

Beyond the Rank: A Public Service Simulation Course for Aspirants

Before the rank, know the role

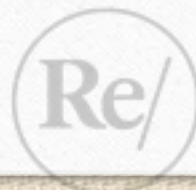
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🎯 A strategic simulation-based micro-course for UPSC aspirants that:

- Exposes them to *core public administration challenges*
- Offers *reflective scaffolding* to make better decisions (whether to continue UPSC or not)
- Provides an *asymmetric strategic edge* if they continue preparing



💡 Core Learning Outcome:

To shift the aspirant's mindset:

- From **rote-preparing** → to **system-seeing**
- From **rank-chasing** → to **role-aware self-assessment**
- From **emotional survival** → to **asymmetrically advantaged strategic prep**



□ MODULE 1: *What Is Public Administration, Really?*

“The UPSC syllabus says: “Role of civil services in a democracy.”

But the system doesn't hand you a job description.
It hands you a web of people, politics, and pressure.”



Exposure — *The System Without Romance*

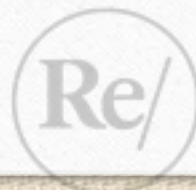
🔍 **Case: Flooded District, Broken Chain**

- You're the District Magistrate (DM). Overnight, torrential rains flood three blocks. Roads have collapsed. A bridge is gone. An anganwadi centre is under water. Electricity is cut off. Social media is flooded with public rage. You haven't slept in 32 hours.
- You have:
 - ₹50 lakh left in the district emergency fund
 - Two MPs calling you non-stop
 - A Collector from a neighbouring district offering 100 personnel
 - WhatsApp videos showing officials distributing expired food packets
 - You have to act now.



- ☐ **Decision Nodes (Choose 2–3 quickly):**

1. Who do you deploy first — rescue boats or food trucks?
2. Do you hold a press conference or issue a silent written release?
3. Do you use your DM account to tweet real-time decisions?
4. Do you discipline the supply officer now — or wait?
5. Do you ask the MLA to chair the review meeting — or keep it to your administrative circle?



Dissection — *Where Systems Clog*

- You just stepped into what public administration actually looks like:
 - **No clear wins**
 - **Inconsistent information**
 - **Overlapping power structures**
 - **Emotional + logistical firefighting**

Public administration isn't *governance as a blueprint*.

It's governance **as improvisation under accountability**.



- **Let this sink in:**

The administrator is rarely the decision-maker in total control.

They are the **integrator** — balancing politics, policy, people, and personal ethics.



Reflection — *Who Are You in the System?*

- Spend 10 minutes writing answers to these:
 1. In that situation, what was the **first instinct** that kicked in — control, empathy, caution, protocol?
 2. Which action felt most uncomfortable? Why?
 3. What emotion did you suppress — fear, anger, helplessness, or pride?
 4. Did your decisions aim for visibility, impact, or sustainability?
 5. What would “success” have meant to you by the end of that day?



⌚ Pause Here.

- This is not roleplay. It's real-life calibration.
- In administration, **you are the nerve center**, but also the most criticized, the most isolated, and the most misinterpreted actor.
- Before we teach *what to study* for UPSC, let's ask:
 - **Are you curious enough to think like a public system?**
Are you built for ambiguity, not applause?



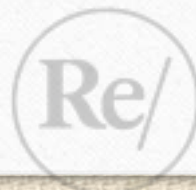


Final Task for Module 1:

- Write a short letter to yourself:

“If I enter the civil services, I want to be someone who...”

(Complete this honestly, without trying to impress your future self.)



□ MODULE 2: *Your Role as a Public Thinker*

“You’re not applying for a subject.

You’re applying to be a system node.”



Exposure — *The Bureaucracy Isn't a Ladder. It's a Web.*

- Imagine this:
 - A district in rural Maharashtra is facing a troubling pattern — a rise in teenage suicides over the past 6 months. The CM flags it in a state-level meeting and assigns your division to “take urgent steps.”
 - You're now in charge of a fact-finding and action team.



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- You meet:
 - A zonal psychiatrist with limited staffing
 - School principals reluctant to speak on record
 - Parents blaming “mobile addiction”
 - Local media already calling it a “mental health epidemic”
 - A fellow bureaucrat who insists it’s a law-and-order issue
 - You have 21 working days. Your political boss wants visibility. Your conscience wants clarity.



Dissection — *Where Impact Isn't Obvious*

- Public administration is not about finding answers.
- It's about:
 - Asking the **right questions**,
 - Bringing **invisible stakeholders** into the room,
 - And absorbing blame without losing balance.



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- This scenario is not fiction — it's one of thousands happening in different shapes across India.
 - In every issue, the public servant must:
 - Integrate disciplines: psychology, policing, education, law
 - Navigate emotions: grief, guilt, outrage
 - Manage expectations: media, political bosses, systems of inertia
 - This is where theory stops being helpful.
And your temperament becomes your toolkit.



Reflection — *Finding Your Fit*

- Use the following questions to introspect:
 1. Did you feel confident or unsure navigating multiple causes for the issue?
 2. Were you inclined to **solve**, **listen**, or **show progress** first?
 3. What part of the situation triggered discomfort — media? inaction? systemic silence?
 4. Who would you talk to first — psychiatrist, parents, teachers, or collector? Why?
 5. If no one listened, would you still act?
 6. What would you *not* do — even under political pressure?

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Mini Exercise: Role Map

- On a page, draw this structure:

| Public (parents/students) | | Teachers / NGOs / Doctors | | You — the Bureaucrat | | Politician / Media / Police |

- Now ask yourself:
 - Where do *you* stand emotionally and cognitively?
 - Who's your first ally?
 - Who feels like a threat?
 - Who is invisible but essential?



Final Prompt:

Write 5 lines describing:

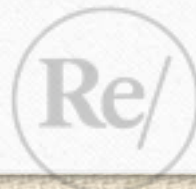
“What does being a public thinker mean to me — and where am I naturally positioned in this system?”





MODULE 3: *Inside the Daily Dilemmas*

“Everyone thinks they’ll be the ethical, efficient, empathetic officer — until real constraints arrive.”



Exposure — *The Choice Is the Challenge*

- **Scenario:**

You're now posted as an SDM in a politically volatile district. The election code of conduct has just kicked in. You receive a complaint that a senior leader is distributing pressure cookers at a local temple.

- **Meanwhile:**

- Your tehsildar reports absence of “direct proof.”
- Media vans have arrived, expecting a statement.
- The politician in question is close to your senior.
- Your junior staff looks at you, awaiting your call.
- The public expects *visible action*.



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- You have three real options:
 1. **Seize goods + file preliminary report**
 2. **Delay action until further verification**
 3. **Take no action but issue an internal warning**
 - Ask yourself:
 - Which do you choose — and why?
 - Who gains, who loses from that decision?
 - What are you most worried about — truth, optics, or career?

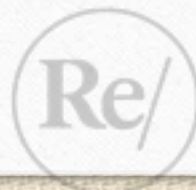
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Dissection — *Why Governance Is Never Clean*

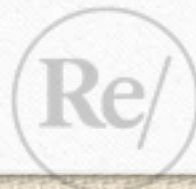
- Let's break this down.

Public administration involves:

- **Ambiguity as default** — rarely black or white
- **Risk-calibrated decisions** — not moral idealism
- **Stakeholder balancing** — often with no applause
- **Self-regulation** — when no one is watching

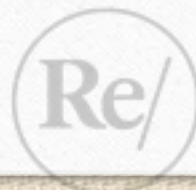


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- Here, you weren't just choosing a policy response.
You were choosing a **posture** — assertive, cautious, or strategic.
 - Your decision reflected more than training.
It reflected **your bandwidth for friction**.



Reflection — *Spot Your Default Style*

- Answer these honestly. Don't overthink.
 1. What emotion led your decision — fear, duty, anger, loyalty, doubt?
 2. What unseen trade-offs did you mentally calculate?
 3. If this happened 5 times a month — could you sustain your posture?
 4. Which part of the situation bothered you most — pressure, exposure, or silence?
 5. If the media misrepresented your action — would you still stand by it?



☐ Identify Your Default Governance Style:

- Pick the one that **most often feels like you** (not what you want to be):
 - ☐ **The Stabilizer** — Plays safe, avoids provocation, values continuity
 - ☐ **The Enforcer** — Acts quickly, values visible control, risks pushback
 - ☐ **The Calibrator** — Balances forces, delays but frames it smartly
 - ☒ **The Diagnostician** — Seeks root cause first, delays action for accuracy
 - ☐ **The Responder** — Reacts to people energy more than protocol
- Write down your top pick. Reflect: “In a system like India’s — what does this style help or hinder?”



Final Task:

Write 5 lines completing:

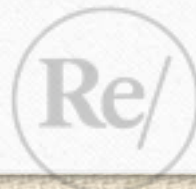
“When I am under pressure, I tend to choose ____ because deep down I value ____.”





Module 4: The Inner Exam

“Everyone trains for the test outside.
Only a few take the one within.”



✳️ □ Why This Module Exists

- You don't become a civil servant the day results are announced.
You begin the moment you ask — *is this path aligned with who I really am?*
- Not just what you can endure.
But what fulfills you.
- This module is not a pros and cons list.
It's not about deciding whether UPSC is hard. (It is.)
It's about asking whether it's **yours**.



Beyond the Rank: “Do you want to serve — or to be seen serving?”

- Let's begin with what's drawing you here.
Tick everything that feels true right now — even if it's contradictory:
 1. I want to work on real, ground-level change
 2. I want a job that gives me status & security
 3. I want to feel worthy in the eyes of my family/society
 4. I want to test how far I can go
 5. I don't know — I just don't want to regret not trying



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- Now pause.

Which of these reasons **feel like yours?**

Which ones feel *borrowed*?

- Write one sentence on:

☞ *If UPSC didn't come with a title, power, or social recognition — would I still want it?*



Knowing Your Operating System

- UPSC is not just a syllabus. It's a psychological regime.
- Take a moment to map your tendencies:

Prompt	Reflection
I thrive in...	Structured or open-ended environments?
I prefer...	Working behind the scenes or being at the frontlines?
I recharge by...	Solitude or social connection?
I struggle most when...	Things move slowly / There's no feedback loop / Stakes are vague

“Your strengths don’t need to match the exam.
They need to match the *role* you’ll play if you clear it.”

Ask:

☞ *Do I want this journey — or just the destination?*



What Kind of Impact Moves You?

- Everyone says they want to “create change.” But what *kind* of change?
- Pick one primary impact mode that excites you most:
 1. Design systems that scale (policy/tech solutions)
 2. Serve vulnerable communities directly (health, education, justice)
 3. Improve efficiency from within (governance, administration)
 4. Change minds (awareness, behavioral nudges, communication)
 5. Enable others to lead (mentorship, collaboration, institution-building)
- Now ask:

☞ *Does the civil services channel my impact in the right direction — or might I thrive better elsewhere?*





Final Reflection:

**“Clarity is not always a loud yes.
Sometimes it’s a graceful no.”**

Write a short journal note (max 5 lines) on one of these:

- *What scares me more — failing the UPSC, or never attempting it?*
- *If I walk away from this path, what opens up instead?*
- *Is this journey a personal calling — or a placeholder for something else I haven’t discovered yet?*



● Closing Note

- There's no shame in pausing.
There's power in stepping back *before* stepping in.
- Take this module as a checkpoint.
Not to exit.
But to enter — with eyes open.





Module 5: ReCode Your Path

“Not all clarity says yes.
Some of it whispers — evolve.”



✱ □ Why This Module Exists

- Some will walk away from this journey.
Some will walk in — but differently.
- Whatever your decision, it must be yours — not society's, not inertia's, not guilt's.
- This is not about whether UPSC is “worth it.”
It's about whether it's *right* for you — at this stage, in this shape.
- This final module helps you close your reflection loop
— not with confusion — but with command.



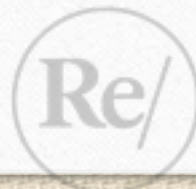
Choose Your Orientation

- Pick the statement that best describes your conclusion *after* Module 4:
 - ✓ I want to prepare — with full clarity and new tools
 - ● I want to exit — with peace and no shame
 - ↻ I'm undecided — but I want to test the waters consciously
- Now reflect: Are you choosing this from clarity — or from fatigue?
- Write 1 line:
 - *I choose this path because...*



Your Next Right Step

- Based on your orientation, here are 3 possible tracks:
 1. You continue
 2. You exit
 3. You are unsure



✓ If You're Continuing:

- You're not just continuing. You're *recoding* the way you'll prepare. Ask yourself:
 - What kind of preparer do I want to become — a memorizer or a meaning-seeker?
 - What's one myth about UPSC prep I now reject?
 - How will I make space for joy, reflection, and strategy?
- ☐ Action prompt:
 - Draft your **Personal Prep Manifesto** — 3 rules you'll follow.
 - Eg. "I will question before I memorize."
 - Eg. "I will track my *thinking quality*, not just my test scores."

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● If You're Exiting:

- You are not giving up. You are graduating from confusion.
- Ask yourself:
 - What am I freeing up in my life by stepping away?
 - What kind of change can I now pursue more honestly?
- ☐ Action prompt:
 - Write your **Graceful Exit Letter** — addressed to yourself.
 - Honor the effort. Celebrate the clarity.
- Include:
 - What I learnt about myself
 - What I'm letting go of
 - What I'm now walking toward



If You're Unsure:

- You don't have to bet everything at once. Start with **low-cost experiments**.
- Ask:
 - Can I shadow or talk to a civil servant directly?
 - Can I volunteer on a governance-linked project?
 - Can I audit a short public policy course?
- ☐ Action prompt:
 - Write your **3-Week Test Plan**
 - Design a 21-day challenge to explore civil services from *inside out*
 - End the challenge with a reflection journal



🔍 Final Check: Is This Decision Whole?

- Answer honestly:
 - What feeling dominates my decision — relief, fear, excitement, guilt, peace?
 - Am I letting go of something that's not mine to carry anymore?
 - Will my future self thank me for this orientation — or question it?
- ☐ Write one sentence:
The version of me I am becoming will...





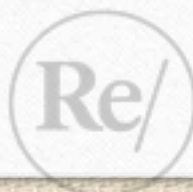
Final Reflection

- **“Decisions are not about choosing perfect futures. They’re about closing the loop on false ones.”**
- You don’t need to walk the “right” path.
You need to walk *your* path — with clarity, curiosity, and coherence.
- Whatever you choose — this inner exam was not wasted.
- You showed up.



✓ Sample: **Personal Prep Manifesto**

- For someone who decides to continue the UPSC journey with clarity:
- **My Personal Prep Manifesto**
 - I will prepare to become — not just to succeed.
 - I will build depth before chasing speed or test scores.
 - I will not let my self-worth hang on prelims, mains, or marks.
 - I will create weekly space for reflection and recalibration.
 - I will stay open to learning from unlikely sources — not just toppers or coaching notes.
- ✎ *Signed on my terms, not the world's.*



● Sample: Graceful Exit Letter

- For someone who steps away from UPSC after reflection:

Dear Me,

I gave this path a real thought — not out of pressure, but out of curiosity.
I tried to see myself inside this system. And something just didn't click.

Not because I wasn't "capable" or "smart enough."
But because I started asking better questions.

I realized I'm drawn to other kinds of challenges.
Ones where I can build, express, or contribute in ways that feel more natural to me.

So I'm letting go of this goal — with no regret.
And I'm walking toward what feels more *mine*.

This isn't a failure. It's a decision.
Made with presence, not panic.

Let that be enough.

— Me



ReSchoolEd Academy

Not Coaching. ReCoding.

Helping aspirants use their knowledge for life, not just a rank.

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