PhD Entrance Exam Syllabus 2026-27

EXAM PATTERN

Section	Type of Questions	Total Questions	Questions to Attempt	Marks per Question	Total Marks
A	**MCQs**	**20**	**20**	**1**	**20**
B	**Short Answer**	**6**	**4**	**5**	**20**
C	**Long Answer**	**5**	**3**	**10**	**30**
Total	**—**	**—**	**—**	**—**	**70**

Unit 1: Sources, Prehistory, Protohistory and Early Historic Developments

- Archaeological sources: exploration, excavation, epigraphy, numismatics; dating techniques.
- Literary sources: indigenous, foreign accounts (Greek, Chinese, Arabic); issues of dating.
- Neolithic & Chalcolithic cultures: settlement, tools, exchange.
- Indus/Harappa Civilization: origins, society, polity, religion, decline, trade, urbanisation.
- Vedic & Later Vedic periods: Aryan debates, political & social institutions, state theories, varna, stratification, iron technology, megaliths.
- Mahajanapadas, emergence of states, second urbanisation, heterodox sects (Jainism, Buddhism, Ajivikas).

Unit 2: State Formation, Empire Building and Early Classical Age

- Rise of Magadha; Alexander's invasion.
- Mauryan Empire: polity, society, economy, Ashoka's Dhamma, decline, art & architecture, edicts.
- Post-Mauryan polities: Indo-Greeks, Sungas, Satavahanas, Kushanas, Sakas; Sangam literature & society.
- Trade with Roman world; Mahayana Buddhism; Kharavela; art schools—Gandhara, Mathura, Amaravati.
- Gupta-Vakataka age: polity, society, agrarian economy, land grants, rights, Sanskrit, science & technology.
- Harsha's administration & religion; Salankayanas & Visnukundins.

Unit 3: Early Medieval India – Regional Kingdoms, Society, Economy & Culture

- Regional kingdoms of Deccan, South, East, West & North India (Gangas to Paramaras).
- Features of early medieval polity, kingship, state structure.
- Agrarian economy, land grants, land rights, coins; trade networks; ports & guilds; SE Asia contacts.

- Growth of Vaishnavism, Shaivism; temples; Bhakti; Shankara, Madhava, Ramanuja.
- Social structure: caste proliferation, women, tribes, untouchability.
- Education: agraharas, mathas, mahaviharas; regional languages.
- State formation debates: feudal, segmentary, integrative models.
- Arab accounts, Sulaiman, Ghaznavid conquests, Alberuni.

Unit 4: Political Developments in Medieval India

- Sources of medieval history: archaeological, Persian, Sanskrit, regional, daftar records, foreign travellers.
- Delhi Sultanate: Ghorids to Lodis; decline.
- Mughal Empire: Babur to Aurangzeb; expansion, consolidation, decline; later Mughals & disintegration.
- Deccan polities: Vijayanagara, Bahmani Sultanate; Bijapur, Golkonda, Bidar, Berar, Ahmadnagar; Gajapatis.
- Rise & expansion of Marathas: Shivaji, Peshwas, confederacy, decline.
- Frontier policies; inter-state relations.

Unit 5: Medieval Administration, Economy and Material Culture

- Administration under Sultanate & Mughals: central, provincial, local; succession; Mansabdari & Jagirdari.
- Vijayanagara & Bahmani administrative systems; Maratha administration (Ashta Pradhan).
- Agriculture, irrigation, village economy, loans, taxation, peasantry.
- Industries: textiles, handicrafts, agro-based industries, technology.
- Trade & commerce: internal/external trade, European traders, ports, transport; hundi, insurance, currency, minting.
- Famines & peasant revolts.

Unit 6: Society, Religion and Culture in Medieval India

- Social organisation; ruling classes, ulema, merchants, professionals, Rajputs.
- Rural society: chiefs, village officials, cultivators, artisans.
- Position of women: zenana, devadasi traditions.
- Sufism: orders, saints, practices; social interactions.
- Bhakti movement: major saints of North & South; impact; women saints.
- Sikh movement: Guru Nanak, teachings, Adi Granth, Khalsa.
- Education: centres, curriculum, madarasa learning.
- Art and architecture: Indo-Islamic, Mughal architecture, regional temples, forts, gardens.
- Painting: Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari, Garhwali; development of music.

Unit 7: Modern India – Colonial State, Economy, Society and National Movement

- Sources of modern history.
- European traders; British conquest; relations with states; administrative evolution.

- 1857 Revolt: causes, nature, impact.
- Colonial administrative structures; princely states; local self-government; constitutional acts (1909–1935).
- Colonial economy: trade, agriculture, land settlements, indebtedness, irrigation.
- De-industrialisation; modern industries; labour laws; trade unions; railways; communication; Urbanisation, town planning; famines; epidemics.
- Tribal & peasant movements.
- Indian society in transition: missions, education, science, technology; Social-religious reform movements; caste mobility; women's organisations & legal reforms.
- National movement: Congress phases; Gandhian movements; revolutionaries; Bose & INA; Left politics; depressed classes; communal politics; Partition.
- Post-1947 India: integration of princely states, Constitution, planning, tribal issues, linguistic reorganisation, foreign policy, emergency, liberalisation.

Unit 8: Historical Methodology and Historiography

- Scope & importance of History; objectivity; bias.
- Heuristics, criticism, synthesis, presentation; auxiliary sciences.
- Causation, imagination, regional history; trends in Indian history.
- Research methodology: hypothesis, topic selection, data collection, notes, referencing, bibliography, plagiarism, thesis writing.
- Historiography: Greek, Roman, Church; Renaissance; Ranke; Marxism; Spengler; Toynbee; postmodernism; Indian historiographical trends.