



Q: Our readers would like to know about your educational background and achievements in detail?

M Usman Khalid (MUK): I got my early education from Faisalabad. I passed the intermediate examination from Government College Lahore with the distinction of standing 5th in Lahore Board. I did BS (Hons) in Computer Science from University of the Punjab. I did MBA from IBA, Karachi. I got A+ grade in all my academic examinations at school, college and university. I have also been an active participant in extra-curricular activities and sports. Before joining civil service, I was serving as an Assistant Director at State Bank of Pakistan.

Q2: What is so special in PAS and how it is better than other groups?

MUK: Selection of a particular group/service depends upon individual's interest and aptitude. In PAS, one gets diversified opportunities of public service; there are career building and learning opportunities along with horizontal and vertical mobility. PAS has very fast Promotions. Here one can serve the masses at grass root level and create difference by playing his role in public policy making.

Q3: Did you get any guidance from some academy or you did that on your own?

MUK: I visited some of the academies for getting necessary information related to the selection of optional subjects and notes etc. Soon I realised that I could save my time and money by preparing on my own in a better and effective way. So I made my own plan for each subject and had prepared accordingly. I also consulted CSS Forum for guidance which proved very helpful. Aspirants may get initial guidance related to CSS from academy if they don't have any other source of guidance. But once they are on track, it's better to prepare on their own.

Q4: Discuss books and notes? What should be prepared and how?

MUK: I consulted both. I think one should read good books and make one's own notes. Also there are already good notes available on different subjects. I used both these sources for making my own notes/points. Aspirants should make short points which might help them revising a subject during the exam days. Make a strategy for each paper by looking at the past papers.

Q5: What strategy one should adopt to make the difference?

MUK: Writing crammed sentences may not create much difference. Aspirants more or less consult same sources/books/notes for preparation and if they just write the crammed wording, examiner might not get impressed as many other candidates would be writing the same. Aspirants should remember the main points/ideas of the question and try to write this in their own words. Presentation also does matter. Aspirants should facilitate the examiner by writing neatly with appropriate space between the words and lines. Do include important statistics/facts and figures, quotations etc. wherever applicable.

Q6: Majority of candidates flunk in English Essay and English Composition papers. So, what precautions or steps would you suggest for these two crucial papers?

MUK: I think the most important thing is the selection of right topic on which one has sufficient command and has enough material available to write on. One should be to the point and substantiate his opinion with supporting arguments, examples, facts and figures etc. For Composition paper, aspirants should practise précis writing. Sundry Reflections is a good book for 'expansion of the idea' question. In both Essay and Composition paper, one should write grammatically correct sentences and try to use good expression. It is also advised to get essay and précis checked from some good teacher of English.

Q7: Kindly tell us about your scores in written as well as in interview in detail?

MUK: I obtained 718 marks in written and 203 marks in interview. (I scored 738 in CSS 2010 but failed in Essay)
Essay: 45, Précis and composition: 57 (78 in 2010), Current Affairs: 69, Everyday Science: 59, Islamiyat: 51, Pakistan Affairs: 53, Arabic: 142 (153 in 2010), Sociology: 59 (76 in 2010), Journalism: 64, Punjabi: 79, International Relations: 40 (64 in 2010)

Q8: Seeking guidance prior to exam is an essential prerequisite of CSS so, what sort of guidance is required for the fresh aspirants and how do you see the Jahangir's World Times (JWT) as far as guidance for CSS-exam is concerned?

MUK: Passing CSS exam needs proper guidance and direction. Hard work should be accompanied with smart work. Guidance is required at different stages; i.e. selection of optional subjects, techniques of attempting the paper and interview etc. Here I would like to thank the management of JWT Magazine for bringing out this wonderful magazine. It has been providing quality information and guidance to the aspirants of competitive exams for last few years. It consists of quality articles considering the demands of CSS exam. It is one of the reasons behind my good score in CA.

Q9. Do you believe in the luck-factor in CSS? As we always notice number of average students gets allocations while talented and scholarly students are unable to pass this exam?

MUK: No doubt, in addition to hard work, commitment, dedication and patience, luck also plays its part in CSS. Many candidates score excellent marks in written but fail in any of the compulsory paper.

Some very talented and competent candidates remain unlucky to qualify the exam due to some reason(s). On the other hand, some average candidates qualify the exam by meeting only the aggregate marks criteria and subsequently get allocation. Having said all this, it is also to be kept in mind that luck is of no avail if there is no hard work and determination. As it is said "The harder you work, the more luck you might have."

Any Message

Never lose hope. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. CSS is an exam of nerves; it really exhausts you and demands a lot of patience due to its lengthy process.

It is also full of uncertainties and surprises. If you are not successful in the first attempt, keep trying with the same zeal and zest and INSHALLAH you will find yourself successful one day. Having said all this, remember! ALLAH is the best planner. Despite all hard work, smart work and other things, if result is not in your favour, surely HE has better plans for your future.

In the end, I would like to attribute my success to the grace of Almighty ALLAH, prayers of my mother, support of my brothers, relatives, friends and last but not the least encouragement, motivation and guidance of my uncle Muhammad Nawaz Khalid Arbi from whom I also got inspiration for joining civil service of Pakistan.