

AFCAT Syllabus 2026

Indian Air Force — Air Force Common Admission Test

Vacancies	Announced twice yearly (AFCAT 1 & AFCAT 2) for Flying, Technical and Ground Duty (Non-Technical) branches
Age Limit	Flying Branch: 20–24 years (up to 26 for candidates with a valid CPL); Ground Duty & Technical: 20–26 years (entry-specific relaxation may apply)
Qualification	Graduation in any discipline (Flying & Ground Duty Non-Technical) with specific subject requirements at 10+2 level for Flying Branch; Technical Branch requires a relevant Engineering degree
Application Fee	■250 (Male candidates). Women candidates are exempted from the fee.
Official Website	afcat.cdac.in
Last Reviewed	11 Jun 2026

Overview

AFCAT is the Indian Air Force's common entrance route into the Flying Branch, Technical Branch, and Ground Duty (Non-Technical) Branch, conducted twice a year (AFCAT 1 and AFCAT 2). It's notably more accessible than NDA/CDS in terms of educational entry point for non-technical roles, since Ground Duty branches accept graduates from any discipline, while Flying and Technical branches have specific subject/degree requirements. Selection combines a single objective written exam (with an additional EKT module for Technical Branch applicants) with the Air Force Selection Board (AFSB) process and a final medical examination.

What's New in the 2026 Cycle

- Two annual cycles — AFCAT 1 and AFCAT 2 — each with a separate notification, written exam and AFSB process.
- Technical Branch applicants must additionally clear the Engineering Knowledge Test (EKT), on top of the common AFCAT paper.
- Ground Duty (Non-Technical) branches accept graduates from any discipline, making AFCAT comparatively more accessible than NDA/CDS for non-engineering graduates.
- AFSB process mirrors other tri-services officer selection — Screening, then Psychology/GTO/Interview across multiple days.

Exam Pattern

AFCAT (Common Paper — all branches)

Mode: Online, objective MCQ | Duration: 2 hours

Section	Questions	Marks
General Awareness	—	Qualifying
Verbal Ability in English	—	Qualifying

Numerical Ability	—	Qualifying
Reasoning & Military Aptitude Test	—	Qualifying

Negative marking: 1 mark deducted for every wrong answer (0.25 marks per wrong answer in some sections — verify against the current notification) | **Nature:** Merit-determining for shortlisting to the AFSB.

Engineering Knowledge Test (EKT) — Technical Branch only

Mode: Online, objective MCQ | Duration: 45 minutes

Section	Questions	Marks
Discipline-specific Engineering (Mechanical/Electrical/Electronics/Computer Science, as applicable)	—	Qualifying

Negative marking: As per the current notification | **Nature:** Mandatory additional test for Technical Branch applicants, combined with the AFCAT score.

Air Force Selection Board (AFSB)

Mode: Screening test, Psychological tests, GTO tasks, Personal Interview, Conference | Duration: Multiple days

Section	Questions	Marks
Officer Potentiality Assessment	—	Qualifying

Negative marking: Not applicable | **Nature:** Counted for final merit alongside the written score.

AFCAT — Detailed Subject-Wise Syllabus

General Awareness

Broad and current-affairs-heavy — daily reading habits compound significantly over a preparation cycle.

- Current affairs — national & international, defence-related news
- History, geography & culture
- Indian polity & economy
- General science & environment

Verbal Ability in English

Standard competitive-exam English — grammar accuracy and comprehension speed are the biggest levers.

- Grammar & usage
- Vocabulary — synonyms, antonyms
- Comprehension
- Error detection & sentence correction

Numerical Ability

Foundational-level questions — speed and accuracy on basics beats advanced topic study.

- Number system & simplification
- Percentage, ratio & proportion, average
- Time, speed & distance, time & work
- Basic algebra & mensuration

Reasoning & Military Aptitude Test

AFCAT-specific practice matters here — generic reasoning sets don't fully capture the military-context style of questions.

- Verbal & non-verbal reasoning
- Spatial reasoning relevant to flying aptitude
- Military-context situational judgement

Engineering Knowledge Test (EKT — Technical Branch)

Tests genuine degree-level engineering knowledge — revise your core discipline systematically, not just AFCAT-specific guides.

- Discipline-specific core engineering subjects (Mechanical, Electrical, Electronics or Computer Science, as per the branch applied for)

AFSB — Psychological & Group Testing

- Officer Intelligence Rating test (screening)
- Picture Perception & Discussion Test
- Group Discussion & Group Planning Exercise
- Command Task & Individual Obstacles
- Personal Interview & Conference

Selection Process

- 1 AFCAT — common written exam for all branches.
- 2 Engineering Knowledge Test (EKT) — additional stage for Technical Branch applicants only.
- 3 Air Force Selection Board (AFSB) — Screening, then Psychological Tests, GTO tasks & Personal Interview.
- 4 Medical Examination.
- 5 Final merit list based on combined AFCAT (+EKT where applicable) and AFSB marks.

Salary & Job Profile

Officers commissioned through AFCAT start at Pay Level 10 (₹56,100 basic), the standard entry-level officer pay across the armed forces, plus Military Service Pay, Dearness Allowance and Flying/Technical/Ground Duty branch-specific allowances as applicable.

Best Books for Preparation

- Pathfinder AFCAT Entrance Examination — Arihant Experts
- Objective General English — S.P. Bakshi (Arihant)
- Quantitative Aptitude for Competitive Examinations — R.S. Aggarwal
- Manorama Yearbook (for General Knowledge & current affairs)

Previous Cut-off Trends (Approximate)

AFCAT cut-offs vary by branch (Flying/Technical/Ground Duty), gender and recruitment cycle (AFCAT 1/AFCAT 2), shifting with paper difficulty and vacancy count each time. AFSB selection ratios are historically far more competitive than the written cut-off alone suggests — always check the official cut-off release for exact figures.

Preparation Tips

- Technical Branch applicants should revise their core engineering subjects specifically for EKT, in addition to the common AFCAT paper.
- Military Aptitude Test questions reward familiarity with situational, defence-context reasoning — practise AFCAT-specific mock papers rather than generic reasoning sets alone.
- Since AFCAT runs twice a year, plan your preparation timeline around your target cycle rather than treating it as a single annual opportunity.
- Start AFSB-specific preparation (group tasks, personal interview mock sessions) well before the written result.

Exam Day Guidelines

- Carry the Admit Card and a valid original photo ID to the exam centre.
- No electronic devices are allowed inside the exam hall for either AFCAT or EKT.
- Arrive well before reporting time; gate-closing rules are strictly enforced.
- For AFSB, carry multiple passport-size photographs, original certificates and photocopies as specified in your call letter.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply for AFCAT's Ground Duty branches?

Graduates from any discipline can apply for Ground Duty (Non-Technical) branches, making AFCAT comparatively more accessible than NDA/CDS for non-engineering graduates.

What is EKT in AFCAT?

The Engineering Knowledge Test is an additional, discipline-specific objective test required only for Technical Branch applicants, on top of the common AFCAT paper.

How many times a year is AFCAT conducted?

Twice — AFCAT 1 and AFCAT 2 — each with its own notification, written exam and AFSB cycle.

Is there negative marking in AFCAT?

Yes, though the exact deduction has varied across recent notifications — always verify the current marking scheme against the official notice before the exam.

What is the age limit for AFCAT's Flying Branch?

Generally 20–24 years, extendable up to 26 years for candidates holding a valid Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL), as specified in the current notification.

Compiled and reviewed by Syllabus Hub against the official Indian Air Force notification as of 11 Jun 2026. Exam patterns, vacancies and dates are subject to change — always cross-check with the official notification at afcat.cdac.in before applying. © 2026 Syllabus Hub.