

Husham Ahmed Cheema (FSP) 38th Common....Interview Topper

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38th Common, (FSP)



Introduction

After passing FSc. from Cadet College, Hasan Abdal, I did my bachelors in electrical engineering from College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering NUST. Right after graduation I appeared in the CSS exam.

After working in the Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) for some time, I realised engineering wasn't my cup of tea and started working in Public Policy. I have also been a writer, blogger and a social activist. I have been writing op-eds, features and blogs for The Frontier Post, Dawn, The Friday Times, and The Express Tribune.

During my school days, I used to participate in the debating competitions and other co-curricular activities on regular basis.

Pre-requisite of the CSS exam

I believe that a candidate for the CSS must have the ability to learn and the eagerness to absorb new information. He must be able to recognise new paradigms and perspectives. He must have developed a reading habit, only then he can write and speak effectively.

Ways to get higher marks in written

I scored 681 in written and 229 in interview. I strongly believe that what matters the most is the manner in which you present all that preparation and information in three hours. The way you attempt your paper than any other reason is the determinant factor of getting good score in the written.

You topped in interview. What are various tips for the preparation of CSS interview?

Candidates must feel relaxed while sitting before the panel, only then they can put their thoughts into words. There are some candidates who may be able to get through the written part without extensive reading but they face problems in interview and feel insecure.

It is also important to know your panel, their inclinations and interests. Just be confident about the things you know, and do not feel embarrassed about any question you have dropped. Listening attentively is as important as speaking effectively in the interview.

What are various problems of CSS students in interview?

Very often candidates fear that they might be at loss of words when they sit before the panel. The failure in communication is one of the biggest reasons for low scores in interview. Another big insecurity they feel is about dropping a question.

How should a candidate answer a question when asked by the FPSC members?

The first step is to acknowledge the question – to give the panel a signal that you have understood their question. Then the candidate should be candid and honest in his reply. He should neither get emotional nor get swept away by the topic. His points should be pertinent, brief and concise. Usually, the panel doesn't let candidates go on a long rant and in trying to do so the candidates fail to hit the nail and end up just beating about the bush. The candidates must know that dropping a question is not an embarrassing thing to do.

Dressing and manners in the interviews

The dressing, of course, should be formal. For boys, the colour of their tie along with their suit colour does say a lot. And it's always nice to exchange niceties with the panel e.g. "Have a good day Sir." Similarly, there are a lot of ways to drop a question. One good way is, "I am afraid, Sir, I haven't heard about it."

Speciality of your interview

Actually my interview didn't start on a very positive note. I dropped a question but wasn't embarrassed when the Chairman told me the answer. In fact, I acknowledged it as a useful piece of information.

Then I was asked why I was leaving engineering, when in fact I had very good grades in it. They implied that I was wasting my engineering skills and the time and money spent in acquiring it. I tried to convince them that I, in fact, consider myself a much more balanced and a lucky person, as I had the opportunity to study both paradigms – scientific and social sciences. My optional subjects were from social sciences, as I wanted to learn about society if I was going to serve in civil services.

I think I also knew my panelists well and phrased my answers depending on the person who was asking the question. For example, when the Chairman FPSC asked me about my favourite book, Robert Fisk's Global War of Civilisation, I replied that Fisk had written about wars as they should be written; Fisk doesn't elevate anyone to the status of heroes and in fact talks about wars which were failure of humanity.

I also highlighted my achievements and awards, and they asked about it. I believe the questions they asked were related to matters of interest to me and very soon the interview turned into a discussion.

Does the psychological test report matter in the final interview?

Psychological test report does matter a lot in the interview. The panel in the interview has to conduct interviews of a large number of candidates. Very often they form their initial opinion from the psychological report. If your report is good then it gives you a headstart in the interview. Otherwise, you will first have to prove yourself better than the evaluation of psychologists, and only then you can start thinking of impressing the interview panel.

How should a candidate perform in the psychological test?

The candidate should be considerate towards his group members and at the same time should stand out in courtesy, etiquettes, communication skills and the message he delivers.