

CDS Syllabus and Exam Pattern: Your Ultimate Prep Guide

Detailed CDS Exam Pattern and CDS Marking Scheme

Before buying your reference books, you must decode the exact **CDS Exam Pattern and CDS Marking Scheme**. The written test structure changes completely based on the academy preferences you fill in the form.

For the **IMA, INA, and AFA** entries, candidates write three distinct papers. Alternatively, candidates choosing the **OTA (Officers Training Academy)** entry face a shorter pathway.

Official Structure for All Academy Streams

The structural differences between the streams appear clearly in the layout below.

Academy Choice	Subject Papers	Duration	Questions	Maximum Marks
IMA, INA, AFA	1. English	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	120	100 Marks
	2. General Knowledge	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	120	100 Marks
	3. Elementary Mathematics	3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	100	100 Marks
	Total for IMA, INA, AFA	3 Papers	340	300 Marks
OTA (Men & Women)	1. English	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	120	100 Marks
	2. General Knowledge (Mathematics is not asked in OTA)	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	120	100 Marks
Total for OTA Entry	2 Papers	4 Hours	240	200 Marks

Understanding the Rules of CDS Negative Marking

Accuracy carries heavy weight because of the strict **CDS Negative Marking** rules enforced on the OMR sheet. English and General Knowledge carries 0.83 marks for each correct answer and Maths contains 1 mark for each correct answer.

However, every incorrect choice triggers a fixed deduction. The commission deducts exactly **one-third (0.33)** of the marks assigned to that question. Unattempted questions cause no penalty. Shading multiple options for a single question automatically registers as a wrong answer.

Comprehensive Subject-Wise UPSC CDS Syllabus

A deep study of the official **UPSC CDS Syllabus** remains vital to clear the cutoffs comfortably. We have organized every topic and minor sub-topic carefully below.

1. CDS English Syllabus (Common for IMA, INA, AFA, & OTA)

The CDS English Question Paper measures your school-level grip on functional language patterns. It evaluates your ability to spot grammar mistakes and construct logical flow.

- **Spotting the Errors:** Finding errors in tenses, subject-verb agreement, and basic prepositions.
- **Sentence Improvement:** Replacing underlined phrases with better grammatical structures.
- **Synonyms and Antonyms:** Testing absolute vocabulary power and context-based word replacements.
- **Selecting Words / Fillers:** Filling gaps using suitable nouns, adverbs, or conjunctions.
- **Ordering of Words in a Sentence:** Arranging messy blocks to build correct, meaningful lines.
- **Ordering of Sentences (Para-Jumbles):** Structuring isolated paragraphs into sequential reading pieces.
- **Reading Comprehension:** Answering logical questions from long reading passages.
- **Idioms and Phrases:** Identifying correct real-world meanings of standard English metaphors.
- **Cloze Test:** Evaluating continuous contextual knowledge by supplying a series of blanks.
- **Parts of Speech:** Labeling active structural words like pronouns and adjectives.

2. CDS General Knowledge Syllabus (Common for IMA, INA, AFA, & OTA)

The General Knowledge section covers standard graduate awareness without requesting massive specialization. Regular newspaper habits help you clear this cutoff seamlessly.

- **Indian History:** Ancient Indian empires, medieval socio-economic changes, and the Indian National Movement.
- **Geography:** Earth motions, physical borders, world climate systems, and Indian resources.
- **Indian Polity:** The Constitution, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, and Parliament laws.
- **General Science (Physics):** Mechanics, thermodynamics, lenses, light, magnetism, sound wave rules, and gravitation.
- **General Science (Chemistry):** Elements, compounds, periodic tables, organic chemistry basics, acids, and salts.
- **General Science (Biology):** Cellular division, human organs, plant growth, vitamins, and infectious diseases.
- **Economics:** Gross Domestic Product (GDP), monetary policy tools, inflation indices, and five-year plans.
- **Environment & Ecology:** Biodiversity threats, standard ecosystem flows, and national parks.
- **Current Affairs:** Military exercises, bilateral summits, sports trophies, and geopolitical updates.

3. CDS Mathematics Syllabus (Only for IMA, INA & AFA)

The core **CDS Entrance Exam Syllabus** for mathematics demands rapid mental steps and clear logic. All topics align with the traditional matriculation standard. **Remember that OTA aspirants do not face this paper.**

- **Arithmetic (Number System):** Real numbers, integers, rational variables, square roots, and decimals.
- **Arithmetic (Fundamental Rules):** Unitary methods, speed formulas, time-work ratios, and percentages.
- **Commercial Math:** Profit calculations, compound interests, ratio variants, and discount equations.
- **Elementary Number Theory:** Divisibility tests (for 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11), HCF, LCM, prime factors, and logarithms.
- **Algebra:** Basic operations, remainder theorem, polynomial theory, and root relations.
- **Algebra (Equations):** Simultaneous linear inequalities, quadratic equations, set notation, and indices.

- **Trigonometry:** Sine, cosine, tangent operations, simple identities, standard angles, and height-distance problems.
- **Geometry:** Lines, parallel angles, congruent triangles, and circle tangent properties.
- **Mensuration:** Areas of squares, triangles, and complex geometric fields.
- **Mensuration (Volumes):** Surface areas and volumes of right circular cones, cylinders, and spheres.
- **Statistics:** Tabulation of data, drawing frequency histograms, pie charts, and calculation of mean, median, and mode.

