

UPSC CAPF (AC) Syllabus 2026

Union Public Service Commission — Central Armed Police Forces — Assistant Commandant Examination

Vacancies	Announced yearly for Assistant Commandant posts across BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP and SSB
Age Limit	20–25 years (as on 1 August of the exam year; relaxation per government norms)
Qualification	Bachelor's degree in any discipline from a recognised university
Application Fee	■200 (General/OBC male candidates). Women and SC/ST candidates are exempted.
Official Website	upsc.gov.in
Last Reviewed	14 May 2026

Overview

UPSC CAPF (AC) recruits Assistant Commandants — the entry-level Group A officer rank — into the Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police and Sashastra Seema Bal. Selection combines a two-paper written exam (a General Ability & Intelligence screening paper followed by a General Studies, Essay & Comprehension paper), a mandatory Physical Efficiency Test and Detailed Medical Examination, and a Personality Test — reflecting the dual academic-and-field nature of the role.

What's New in the 2026 Cycle

- Paper I is qualifying/screening; only Paper II marks combine with the Interview for final merit, alongside the Paper I score in the overall total.
- PET/PST includes force-specific physical standards, given candidates may be posted to any of the five CAPFs.
- Paper II includes a compulsory descriptive Essay and comprehension component, unlike typical MCQ-only SSC-style exams.
- Medical standards are stringent, reflecting the operational and field-command nature of Assistant Commandant postings.

Exam Pattern

Paper I — General Ability & Intelligence

Mode: Offline, objective MCQ | Duration: 2 hours

Section	Questions	Marks
General Mental Ability, General Science, Current Affairs, Indian Polity & Economy, Reasoning	125	250

Negative marking: 1/3rd mark deducted per wrong answer | **Nature:** Screening stage — must clear the cut-off to proceed; contributes to the aggregate.

Physical Efficiency Test (PET) & Physical Standard Test (PST)

Mode: Field test — race, height, chest & weight measurement | Duration: Conducted on scheduled test dates

Section	Questions	Marks
Race, Height/Chest/Weight measurement	—	Qualifying

Negative marking: Not applicable — qualifying (pass/fail) only | **Nature:** Mandatory gate before Paper II eligibility is confirmed for final selection.

Paper II — General Studies, Essay & Comprehension

Mode: Offline, descriptive (essay, comprehension, precis, communication skills) | Duration: 3 hours

Section	Questions	Marks
Essay, Precis Writing, Comprehension, Counter Terrorism & Security related issues		200

Negative marking: Not applicable — descriptive paper | **Nature:** Counted for final merit.

Personality Test (Interview)

Mode: Board interview | Duration: —

Section	Questions	Marks
Personality, leadership potential & suitability for CAPF service	—	150

Negative marking: Not applicable | **Nature:** Counted for final merit.

UPSC CAPF (AC) — Detailed Subject-Wise Syllabus

General Mental Ability & Reasoning

Standard competitive-exam reasoning — consistent timed practice yields quick improvement.

- Verbal and non-verbal reasoning
- Analytical ability
- Logical reasoning & problem-solving

General Science & Current Affairs

Broad and current-affairs-heavy — daily news habits beat infrequent long study sessions.

- Everyday science
- Current events — national & international
- Sports, awards, defence-related news

Indian Polity, History, Geography & Economy

Overlaps significantly with UPSC CSE's GS foundation — useful cross-preparation if attempting both exams.

- Indian Constitution & governance
- Modern Indian history & freedom struggle
- Physical & Indian geography
- Indian economy & government schemes

Paper II — Essay, Precis & Comprehension

The real differentiator in CAPF AC selection — practise timed essay writing on security and governance themes specifically.

- Essay writing on a contemporary or security-related topic
- Precis writing & summarisation
- Reading comprehension of long passages
- Counter-terrorism, internal security & border management issues
- Communication skills — clarity, structure and coherence of written expression

Selection Process

- 1 Paper I — General Ability & Intelligence (screening).
- 2 Physical Efficiency Test (PET) and Physical Standard Test (PST).
- 3 Paper II — General Studies, Essay & Comprehension (merit).
- 4 Personality Test (Interview).
- 5 Final merit based on Paper I + Paper II + Interview, subject to clearing PET/PST and the medical examination.

Salary & Job Profile

Assistant Commandants start at Pay Level 10 (₹56,100 basic), the same entry level as other Group A civil/defence services, plus Dearness Allowance, HRA, Ration Money Allowance and other force-specific allowances depending on posting and operational deployment.

Best Books for Preparation

- Pathfinder CAPF (AC) Examination — Arihant Experts
- Indian Polity — M. Laxmikanth (for GS foundation)
- Lucent's General Knowledge
- Wren & Martin — High School English Grammar & Composition (for Paper II writing skills)

Previous Cut-off Trends (Approximate)

UPSC CAPF (AC) Paper I cut-offs and final cut-offs vary by year and category, shifting with vacancy count and paper difficulty. Because Paper I marks carry forward into the final aggregate alongside Paper II and the Interview, a comfortable Paper I margin matters more here than in exams where the first stage is purely qualifying — always check UPSC's official cut-off release for exact figures.

Preparation Tips

- Since Paper II is descriptive with a significant essay component, practise structured writing on security and governance themes well before the exam.
- Physical training should start early and match the toughest force-specific standard among BSF/CRPF/CISF/ITBP/SSB, since posting force isn't guaranteed in advance.
- Current affairs prep should specifically track internal security, border issues and counter-terrorism developments, given their direct relevance to Paper II.
- Mock interviews focused on situational and leadership questions will help more than generic personality-test practice, given the command nature of the role.

Exam Day Guidelines

- Carry the e-Admit Card and a valid original photo ID for both Paper I and Paper II.
- Begin physical training well ahead of the PET date — this is a hard elimination gate between the two papers.
- Carry your own stationery for the descriptive Paper II; UPSC does not provide pens.
- No electronic devices are permitted inside the examination hall at any stage.

Frequently Asked Questions

Which forces recruit through UPSC CAPF (AC)?

The Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

Is Paper I of CAPF AC qualifying or merit-based?

Paper I acts as a screening stage with its own cut-off, but its marks are also included in the final aggregate along with Paper II and the Interview.

Does UPSC CAPF AC have a physical test?

Yes, candidates who qualify Paper I undergo a Physical Efficiency Test and Physical Standard Test before being considered for Paper II evaluation and final selection.

Is there negative marking in Paper II?

No, Paper II is a descriptive paper covering essay, precis and comprehension, so there's no MCQ-style negative marking.

What is the age limit for UPSC CAPF AC?

Candidates must be between 20 and 25 years of age as on 1 August of the exam year, with standard relaxations for reserved categories.