# CDS 2026 SSB Interview Process Explained (Stage I & Stage II)

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Clearing the **CDS written exam** is only half the battle. The real test of your **officer-like qualities (OLQs)** happens at the **SSB Interview**, where your **personality, leadership skills, mental ability, and suitability for the Armed Forces** are assessed.

The **CDS 2026 SSB Interview** is a **5-day personality assessment process**, divided into **Stage I (Screening)** and **Stage II (Psychological, GTO & Interview)**. This article explains the **entire CDS SSB process step by step**, helping aspirants prepare with clarity and confidence.

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## What Is CDS SSB Interview?

The **Services Selection Board (SSB)** interview is conducted to select suitable candidates for:

- Indian Military Academy (IMA)
- Indian Naval Academy (INA)
- Air Force Academy (AFA)
- Officers' Training Academy (OTA)

The SSB does **not test bookish knowledge**. Instead, it evaluates **Officer Like Qualities (OLQs)** such as:

- Leadership
- Effective communication
- Decision-making ability
- Team spirit
- Mental robustness
- Integrity & discipline

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## Overview of CDS 2026 SSB Interview Process

| Stage | Duration | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Stage I | Day 1 | Screening & elimination |
| Stage II | Day 2–5 | In-depth personality assessment |

| Stage | Duration | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Conference | Day 5 | Final decision |

Only candidates who clear **Stage I** are allowed to appear for **Stage II**.

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# Stage I: CDS SSB Screening Test (Day 1)

Stage I is an **elimination round**, where nearly **60–70% candidates are screened out**.

## Components of Stage I

### 1. Officer Intelligence Rating (OIR) Test

- Verbal & Non-Verbal reasoning
- Series, coding-decoding, analogies
- Time-bound (quick thinking required)

**Tip:** Accuracy matters more than attempting all questions.

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### 2. Picture Perception & Discussion Test (PPDT)

**PPDT has 3 steps:**

1. A blurred picture is shown for 30 seconds
2. Candidates write a short story based on the picture
3. Group discussion on the picture and story

**Assessors look for:**

- Logical thinking
- Communication skills
- Confidence
- Initiative in group discussion

**Clear expression and originality matter more than dominance.**

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### Result of Stage I

- Candidates who clear Stage I are **screened in**
- Others are **screened out and sent back on Day 1**

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## Stage II: CDS SSB Interview (Day 2 to Day 5)

Stage II is a **detailed evaluation of personality**, conducted over **4 days**.

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## Day 2: Psychological Tests

These tests assess your **thought process, attitude, and emotional balance**.

### Psychological Test Series

#### 1. Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

- 12 pictures shown
- Write a story for each
- Last picture is blank

**Focus:** Positive thinking, leadership, realistic solutions

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#### 2. Word Association Test (WAT)

- 60 words shown
- Write first thought that comes to mind

**Focus:** Natural responses, positivity, clarity

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#### 3. Situation Reaction Test (SRT)

- 60 real-life situations
- Write your reaction

**Focus:** Presence of mind, responsibility, decision-making

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#### 4. Self-Description Test (SDT)

- Write about yourself from:

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- Parents’ view
- Teachers’ view
- Friends’ view
- Your own view
- Areas of improvement

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## Day 3 & Day 4: GTO Tasks (Group Testing Officer)

These tests evaluate **teamwork, leadership, and social effectiveness**.

### Outdoor & Indoor GTO Tasks

- Group Discussion (GD)
- Group Planning Exercise (GPE)
- Progressive Group Task (PGT)
- Half Group Task (HGT)
- Individual Obstacles
- Command Task
- Snake Race
- Lecturette
- Final Group Task (FGT)

**What GTO Observes:**

- Initiative
- Cooperation
- Confidence
- Ability to influence group positively

**Helping others and staying calm is more important than winning.**

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## Personal Interview (Day 2–4)

The **Interviewing Officer (IO)** interacts with you one-on-one.

### Common Interview Areas

- Education & academics
- Family background
- Daily routine
- Hobbies & interests
- Current affairs
- Defence awareness
- Personal achievements & failures

**Key Tip:** Be honest, clear, and confident—**fake answers are easily caught**.

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## Day 5: Conference Day

- All assessors (Psychologist, GTO, IO) discuss your performance
- Short personal interaction
- Final recommendation made

**Possible Outcomes:**

- Recommended
- Not recommended
- Conference out (borderline cases)

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## Medical Examination After SSB

Candidates recommended at SSB undergo:

- Detailed medical examination

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- Vision, hearing, physical standards checked

Final merit list depends on:

- SSB marks
- Written exam marks
- Medical fitness
- Vacancies

## Marks Distribution in CDS SSB

| Component | Marks |
|---|---|
| SSB Interview | 300 |
| Written Exam | 200 / 300 (academy-wise) |

## Common Mistakes to Avoid in CDS SSB

- Memorised answers
- Dominating group discussions
- Being silent in tasks
- Overacting leadership
- Negative body language
- Lying in interview

## How to Prepare for CDS 2026 SSB Interview

- Improve communication skills
- Read newspapers daily
- Practice psychological tests
- Participate in group activities
- Develop physical stamina
- Work on self-awareness

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**SSB preparation is personality development, not rote learning.**

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### Q1. How many days is CDS SSB Interview?

CDS SSB is conducted over **5 days**.

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### Q2. Is Stage I compulsory for everyone?

Yes, all candidates must clear **Stage I screening**.

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### Q3. Can average students clear SSB?

Yes. SSB looks for **potential officers**, not toppers.

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### Q4. Is coaching necessary for CDS SSB?

Not mandatory. Self-preparation with awareness is sufficient.

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### Q5. How many times can I appear for CDS SSB?

As many times as you clear the written exam and meet age limits.

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### Q6. What is conference out in SSB?

Candidates close to selection but not finally recommended.

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## Conclusion

The **CDS 2026 SSB Interview** is a **scientific and fair personality assessment system**. It does not expect perfection—it expects **honesty, balance, leadership potential, and willingness to learn**.

Focus on being **the best version of yourself**, not someone else. With clarity, confidence, and consistency, **clearing SSB is absolutely achievable**.

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