

CDS Cut Off Marks (IMA, OTA, INA, AFA) - Expected for 2026

The **CDS cut off marks** play a crucial role in determining whether a candidate qualifies for the **SSB Interview** and ultimately secures a place in the **Indian Military Academy (IMA)**, **Officers' Training Academy (OTA)**, **Indian Naval Academy (INA)**, or **Air Force Academy (AFA)**.

With CDS 2026 approaching, aspirants are keen to know the **expected CDS cut off marks for 2026** to set realistic score targets and plan their preparation strategy accordingly. This article provides a **complete analysis of CDS cut off marks**, including **previous year trends**, **expected cut off for 2026**, **factors affecting cut off**, and smart score-planning tips.

What Is CDS Cut Off?

The **CDS cut off marks** are the **minimum marks** a candidate must score in the **written examination** to be shortlisted for the **SSB interview**. UPSC releases cut off marks **academy-wise** and **exam-wise** after the final result.

There are two stages of cut off:

1. **Written Exam Cut Off**
2. **Final Cut Off (Written + SSB)**

This article mainly focuses on the **expected written exam cut off for CDS 2026**.

CDS 2026 Exam - Written Marks Structure

Academy	Papers	Maximum Marks
IMA	English + GK + Maths	300
INA	English + GK + Maths	300
AFA	English + GK + Maths	300
OTA (Men & Women)	English + GK	200

Candidates must also score **minimum qualifying marks in each paper** separately.

Previous Year CDS Cut Off Trends (Written Exam)

Understanding past trends helps in accurately predicting the **CDS 2026 expected cut off**.

CDS Previous Year Written Cut Off (Approximate Range)

Academy	Cut Off Range
IMA	120 - 135 / 300
INA	125 - 140 / 300
AFA	140 - 155 / 300
OTA (Men)	90 - 105 / 200
OTA (Women)	90 - 105 / 200

CDS Cut Off Marks - Expected for 2026 (Academy-Wise)

Based on **previous year trends, exam difficulty level, and competition**, the **expected CDS 2026 written cut off** is as follows:

Expected CDS 2026 Cut Off for IMA

- **Expected Cut Off: 125 - 135 marks (out of 300)**
- **Papers:** English, GK, Maths

Safe Score Target for IMA:

☐☐ **145+ marks** to comfortably clear the cut off

Expected CDS 2026 Cut Off for INA

- **Expected Cut Off: 130 - 140 marks (out of 300)**
- **Papers:** English, GK, Maths

Safe Score Target for INA:

☐☐ **150+ marks**

INA cut off is slightly higher due to **limited vacancies** and **engineering background competition**.

Expected CDS 2026 Cut Off for AFA

- **Expected Cut Off: 145 - 155 marks (out of 300)**
- **Papers:** English, GK, Maths

Safe Score Target for AFA:

☐☐165+ marks

AFA usually has the **highest cut off** among all academies.

Expected CDS 2026 Cut Off for OTA (Men)

- **Expected Cut Off: 95 - 105 marks (out of 200)**
- **Papers:** English, GK

Safe Score Target for OTA (Men):

☐☐115+ marks

Expected CDS 2026 Cut Off for OTA (Women)

- **Expected Cut Off: 95 - 105 marks (out of 200)**
- **Papers:** English, GK

Safe Score Target for OTA (Women):

☐☐115+ marks

Factors Affecting CDS 2026 Cut Off Marks

Several factors influence the CDS cut off every year:

1. Difficulty Level of the Exam

- Tough GK or Maths → lower cut off
 - Easy paper → higher cut off
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2. Number of Vacancies

- Fewer vacancies → higher cut off
- More vacancies → lower cut off

3. Number of Appearing Candidates

Higher competition directly increases cut off.

4. Candidate Performance

If overall performance is good, UPSC raises the cut off.

5. Academy Preference

AFA and INA usually have higher cut offs due to **technical and flying branch demand**.

Minimum Qualifying Marks Rule (Very Important)

To be considered for cut off:

- **Minimum 20-25% marks in each paper** (varies year to year)
- Failing in **any one paper = disqualification**, even if total score is high

How Much Should You Score to Clear CDS 2026 Comfortably?

Academy	Recommended Safe Score
IMA	145 - 150
INA	150 - 155
AFA	165 - 170
OTA	115 - 120

Tips to Beat CDS 2026 Cut Off

- Focus on **accuracy over attempts**
- Avoid blind guessing due to negative marking
- Strengthen **English and GK** (high scoring)
- Solve **10-15 years of PYQs**
- Attempt mock tests regularly

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - CDS Cut Off 2026

Q1. Is CDS cut off same for all academies?

No, CDS cut off varies for **IMA, INA, AFA, and OTA**.

Q2. Does CDS cut off change every year?

Yes, CDS cut off changes depending on **exam difficulty, vacancies, and competition**.

Q3. Is there any category-wise cut off in CDS?

No, CDS has **no category-wise cut off**. The same cut off applies to all candidates.

Q4. Is clearing written cut off enough for selection?

No, candidates must also clear the **SSB interview and medical examination**.

Q5. Which academy has the highest CDS cut off?

The **Air Force Academy (AFA)** usually has the highest cut off.

Q6. When will UPSC release CDS 2026 cut off marks?

UPSC releases cut off marks **after the final result**, usually months after the exam.

Conclusion

The **CDS 2026 cut off marks** are a critical benchmark for aspirants targeting IMA, OTA, INA, or AFA. While cut offs vary every year, having a **clear target score above the expected range** significantly improves your chances of qualifying for the SSB interview.

Smart preparation, strong fundamentals, and disciplined practice can help you **not just clear the cut off, but stay well ahead of it**.

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