

Kashif Ali

39th Common, (DMG)



Please tell us about your-self, educational background and achievements in detail.

I belong to a Gujjar family from Azad Jammu & Kashmir, currently living in Lahore. I did Masters in English Literature from University of the Punjab. Then I took admission in LLB and secured overall 1st position (B) in University of the Punjab. I won title "English debater of the year" for my Law College for 3 consecutive years, which is record in the history of my Law College. As far as other distinctions are concerned, I was selected in Pakistan Navy as Commissioned Officer in 2001 but didn't join at mother's wish. I represented Pakistan in SAARC International Law Moot Competition (2007) held in New Delhi, India on Topic "Cross Border Mergers & Acquisitions". Again, for the second time I was invited as Guest Speaker on "Cyber Crimes and State Legislation" in India in 2008. I passed PCS exam for the post of English Lecturer (BPS-17) in AJK but didn't join as I appeared in said exam only to test my abilities for the competitive exam. In 2009, my paper was published in GINI, an international Organisation, which I read at Serena Hotel Islamabad on the topic "Federalism and its problems in Pakistan". Currently I am coaching CSS students. I appeared in CSS 2010 for the first time at the age of 27 and secured top position in AJK and landed in my Dream Majesty Group i.e. DMG. I would like to dedicate all my achievements to Sir Tariq Ahmad, Professor in English Literature, who taught me the 'ABCs of Success'.

Being 1st position holder in AJK, what type of strategy did you follow for preparation?

Well, my success has broken a stereotype about aspirants of CSS from AJK. There is no secret behind achieving 1st position in AJK. Persistent hard work, proper planning and strategy, writing speed, self-confidence, cordial support of parents, wishes of teachers and friends and above all, God's grace.

That is only the secret of success. One thing I must add here that students waste their precious time in solving MCQs in papers. I would suggest them to solve MCQs in just 5 minutes and save 20-25 minutes for other questions. Again I used to attempt my first

question in 1 hour and 10 minutes on the main sheet in every paper just to knock the examiner out rightly at the initial stage. Then I used to attempt my remaining three questions in just 35 minutes each. The use of Black and Blue Marker also helped me in making my paper more attractive.

What types of guidance one should seek?

Well, one should keep in mind the following things: basic understanding of the subject, one's interest in the subject, availability of necessary study material and proper guidance. I think about 6-8 months of average amount of study is sufficient for serious preparation of this examination. The first and foremost thing to decide while aspiring for Civil Services is the judicious choice of subjects for CSS. This is the most important and first step of your journey and should be accomplished most carefully as coming things hinge on it and a wrong decision may prove to be disastrous. Careful analysis of syllabus, previous years' papers, your caliber, requirement of subject, comfort level with the subject and past trends should be seen. Advice from seniors and fellow candidates should also be sought. To avoid dithering in choice at later stage, initial deep thinking and consultations are essential. Having decided the subject, it is advisable to stick to your choice even if the perception of others about it is not favorable.

Did you prefer books or notes; what should be prepared and how?

I preferred both, books plus notes were the key to success in my case. I made just outlines for my preparation of CSS exam. Preparation for Compulsory Papers can be done hand in hand while preparing for Optional papers. Good mix of study hours for Compulsory Papers and Optionals makes study enjoyable and it becomes easy to sustain for long hours without losing interest and enthusiasm. Compulsory Papers, though does not have any limits, yet syllabus as outlined by FPSC gives quite good understanding of the question paper. Even if you do not cover less probable ones, you are not at much of loss. So, be secure and study systematically. Trend now a days has shifted more towards current issues; hence a thorough awareness of recent happenings is mandatory. Once you achieve the threshold in Compulsory Papers, more efforts should be put on Optionals as it is more scoring and is the hub of success.

What are the prerequisites for the CSS examination? For instance a new student appearing for CSS, what type of ability and talent should he possess?

Good writing skills, balanced thinking and analytical approach are the basic pre-requisites for the CSS exam. The track to the coveted Civil Services is full of ups and downs and is a highly bumpy track to traverse. Hence, one should aim at projection an optimistic outlook. Humbleness is a quality that has no peers. Our arguments should not resemble rhetoric but should be persuasive. Taking part in debates and extempore is a must. One should spend at least 2 hours a day in reading the newspapers. One should be prepared for analyzing any issue of current importance. But, we should never try to give ad-hoc or quick-fix solutions. Remember, stalling for time is a very good way of overcoming a problem. Don't take it as a task, enjoy what you study. It is necessary to have a clear goal and work with single-minded dedication towards it. Also, never lose faith in yourself.

What are the steps for the preparation especially English essay and composition paper?

As far as Essay paper is concerned, the art to express many contrasting views in a confined word space comes through practice, so practice some previous years' question papers. Be your own while writing, never try to imitate anybody. Your expression needs try to be limited yet comprehensive while writing Essay. In Essay paper, your imagination can reach zenith but with a purpose, never divert from the main topic. To ensure, work out the essay into parts, rearrange them if necessary and once you are satisfied with the rough work, elaborate on this outline after wards.

There is no standard word-limit yet. What one can effectively write in 3-hour duration is good enough length. My essay consisted of approx. 2800 words. Conclusion should be drawn only at the end, take a balanced approach and write whatever good comes to your mind at the end at the moment. Devote initial 40-45 minutes on preparing rough outline. Next 2 hours for writing inflow and last 15-20 minutes for review and corrections.

Thus you can develop your writing skills and make sure that you can cover lengthy papers, especially Essay Paper, in time.

Same is the case with Grammar & composition. One should solve the Past Papers and get them checked by some English Grammar expert for proper evaluation.

What are the ways to get higher marks in written and interview and write down your written and interview scores in detail?

"How to write an answer" is a vital aspect in CSS. Students sometimes ignore basics and it costs much. Before proceeding, state all the assumptions involve and try to give minutes plausible details, adopt step-by-step approach, see that no vital step is left in between. All this sequential and systematic answering comes through a lot of practice and analysis of standard answers.

Why you opted for DMG?

Frankly speaking, Qudrat Ullah Shahab, a Kashmiri and DC Jhang became a role model for me, since the days of my matriculation when I read his 'Shahab Nama'. It was the first day at University, when during my introduction; I told my class that I want to be DC Jhang. I still remember the satirical laughter of my class fellows and their whispers that to be DC Jhang is not a child's play. But with the passage of time this joke turned into a passion, matter of honor and a dream, which Allah Almighty fulfilled in my 1st attempt of CSS.

Any Message

A lot depends upon the Almighty Allah, so pray often. I have read somewhere that winners are those who manage their hardships effectively. Never feel depressed. Self-confidence and inner strength are the two basic requirements for anybody to appear in CSS examination. Believe in yourself.