

UPSC Indian Forest Service (IFoS) Exam 2025 - Complete Guide for Beginners

Quick Snapshot (2025)

Item	Details
Notification Date	22 January 2025
Application Window	22 Jan – 11 Feb 2025; extended till 18 Feb 2025 (06:00 pm)
Prelims (CSE & IFoS screening)	25 May 2025 (single day)
IFoS Mains 2025 (start)	16 November 2025
Stages	Prelims → IFoS Mains → Personality Test (Interview)

Note: IFoS Prelims is the same exam as UPSC CSE Prelims and acts as a screening test for IFoS Mains.

1) What is the Indian Forest Service (IFoS)?

The IFoS is one of India's three All-India Services focused on scientific management of forests, wildlife, biodiversity and environmental protection. Recruitment is conducted by UPSC through a three-stage process: Prelims, IFoS Mains (subjective) and Interview.

2) Eligibility (Age, Degree, Attempts & Medical Fitness)

Age & Attempts

- **Age:** 21–32 years (category relaxations apply).
- **Attempts:** General 6, OBC 9, SC/ST unlimited within age limits, PwBD as per category.

Educational Qualification (Degree Subjects)

A Bachelor's degree with at least one of the following: Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science, Botany, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, Zoology, Agriculture, Forestry, or Engineering.

Medical/Physical Standards

Candidates must be physically fit as per Appendix-III of the IFoS rules (vision, chest expansion, field fitness, etc.).

3) Selection Process & Exam Pattern (2025)

A) Prelims (Screening through CSE Prelims)

- **Papers:** GS-I (200), CSAT (200).
- **Nature:** Objective (MCQ); 1/3 negative marking; CSAT is qualifying at 33%.
- **Purpose:** Shortlists candidates for IFoS Mains (higher cut-off trend due to fewer vacancies).

B) IFoS Mains (Descriptive)

Total 6 papers | 1400 marks | 3 hours each

- **Paper I:** General English – 300
 - **Paper II:** General Knowledge – 300
 - **Papers III & IV:** Optional Subject-1 – 200 each
 - **Papers V & VI:** Optional Subject-2 – 200 each
- Grand Total (Mains): 1400; Interview: 300; Final Merit: 1700**

C) Personality Test (Interview)

- 300 marks; evaluates technical awareness, ethical judgement, field orientation, and leadership.

4) Optional Subjects & Disallowed Combinations

List of Optionals (choose two; each has two papers)

Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science, Botany, Chemistry, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Forestry, Geology, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Physics, Statistics, Zoology.

Combinations not allowed

- Agriculture + Agricultural Engineering

- Agriculture + Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science
- Agriculture + Forestry
- Chemistry + Chemical Engineering
- Mathematics + Statistics
- Any two Engineering subjects together

5) Application & Fees (2025)

- **Apply Online:** Through UPSC OTR portal. Choose IFoS option while filling form.
- **Prelims Fee:** ₹100 (Female/SC/ST/PwBD exempt).
- **Mains Fee:** Separate intimation for candidates qualified to Mains (₹200).

6) Syllabus Overview (High-Yield Pointers)

Prelims (common with CSE)

- **GS-I:** Current affairs; Indian polity, economy, geography, environment & biodiversity; science & tech; history & culture.
- **CSAT:** Comprehension, reasoning, numeracy (qualifying).

IFoS Mains - Compulsory

- **General English:** précis, comprehension, essay, grammar.
- **General Knowledge:** Indian polity, economy, environment, forestry, wildlife, geography, current events.

IFoS Mains - Optional Subjects

Each subject has defined paper-wise micro-topics (e.g., Botany: Microbiology to Plant Physiology; Forestry: Silviculture, Mensuration, Wildlife, Management).

7) Cut-off, Vacancies & Competition (2025)

Around 150 vacancies are expected for IFoS 2025. Since vacancies are limited, the cut-off for IFoS Prelims is usually higher than that of CSE Prelims.

8) Preparation Roadmap for Beginners

First 4-6 Weeks

- Print syllabus + 10 years PYQs.
- Choose optionals wisely based on graduation subject and interest.
- Start NCERTs (Geography, Biology, Polity, Economy).

Months 2-4

- Current Affairs daily (with environment focus).
- CSAT practice twice a week.
- Start making notes for first optional.

Months 5-7

- Prelims test series (full + sectional).
- Quick revision of static and environment topics.
- Prepare wildlife and biodiversity notes.

Months 8-10 (Post-Prelims to Mains)

- Focus on English & GK writing practice.
- Strengthen optionals with diagrams and case studies.
- Write daily answers (gradually move to full papers).

Final 4-6 Weeks

- Interview prep: forest management issues, biodiversity conflicts, climate change, eco-restoration.
- Revise optionals, revise error log, mock interviews.

9) High-Value Booklist

- **Environment:** Shankar IAS Environment; MoEFCC reports
- **Forestry:** Manikandan & Prabhu; B.P. De; T.P. Ola
- **Botany/Zoology:** Standard graduation texts
- **Prelims Static:** NCERTs, Laxmikanth (Polity), Spectrum (Modern History), Economic Survey highlights

10) Why Choose a Forest-Service-Focused Coaching

If you're searching for the **best Forest Service coaching institute in India**, look for:

- Faculty with IFoS expertise
- Prelims–Mains integrated classes with environment focus
- Optional subject mentorship (Forestry, Botany, Zoology, etc.)
- Answer writing practice with diagrams & case studies
- Mock interviews tailored to IFoS

At **Victor Growth** (Kochi), we provide subject-expert guidance, targeted test series, and personalized mentorship to help aspirants crack IFoS.

11) Smart Exam-Hall Strategies

- **Prelims:** Attempt in two passes, manage CSAT carefully.
- **Mains:** Use sub-headings, flowcharts, Indian examples.
- **Optionals:** Diagrams are must; quote Acts/schemes.
- **Interview:** Relate answers to sustainability and livelihoods.

12) Important Dates 2025

- **Notification:** 22 Jan 2025
- **Application Last Date:** 11 Feb 2025 (extended till 18 Feb 2025)
- **Prelims Exam:** 25 May 2025
- **IFoS Mains Start:** 16 Nov 2025

FAQs — UPSC IFoS 2025

Q1. Is IFoS Prelims separate from CSE Prelims?

No. IFoS uses the same CSE Prelims as a screening test for Mains.

Q2. What are the IFoS Mains papers and marks?

English (300), GK (300), Optional-1 (400), Optional-2 (400) = 1400 marks; Interview 300 marks; Total 1700.

Q3. Which optional combinations are not allowed?

Agriculture + Forestry, Agriculture + Agricultural Engg, Agriculture + AH&VS, Chemistry + Chemical Engg, Math + Statistics, any two Engineering subjects together.

Q4. What degree is needed for IFoS?

Bachelor's with at least one of these: Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science, Botany, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, Zoology, Agriculture, Forestry, or Engineering.

Q5. Are medical standards different for IFoS?

Yes. Stricter fitness norms are applied due to field duties.

Q6. What are the key dates for IFoS 2025?

Notification: 22 Jan 2025, Application till 11 Feb (extended 18 Feb), Prelims: 25 May, Mains: 16 Nov.

Q7. How can coaching help?

Coaching provides targeted optional preparation, practice tests, diagram-rich answer writing, and interview simulations, all of which improve chances of success.

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