

The "**Combined Defence Services**" (CDS) Examination is conducted twice a year by the Union Public Service Commission for recruitment into the Indian Military Academy, Officers Training Academy, Indian Naval Academy and Indian Air Force Academy. The Notification for the examination is usually released in the months of October and June, and the examinations are conducted in February and November respectively. Only unmarried graduates are eligible to sit for the exam. Successful candidates are admitted into the respective Academies after an interview conducted by the Services Selection Board (SSB).

Age Limit

Indian Military Academy	19–31 years
Air Force Academy	19–24 years
Naval Academy	19–22 years
Officers' Training Academy	19–35 years

Scheme of Examination

Indian Military Academy / Air Force Academy / Naval Academy

All the papers are of objective type.

Subject	Marks
English	100
General Knowledge	100
Elementary Mathematics	100
Total	300

Officers' Training Academy

All the papers are of objective type.

Subject	Marks
English	100
General Knowledge	100
Total	200

Candidates successful in the written exam are then called for an interview by a Services Selection Board which evaluates a candidate's suitability for a career in the Indian Armed Forces. The SSB interview lasts for approximately a week, during which a candidate undergoes various physical and psychological tests to ascertain whether or not he is officer material. Apart from SSB interview, Air Force academy candidates (only those who have applied for flying branch) are tested for PABT. After these tests, candidates undergo medical examination before finally admitted into the above-mentioned academies, and after successful completion of training, they are inducted into the armed forces.

Armed forces offer very exciting career to young men and women in several fields. Career in the force is also an adventure in itself. To ensure that appropriate candidates are chosen, a comprehensive selection process is adopted by the armed forces through Service Selection Board (SSB) interview. This system of selection is based on the "trait theory" of leadership which assumes that every leader must have some specific and pre-determined leadership traits. It also presumes that such traits can be acquired by a candidate with the passage of time meaning thereby that a person once rejected in an SSB interview is likely to succeed if he acquires some of the traits with the passage of time. The present system of selection, although is long and takes four to five days, is thus based on an objective assessment of each candidate in which the qualities like initiative, alertness, judgement, courage, physical fitness endurance, cooperation, group planning, decisiveness, knowledge, etc. are judged. In addition, psychological and mental robustness of the candidate vis-a-vis requirements of the Armed Forces is judged and finally an overall assessment of the personality of a candidate is made by way of an exhaustive personal interviews