

# 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)

	Cut Off Range
Academy	120 – 135 / 300
IMA	125 – 140 / 300
INA	140 – 155 / 300
AFA	90 – 105 / 200
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.

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## **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**

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## **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**

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## **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**.

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## **Q2. Does CDS cut off change every year?**

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

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## **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.

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## **Q4. Is clearing written cut off enough for selection?**

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

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## **Q5. Which academy has the highest CDS cut off?**

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

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

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

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## **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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