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

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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

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

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

Post-Retirement Benefits

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

Other Benefits of CDS Career

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

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

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?

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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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