

# CDS Salary, Rank Structure & Career Growth After Commission - Complete Guide

One of the biggest motivations for aspirants preparing for the **Combined Defence Services (CDS) Examination** is the **prestigious career, attractive salary, and long-term growth opportunities** offered after commission. Beyond pay, a CDS officer enjoys **honour, authority, job security, and lifelong respect**.

This article explains the **CDS salary structure (Army, Navy & Air Force), rank hierarchy, allowances, and career growth path after commission**.

## CDS Salary Structure After Commission (2026)

The salary of CDS officers is based on the **7th Pay Commission**.

### Starting Salary After Training

- **Basic Pay:** ₹56,100 per month
- **Pay Level:** Level 10
- **Rank:** Lieutenant / Sub-Lieutenant / Flying Officer

## Rank-Wise Pay Structure (Army, Navy & Air Force)

Rank	Pay Level	Basic Pay (₹)
Lieutenant / Flying Officer	Level 10	56,100
Captain / Flight Lieutenant	Level 10B	61,300
Major / Squadron Leader	Level 11	69,400
Lieutenant Colonel / Wing Commander	Level 12A	1,21,200
Colonel / Group Captain	Level 13	1,30,600
Brigadier / Air Commodore	Level 13A	1,39,600
Major General / AVM	Level 14	1,44,200
Lieutenant General / AOC-in-C	Level 15	1,82,200
HAG+ Scale	Level 16	2,05,400
VCOAS / AOC-in-C (Army/IAF)	Level 17	2,25,000
COAS / CNS / CAS	Level 18	2,50,000

## Military Service Allowance (MSA)

- **₹15,500 per month** (up to the rank of Brigadier)

- Applicable to officers in field and operational areas

## Major Allowances for CDS Officers

Allowance	Amount
Dearness Allowance (DA)	As per govt rates
HRA / Field Area Allowance	Based on posting
Siachen Allowance	₹42,500
Island Duty Allowance	₹25,000
Flying Allowance	₹25,000
Transport Allowance	₹3,600 - ₹7,200
Uniform Allowance	₹20,000 annually

Allowances vary depending on **posting, branch, and operational role**.

## Career Growth in Indian Army (Through CDS)

### Promotion Timeline (Approximate)

- Lieutenant → Captain: 2 years
- Captain → Major: 6 years
- Major → Lieutenant Colonel: 13 years
- Lieutenant Colonel → Colonel: 15-18 years (selection-based)
- Higher ranks: Merit + vacancies

### Commission Types

- **Permanent Commission (IMA)**
- **Short Service Commission (OTA)** – option to extend up to 14 years and convert to PC

## Career Growth in Indian Navy (Through CDS)

- Structured promotion based on service and performance
- Opportunities in:
  - Executive branch

- Technical branch
- Exposure to:
  - Ship command
  - Submarine service
  - Aircraft carriers
  - Foreign naval missions

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## **Career Growth in Indian Air Force (Through CDS)**

- Promotions depend on:
  - Branch (Flying / Ground Duty)
  - Medical fitness
  - Performance
- Specialised roles:
  - Fighter pilots
  - Transport pilots
  - ATC
  - Technical officers

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## **Post-Retirement Benefits**

- **Pension & gratuity**
- **Canteen (CSD) facilities**
- **ECHS medical facilities**
- **Re-employment opportunities**
- **Respect & social status**

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## **Other Benefits of CDS Career**

- Free accommodation or HRA
- Free medical for self & dependents
- Leave travel concessions
- Adventure training & foreign postings
- Education support for children

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## **Why CDS Career Is More Than Just Salary**

- Leadership from an early age
- Nation-first service
- Fast promotions compared to civil jobs
- High job satisfaction
- Lifetime identity as an officer

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## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **Q1. What is the starting salary after CDS?**

₹56,100 per month plus allowances.

### **Q2. Do CDS officers get salary during training?**

Yes, a stipend of **₹56,100/month** during training.

### **Q3. Is CDS salary same for Army, Navy & Air Force?**

Yes, base pay is the same; allowances differ.

### **Q4. Can OTA officers get permanent commission?**

Yes, SSC officers can apply for PC based on vacancies.

### **Q5. Do CDS officers get pension?**

Yes, after completing the required service period.

### **Q6. Are promotions guaranteed?**

Up to Major level (Army) are time-bound; higher ranks are merit-based.

## Conclusion

A career through **CDS** offers an excellent **salary structure, fast career growth, unmatched allowances, and lifelong respect**. While the financial benefits are strong, the **honour of serving the nation as an officer** makes CDS a truly rewarding career path.

If you aspire for leadership, adventure, and purpose—**CDS is one of the best careers in India.**

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