and its general significance but not in the context of audit planning & performance. In Q.No.4, relating to auditor's consideration in audit planning and performance, while preparation of the financial statements of entities, majority of the candidates explained the importance of international standards for preparation of financial statements and only a few responded according to the required context of audit planning & performance. In Q.No.5, many candidates lacked understanding of income from property and deductions, while Part (b), requiring the calculation, the responses were good. Q. No. 6 related to business taxation, with particular reference to Sales Tax registration and legal provisions about sales tax registration. Responses were just story type information and in Part (b), a considerable number of students reproduced the question statement. Q. No.7 related to business studies and finance section. Majority of the students provided satisfactory answers to Part (a) on contemporary challenges faced by businesses. Part (b) was a numeric problem relating to calculation of cost of capital using CAPM. The responses to this question were poor and indicated lack of practice on financial calculations. In response to Q. No.8, Part (a), on business cycle and its implications, about 50% of the candidates explained business cycle phases, without its proper business implications. Some instead of giving answer related to the business cycle provided the concept of accounting cycle. Part (b) related to time value of money, and required the calculation of effective annual rate (EAR) and future value of bank deposits and finally requiring a suggestion about bank deposit. Majority of the candidates provided satisfactory calculations of future value, but poor calculation of EAR. Only calculations were provided without suggesting anything towards decision making.

Applied Mathematics: The performance in the subject was disappointing. Out of 105 candidates that appeared, only 17 got 40% marks, 88 candidates obtained below 40% marks. Out of which 55 candidates got zero marks. The maximum marks attained were 73/100. Difficulty level of some part of the paper was high although candidates were given the option to attempt 5 out of 8 questions. Candidates hardly attempted the question on Advance Vector Analysis, Fourier series and Partial Differential Equations.

Arabic: Majority of the candidates lacked the ability to read or write in Arabic language. The responses to Q.No.4 informed that the candidates did not have proper understanding of the literary aspects of the Holy Quran. The Examiner recommended that in public/private Universities, teaching of Arabic language may be introduced at graduate/post graduate level, qualified teachers to be appointed to teach Arabic and 2-3 months compulsory training/refresher courses to be arranged.

Agriculture & Forestry: Most of the candidates attempted the Paper without any preparation and scored zero out of 80 marks. It was expected that a graduate level candidate to score at least passing marks even without preparation. The ideas were repetitive and irrelevant. One candidate filled the answer scripts by re-writing the questions again and again. Many could not write even a few lines on "Grain Management" or "Environmentally controlled poultry houses". The Examiner strongly recommended a qualifying round of candidates to take the CSS competitive exam.

Anthropology: The understanding of the subject was up to the mark. 90% of the candidate's performed very well. Writing skills of the candidates were also good, showing clarity and relevancy. However, 10% attempted questions based on their general knowledge and not from the anthropological readings. The Examiner suggested that potential aspirants must consult the library at Quaid-e-Azam University

Islamabad, the pioneer forum in the country which provides reading material at the level of M.Phil/Ph.D in the subject.

Balochi: Assessment of 75 answer scripts was a disappointment. Performance of 70% of the candidates was weak and lacked analytical/creative writing skills. The syllabi of regional languages were structured at the very basic level even than a majority of the candidates did not perform well. The Examiner observed that a vast majority was unaware about their own region/customs, language and literature and added that the need at this level was to know beyond this level about other civilizations/culture at national and international level. The declining state of competency level in CSS CE was also pointed out.

Botany: About 105 candidates opted for Botany and with the exception of a few; the performance of the remaining was not satisfactory. In some scripts even the hand writing was not legible. Due to lack of knowledge of the subject, some candidates made basic mistakes to define terms like Polonogy, or species of family plant etc. In short notes, candidates had no idea about taxonomic key or numerical taxonomy. Diagrams were also very poor.

British History: About 230 candidates opted for the subject scripts. Some of the scripts were up to the mark but overall standard was very low.

Business Administration: The quality, contents & presentation of the most of the candidates was found to be unsatisfactory when gauged against the standard expected from candidates appearing in the country's prestigious CSS Competitive Examination. Poor performance of the candidates was due to lack of adequate preparation. To improve proficiency in the exam, guidelines/instructions need to be prepared for better understanding of the candidates on how to prepare for the exam and how to attempt the questions. Eligibility criteria should also be revised to screen out those with poor academic background.

Chemistry-I: The candidate's performance and level of understanding basic chemistry was extremely poor despite the fact that paper was within the limits of the prescribed syllabus. It appeared that the candidates had done selective study only. Though the paper contained no "Surprise" items for the candidates who had prepared well for the paper yet there were weak responses to questions related to physical chemistry and inorganic chemistry (Q.No.6 &7). Most candidates attempted and answered Q.No.5. & Q.No.8 and the responses were satisfactory. For any future exam, the Examiner advised to attempt papers in clear and logical manner. In explanatory questions, it was required to answer within the defined context. The candidates were advised to consult previous papers to understand the layout of the paper. Practice for better time management was also emphasized.

Chemistry-II: It is a technical paper/subject while the approach to attempt the paper was very generic. Many of the responses were non-serious and contained irrelevant contents like an essay or a story. While attempting technical subject/papers, the candidates must be precise and articulate. Responses to Question No. 3, 4, and 8 conveyed that candidates had no knowledge of the concepts and had only done selective study. One of the main drawbacks was that candidates had not prepared from the recommended reading material.

Criminology: "Criminology" was introduced for the first time as an optional subject in CSS Competitive Examination-2016. About 795 candidates opted for this new subject and the result was quite encouraging as 80% of the candidates performed very well. The concepts were clear and responses encouraging. About 20% also cited references. The Examiner suggested that those opting for Criminology must also study Law, Sociology, Social work and Psychology.

European History: Examination of the scripts pointed to many deficiencies and inadequacies in understanding of the subject. Generally, the students lacked critical thinking, had poor understanding of the subject, used inappropriate expressions and demonstrated poor English writing skills. Some of the specific deficiencies were that the candidates either did not know how to attempt the question paper or lacked in-depth knowledge/understanding of the subject. Focus was missing in many answer scripts. The

candidates were asked about “the connection between the ideas of French Philosophers and the French Revolution” but in response, a significant number discussed causes of the revolution rarely touching the real point. Similarly in response to the question related to unification of Germany and Italy, irrelevant details were provided. The Examiner observed that the standard of education in the county was deteriorating and recommended that HEC/ provincial educational departments to take concrete steps for improving the education system.

Environmental Sciences: Introduction of the new optional subject in CSS syllabus and the appearance of a large number of candidates (1075) were appreciated. Performance of a few candidates was exceptional and in fact very impressive. However, candidates with low scores had no knowledge of the subject and the issues related to it.

Economics-I: Performance of 80% of the candidates was rated as poor, non-serious and without any serious preparation. It appeared that candidates mostly relied on their general knowledge instead of understanding the nature of questions that was it theoretical, empirical or required a policy perspective. The Examiner also advised the aspiring candidates to supplement empirical questions with required derivation, graphs and tables. Unnecessary details must be avoided rather the answers should be worth for consideration of the total marks allocated to the questions. The candidates should understand that the subject relates to theory and policy, therefore the responses should be on some sound knowledge. QNo.4 was a poor attempt and candidates were not able to correctly respond to theories of inflation and unemployment, particularly on Pakistan’s experience of inflation pre and post-70’s.

Economics-II: The answer scripts that were assessed reflected that some applicants renumber the questions, make grammatical mistakes, and leave blank lines within the answers to waste the paper or provide un-necessary details. Rather than analysing the economic problems faced by Pakistan, candidates gave theoretical explanations. The Examiner did not recommend use of additional sheets.

English Literature: Based on the performance of the candidates in English Literature, the Examiner observed that there was a tendency in majority of the candidates to read summaries of the specified text. As a result, they ignored two very important aspects while answering the question i.e. they did not focus on what was asked; rather they reproduced the summary that they had already prepared. The answers were therefore superficial and lacked depth. The second weakness was that the candidates were unable to back up their arguments by any supporting evidence from the text. Moreover, in some cases the written expression was a matter of grave concern as candidates despite having understanding of the subject were not able to express themselves properly. Some candidates had very good written expression and sound knowledge of the subject but attempted less than the required number of questions. These candidates could have easily scored higher, had they attempted the required number of questions. Many candidates wrote in detail without any relevance or requirement. This category scored the lowest marks. The Examiner underscored that long answers was not a guarantee for good marks.

Geography: The Examiner observed poor understanding of concepts in physical as well as in human geography. (Question No. 02, 03, 04, and 06) were attempted providing irrelevant details. The written expression was poor. The Examiner suggested enhancing the eligibility for CSS CE to MS/M.Phil level.

Governance & Public Policy: A new subject but overall performance of the candidates was not up to the mark. Most of the candidates had neither any concept nor any understanding of the discipline. Responses were not relevant to the questions. Q No.4, in particular, was poorly attempted as most of the candidates failed to distinguish between the different concepts. The Examiner recommended that the candidates should consult proper text/recommended books instead of relying on their own observations or analyses or just the newspapers information.

History of Pak & India: The result was mixed, some papers were excellent and some were very poor. There were a large number of non serious candidates. Every year the paper and choice in the selection of questions is 50/50 yet the performance was not upto the mark in this exam. The Examiner also observed that probably candidates did not prepare the whole course starting from 712 to 1857 and therefore did not perform well in all areas of the syllabi. The Examiner also recommended incentivizing good written expression with extra marks so that the candidates can focus on improving the same.

International Relations: The Examiner observed that the performance of the candidates remained unsatisfactory. Due to lack of English language proficiency, the candidates failed to respond what was asked in the question. E.g. in Q.No.6, many candidates did not understand what was meant by “rational”, hence were unable to respond correctly. Many candidates attempted the answers giving points, which was not a requirement and method to respond to theoretical questions. It was observed that as candidates were used to power point presentations and digital communication, the responses were attempted somewhat on the same pattern with no details. What was most disheartening was the dishonesty as some candidates repeated ideas/questions in answer sheets. The answer scripts were also full of statements in bold headings with total disconnect to the question. Commonality of content, same material and same mistakes was noted in many scripts indicating coaching at specific centres for exam preparation. However, some scripts were exceedingly outstanding showing full command on the subject.

Islamic History & Culture: The performance of the candidates was not upto the required standard. The questions asked were analytical and descriptive. The scripts offered neither analysis nor focus. Responses were based on limited or superficial knowledge of the subject. The Examiner recommended preparing consulting international and national Journals/Magazines and to expand their knowledge in all related disciplines to Islamic Studies.

Journalism & Mass Communication: Overall the performance of the candidates was satisfactory. However, there were a few scripts filled with ir-relevant answers or repetitive information. Generally, it was observed that the responses were too theoretical and analysis or conclusion with reasonable solution was missing. In many cases it seemed that the candidates were not current and well-versed on the national or international issues. Q No.2 related to mass media set of theories was required to be answered in the context of powerful, moderate, or limited effects on society, however the majority responded giving the general effects. Likewise in Q No.7, the term spin doctor was not clearly understood by the most of the candidates. Q No.4 relating to globalization of media industry was attempted as globalization in general. The Examiner also commented that candidates could not attempt the questions in parts giving clear headings and examples as was required in the question e.g. what is functional approach, ideal role of mass media and ways to overcome sensationalism were three separate parts of a question but majority of the candidates attempted it as a whole.

International Law: The standard of responses was generally poor. However there were a few exceptions where the student’s performance was excellent. The Examiner opined that poor output in the subject perhaps resulted from poor teaching of the subject at the university and postgraduate level. Improvement in instruction of international law was strongly urged.

Law: The Examiner observed that a significant majority had no concept of Law. Most of the answers were irrelevant and were attempted without any proper preparation.

Mercantile Law: The Examiners observed that a majority of the candidates did not know the subject. It was unfortunate that majority of candidates attempted the paper providing superficial and irrelevant information. They were unable to answer the questions by quoting relevant sections. English expression was also very poor.

Persian: The Examiner observed that performance of the candidates was very poor in the subject however the paper was quite simple. Some candidates performed well in responding to Q. No 2, 4, 5 & 7. Some candidates responded in English instead of Urdu as was required in some questions. The Examiners encouraged the candidates to learn the Persian language and familiarity with its literature as it has historic roots in this region. A refresher 4-6 months Persian language course was recommended by the Examiner for all those aspiring candidates who wished to opt for Persian in the competitive exams.

Philosophy: The overall quality of papers was average while some of the papers were very good. A number of candidates also wrote completely irrelevant answers. The candidates who wish to opt for Philosophy in competitive exams must read authentic books, research papers and consult e-sources.

Physics-II: The Examiner observed that performance of majority of the candidates was not satisfactory and it appeared that they had not seriously prepared for the examination. A vast majority failed to attempt even very basic questions. E.g. they were not familiar with the basic postulates of the quantum mechanics and instead were stressing on the basic difference between quantum mechanics and classical mechanics. None of them had comprehensive knowledge about fundamental particles. Candidates who successfully developed the required mathematical relations were not good in problem solving. Besides lack of depth of technical information, the English language expression was also weak, both in vocabulary and grammar. The Examiner also commented that the standard of instruction/teaching Philosophy at school/college and University level was not meeting the expected results and the students had little knowledge of the subject. The Examiner further added that the result was a sad reflection of our fast declining education standard at all levels and requested the authorities to check the declining standard of teaching in educational institutions. Both the public and private sector universities were responsible for alarming decline in the educational standards. It was strongly recommended to improve English language teaching at college and university level. The candidates were advised to read standard books on fundamental concepts of Physics.

Political Science-I: Of the entire number of scripts in Political Science, only 5 to 10% candidates had basic knowledge of the discipline. It could be assessed from a majority of the scripts that the candidates were neither well read nor was their written expression worthy of credit. A high majority had no knowledge about modern political concepts which was particularly observed in responses to questions related to End of History, civil society, women empowerment etc.

Public Administration: The Examiner opined that general performance of all candidates, barring some, was not up to the standards achieved by candidates appearing in the past. The Examiner observed a marked deterioration in the ability of candidates to comprehend the question and to construct an answer. Most questions were set as analytical ones but the candidates answered based on their rote learning. The common weaknesses related to English Language, poor structure, punctuations and tenses etc.

Pure Mathematics: The Examiner observed that the paper was set out from the prescribed syllabus. However, it appeared from the assessment of the candidates that most of them were either not in touch with the subject or was ignorant of the recommended subject contents. Overall performance of the candidates was un-satisfactory.

Psychology: Performance of the candidates in general was poor. Some of the answer scripts informed that candidates had no knowledge of the subject and a few treated the paper as subject of general knowledge. A small percentage of the students who had good knowledge of the subject also performed well. One of the key weaknesses was the expression in English language. The Examiner recommended restricting the choice for Psychology in CSS exams to only those students who studied the discipline from intermediate to graduate level.

Sindhi: Majority of candidates had prepared for the subject through guides and the analysis part of the paper was quite weak. Candidates were advised to refer to original books not key or guide books.

Sociology: The Examiner observed with great concern that majority of students/candidates was not serious. The understanding of the subject seemed poor. A qualifying round of screening test for CSS exams was recommended.

Statistics: The performance of the candidates was very poor. Many answers lacked focus, statements were repetitive or responses were incorrect. It seemed that the candidates tried to befool the examiner.

Town Planning & Urban Management: Incorporation of the new subject of “Town Planning & Urban Management” in the list of syllabi for CSS Competitive Examination was appreciated by the Examiner. On the answer scripts, the Examiner reported that writing standard was not up to the mark and conceptually the candidates were very weak. Majority (95%) had developed their own meaning to various concepts asked in the question paper and (80-85%) did not understand the questions correctly, particularly in case of Q.No.3, 4 and 5. The attempted questions were more inclined towards output rather than outcome, answers were neither precise nor to the point. Structure of the paragraph and flow of writing was another weak area. While marking the scripts, it appeared that there was no competition amongst the candidates. Performance of only two candidates was outstanding.

Urdu Literature: The quality of answers was not good. Only 50% could score to pass. A majority of the candidates attempted the paper without preparation in line with the CSS prescribed syllabus. The responses were built on stereotype reading material available in the market. The answer scripts informed that candidates prepare general notes and try to fit in the same in response to any question on prose or poetry. No references were made to the poet or prose writer while responding to the question. Essay and précis writing were weak. In Urdu paper, the answers were repetitive statements to fill in the pages. The Examiner shared concerns on non serious attitude of the candidates and strongly recommended that candidates instead of consulting the guide books should prepare as per outline and recommended readings.

Zoology: The performance of most of the candidates in general remained satisfactory. The Examiner recommended improvement in written expression in English. Articulation rather than long story writing was emphasized. The Examiner opined that pessimistic views and immense criticism from a considerable number of candidates was a cause of concern and not a healthy trend. It was suggested that General knowledge needed substantial improvement. Students must learn from new modes of learning as internet.

Advice for the Commission

Law

The syllabus of the paper is apparently too lengthy to be gone through for one paper. This aspect may be considered for improvement at commission level.

Mercantile Law:

Too comprehensive and confusing

Reading list is quite up to the mark except of Banking Laws.

Persian: The importance of Persian language for CSS aspiring candidates in the region is understood, however syllabus showed different picture of the scenario. Despite gap between understanding of language and the candidates are asked for describe poetical/philosophical deliberations in details. Syllabus must be simple consolidated and focussed towards learning/speaking/grammar of the language

Psychology

The course outline is good but the question is who are the students with a background of psychology or just anybody who desires to appear in the exam. Only who study psychology

Town planning & urban management

Incorporation of the new subject of “Town planning & urban management” in the list of syllabi for CSS Competitive Examination was appreciated by the Examiner as many of the civil servants remained involved in physical development of the country. The country is in intense need of such a policy makers who can foresee the appropriateness of various programs. The introduction of this subject will surely increase understanding of snail process of development in Pakistan.

Balochi

Results reflected their declining state of competency level. FPSC must revised syllabi of regional languages also to tackle the factors behind opting these subject for favouring as easy or scoring high for success.