

CDS 2026 COMPLETE NOTIFICATION: EXAM DATES, ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION PROCESS

The **Combined Defence Services (CDS) Examination 2026**, conducted by the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**, is a prestigious national-level defence exam for graduates who aspire to become officers in the **Indian Armed Forces**. Through CDS, candidates are selected for the **Indian Military Academy (IMA)**, **Indian Naval Academy (INA)**, **Air Force Academy (AFA)**, and **Officers' Training Academy (OTA)**.

UPSC conducts the CDS exam **twice every year** — CDS-I and CDS-II — offering a golden opportunity to serve the nation with honour and pride.

□□ CDS 2026 Notification - Overview

The **CDS 2026 notification** contains complete information regarding:

- Exam dates
- Vacancies
- Eligibility criteria
- Application process
- Selection procedure
- Medical standards

For CDS-I 2026, approximately **451 vacancies** were announced across various academies.

Academy-Wise Vacancies (Approx.)

| Academy | Vacancies |
|--|-----------|
| Indian Military Academy (IMA) | 100 |
| Indian Naval Academy (INA) | 26 |
| Air Force Academy (AFA) | 32 |
| Officers' Training Academy (OTA - Men) | 275 |
| Officers' Training Academy (OTA - Women) | 18 |

(Vacancies may vary as per official updates.)

□□ CDS 2026 Important Dates

CDS-I 2026

| Event | Date |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Notification Release | 10 December 2025 |
| Application Start Date | 10 December 2025 |
| Last Date to Apply | 30 December 2025 |
| Admit Card Release | April 2026 (Expected) |
| CDS-I Exam Date | 12 April 2026 |
| Result Declaration | May-June 2026 (Expected) |

CDS-II 2026

| Event | Date |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Notification Release | 20 May 2026 |
| Application Start Date | 20 May 2026 |
| Last Date to Apply | 09 June 2026 |
| Admit Card Release | August 2026 (Expected) |
| CDS-II Exam Date | 13 September 2026 |
| Result Declaration | October 2026 (Expected) |

□□ CDS 2026 Eligibility Criteria

1. Nationality

A candidate must be:

- A citizen of India, or
- A subject of Nepal or Bhutan, or
- A Tibetan refugee who came to India before 1 January 1962 with the intention of permanent settlement.

2. Age Limit (As per Academy)

| Academy | Age Limit |
|-------------------|-------------|
| IMA | 19-24 years |
| INA | 19-24 years |
| AFA | 20-24 years |
| OTA (Men & Women) | 19-25 years |

□□**Note:** Candidates must be unmarried at the time of application (specific rules apply for each academy).

3. Educational Qualification

| Academy | Required Qualification |
|---------|---|
| IMA | Graduation from a recognized university |
| INA | Engineering degree |
| AFA | Graduation with Physics & Maths at 10+2 |

Academy

OTA

Required Qualification
level OR Engineering degree
Graduation from a recognized university

Final-year students may apply, subject to fulfilling eligibility at the time of joining.

4. Physical & Medical Standards

Candidates must meet prescribed **medical and physical standards**, including:

- Height & weight standards
- Vision requirements
- Hearing and dental health
- Overall physical fitness

Medical standards are strictly assessed during the medical examination stage.

□□ CDS 2026 Application Process (Step-by-Step)

The CDS 2026 application process is **completely online**.

Steps to Apply

1. Visit the UPSC online application portal
2. Click on “CDS-I / CDS-II Examination 2026”
3. Register using a valid email ID and mobile number
4. Fill in personal, academic, and contact details
5. Select preferred academies
6. Upload scanned photograph and signature
7. Pay the application fee
8. Submit the form and download the confirmation page

Application Fee

- General / OBC / EWS: **₹200**
- SC / ST / Female candidates: **Fee Exempted**

□ CDS 2026 Selection Process

The selection process consists of **four stages**:

- 1. Written Examination (UPSC)**
- 2. SSB Interview (5-Day Process)**
- 3. Medical Examination**
- 4. Final Merit List**

Only candidates clearing each stage move to the next phase.

□ CDS 2026 Exam Pattern (Overview)

For IMA, INA & AFA

| Subject | Marks |
|------------------------|------------------|
| English | 100 |
| General Knowledge | 100 |
| Elementary Mathematics | 100 |
| Total | 300 Marks |

For OTA

| Subject | Marks |
|-------------------|------------------|
| English | 100 |
| General Knowledge | 100 |
| Total | 200 Marks |

- Mode: Offline (Pen & Paper)
- Type: Objective (MCQs)
- Negative marking applicable

□ Preparation Tips for CDS 2026

- ✓ Start preparation at least 8-10 months early
- ✓ Practice previous year question papers
- ✓ Focus on English and GK for OTA
- ✓ Strengthen Maths basics for IMA/INA/AFA
- ✓ Maintain physical fitness for SSB
- ✓ Stay updated with current affairs

□ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. When will CDS 2026 exam be conducted?

CDS-I 2026 will be held on **12 April 2026** and CDS-II 2026 on **13 September 2026**.

Q2. Can female candidates apply for CDS 2026?

Yes, female candidates can apply for **OTA (Non-Technical)** entry.

Q3. Is there negative marking in CDS exam?

Yes, negative marking is applicable for wrong answers.

Q4. Can final-year students apply for CDS?

Yes, final-year students can apply provided they meet eligibility before joining.

Q5. How many attempts are allowed for CDS?

There is **no attempt limit**. Candidates can apply until they meet age criteria.

Q6. Is Maths compulsory for OTA candidates?

No, OTA candidates do **not** have a Mathematics paper.

Q7. What happens after clearing the written exam?

Candidates are called for **SSB Interview**, followed by medical examination and final merit list.

□ Conclusion

The **CDS 2026 examination** is a golden opportunity for graduates who dream of wearing the uniform and serving the nation as commissioned officers. With the right strategy, disciplined preparation, and strong determination, cracking CDS is absolutely achievable.

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