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CGL is the Staff Selection Commission's largest and most varied examination, through which graduates enter Group B and Group C posts in the ministries, departments and organisations of the Government of India. The Commission's...



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करियर मार्गदर्शन कार्यशाला, डाइट बाड़मेर (14-17 जुलाई 2026) में विकसित व लोकार्पित
Developed & unveiled at the Career Guidance Workshop, DIET Barmer (14-17 July 2026)

यह एक स्वतंत्र परियोजना है, जो सरकार की आधिकारिक करियर-मार्गदर्शन सामग्री पर आधारित है। · An independent project based on the Government's official career-guidance content.

1 About this career

CGL is the Staff Selection Commission's largest and most varied examination, through which graduates enter Group B and Group C posts in the ministries, departments and organisations of the Government of India. The Commission's own list records thirty-seven distinct posts against this single examination — Inspector of Income Tax, Inspector in Customs and Central Excise, Assistant Section Officer, Auditor and Accountant, Assistant Audit Officer, Sub-Inspector in enforcement agencies, and many more. It is the largest single door into the officer level of the central government's tax, accounts and enforcement machinery. The most important thing to grasp about this examination is that there is no single qualification and no single age limit: the general rule is a Bachelor's degree and 18 to 27, but the notice gives a post-wise table and several posts carry conditions that differ. Reading the row for your own post before applying is therefore necessary.

2 At a glance

Minimum qualification	Generally a Bachelor's degree from a recognised University or Institute. Some posts differ — Assistant Audit Officer, for instance, requires the degree and treats CA, CMA, CS or a Master's in Commerce/Business Administration as desirable
Recruiting body	Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Government of India
Age limit	The general band is 18 to 27, but it varies post by post — read the row for your own post in the notice's post-wise table
Starting salary	Level 4 to Level 8 of the CENTRAL pay matrix depending on the post — a basic of ₹25,500 to ₹47,600
Demand	One examination, thirty-seven posts in the Commission's list — the post is settled at allocation, not before preparation

3 What you need

INTERESTS

- An interest in tax, accounts, audit and enforcement work
- Working inside the government's policy and administrative machinery
- Drawing conclusions from numbers and records

ABILITIES

- Numerical ability and reasoning — the examination rests on these more than anything else
- The patience for a long preparation, since this examination runs in several stages
- English language and comprehension, which carry a large weight in this examination

KEY SKILLS

- Quantitative aptitude — percentages, ratios, interest, geometry and data
- English grammar, vocabulary and comprehension
- Data interpretation and reading tables
- Reasoning and general intelligence
- General awareness — history, geography, economy, polity and science
- For some posts, a computer proficiency test and data entry speed

4 How to get there

- 1 Pass Class 12 in any stream, then take a graduation in any subject. That is the general rule — most posts set no subject condition, so the route stays open from arts, commerce and science alike.
- 2 Read the row for the post you are aiming at in the notice's post-wise table, because that is this examination's most necessary precaution. Some posts carry a qualification or an age band different from the general rule. For Assistant Audit Officer, for example, a degree is essential and CA, CMA, CS or a Master's in Commerce, Business Studies, Business Administration (Finance) or Business Economics is stated as desirable.
- 3 Candidates in the final year of graduation may also apply, but must possess the qualification by the cut-off date given in the notice.

- 4 Start preparing during the graduation itself, because the age limit is generally 27 and the examination runs in several stages — one cycle takes up a large part of a year. Whoever starts early gets more attempts, and that is the single greatest practical advantage in this examination.
- 5 The Assistant Audit Officer post carries an extra condition worth knowing in advance: direct recruits must qualify the Subordinate Audit/Accounts Service Examination during probation. So one examination remains even after selection.
- 6 Apply online when the notice appears on the Commission's website, and fill the preference form with thought.

MAIN EXAMS

- The most misleading thing about this examination is that it is taken to be one uniform examination, when it is in fact a shared door to many different posts. The Commission's own list records thirty-seven posts against CGL, and the notice gives age and qualification in a post-wise table. The plain consequence is that a sentence like "the CGL age limit is 18 to 27" states the general rule but is wrong for some posts. Reading the row for your own post is the only safe method — and that is why this page avoids printing a single figure.
- Pay also varies by post, and the difference is not small. The posts filled by this examination spread from Level 4 to Level 8 of the central pay matrix — a starting basic of roughly ₹25,500 to ₹47,600. So "the CGL salary" is not one number but a range, depending on which post merit and preference produce. That is another reason to fill the preference form carefully.
- The posts are of very different kinds and their work differs greatly, so the preference form should not be taken lightly. Inspectors in Income Tax and Customs do assessment, investigation and enforcement, with fieldwork involved; an Assistant Section Officer works inside a ministry on policy and files; Auditors and Accountants do audit and accounts; Sub-Inspectors in enforcement agencies do investigation. All are filled from one merit list, so it is worth knowing what a day looks like in each — this portal carries separate pages for Inspector of Income Tax and Customs Officer, which help with exactly that.
- For preparation the examination rests on four subjects: quantitative aptitude, reasoning, English language and comprehension, and general awareness. Among these the weight given to English is usually the largest challenge for Hindi-medium candidates, and it is sensible to work at it from the graduation years — grammar and vocabulary are the part that builds slowly and cannot be assembled at the end. The examination runs in several stages, and for some posts a computer proficiency test or data entry speed is also assessed; the detailed scheme is in that cycle's notice and in the Commission's scheme of examination.

- One caution that matters on this portal: pay matrix level numbers do not mean the same thing in the state and at the Centre. Central Level 8 is ₹47,600, while Rajasthan Level 14 is ₹56,100 — the numbers are not comparable. Compare the rupee figures, not the level numbers.

5 Where to study

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTES

- University of Rajasthan and the state universities — a graduation in any subject qualifies for most posts — Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Ajmer, Kota and Bikaner (<https://uniraj.ac.in/>)
- Government colleges across Rajasthan — B.A., B.Com. and B.Sc. at very low fees — In nearly every district (<https://hte.rajasthan.gov.in/>)
- Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota — for completing a graduation alongside work — Kota, Rajasthan (<https://www.vmou.ac.in/>)

ONLINE

- कर्मचारी चयन आयोग — विज्ञप्ति एवं पद-वार आयु एवं योग्यता तालिका — Read the row for your own post here (<https://ssc.gov.in/>)
- एस.एस.सी. — परीक्षा योजना एवं पाठ्यक्रम — The structure of the stages and the marking scheme (<https://ssc.gov.in/for-candidates/scheme-of-examination>)
- एस.एस.सी. — पिछले वर्षों के प्रश्न-पत्र (निःशुल्क) — The most reliable free preparation material there is (<https://ssc.gov.in/for-candidates/previous-year-question-paper>)
- आर.एस.एस.बी. — पिछले प्रश्न-पत्र, उत्तर कुंजी व पाठ्यक्रम (निःशुल्क) — The Staff Selection Board's own site — the most reliable free preparation material there is (https://rsmssb.rajasthan.gov.in/show_archived?menuName=Xj4lCb9vGxpQnfls%2FxlZ2g%3D%3D)
- विभागीय सेवा नियम (कार्मिक विभाग) — पद की योग्यता व आयु मूल दस्तावेज़ में पढ़ें — The Department of Personnel publishes the service rules for every cadre. Read these before any coaching material — qualification, age and the method of recruitment are settled here and nowhere else. (<https://dop.rajasthan.gov.in/>)
- स्वयं (SWAYAM) — भारत सरकार के निःशुल्क ऑनलाइन कोर्स — Free (<https://swayam.gov.in/>)
- राष्ट्रीय डिजिटल पुस्तकालय (NDLI) — Free books and study material (<https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/>)
- एन.सी.ई.आर.टी. — निःशुल्क पाठ्यपुस्तकें — The foundation for general knowledge, maths and science (<https://ncert.nic.in/>)

FEES

The educational cost of this route is that of an ordinary graduation, and at Rajasthan's government colleges that is very low — a B.A., B.Com. or B.Sc. is available in nearly every district, and most posts set no subject condition, so no expensive professional course is needed. If study has to run alongside work, the graduation can be done through Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota. Before spending money on preparation it is worth knowing that the Commission publishes the syllabus, the scheme of examination and past years' papers free, and that regular practice on past papers is what helps most in this examination. The one part that genuinely demands time and attention is English, particularly for Hindi-medium candidates — and that too asks mainly for regular reading and practice rather than fees. For students of Rajasthan from the SC, ST, OBC, MBC, EWS and minority categories, SSC examinations are expressly included in the Mukhyamantri Anuprati Coaching Yojana. One practical point: starting preparation alongside the graduation makes those same years do two jobs, and given the age limit that is the largest saving available — not of money, but of attempts.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- Mukhyamantri Anuprati Coaching Yojana (free coaching, apply via SSO) (<https://sso.rajasthan.gov.in/signin>)
- Rajasthan Social Justice and Empowerment Dept scholarships (<https://sje.rajasthan.gov.in/>)
- National Scholarship Portal (NSP) (<https://scholarships.gov.in/>)
- Buddy4Study scholarship search (<https://www.buddy4study.com>)

6 What the work is like

WHERE YOU WORK

The ministries and departments of the Government of India — the Income Tax Department, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, enforcement agencies and others. A posting can be anywhere in the country, and depending on the post the work is in the office or in the field.

WORK CULTURE

The nature of the work depends so much on the post that one description would mislead, so what is said here is what most posts share. These are officer-level posts and they carry real responsibility from the start — a decision taken on an assessment, an audit or a file travels onward, and you are the person answerable for it. Tax and enforcement posts involve fieldwork, investigation and direct dealing with the public, and pressure comes with that: decisions here affect other people's money and businesses, so integrity and adherence to procedure are the central discipline of this service rather than an ideal. Ministry posts are quieter and file-based, and there the process of policy is visible at close quarters. A posting may come outside your own state and transfer is an ordinary part of this service. Hours are fixed in most posts, though they stretch during assessment or investigation seasons. CGL's greatest attraction is exactly this: it gives officer-grade entry on an ordinary graduation, with a long path of promotion open beyond it.

WHO HIRES

- The Income Tax Department and the Central Board of Direct Taxes
- The office of the Comptroller and Auditor General — Auditor and Assistant Audit Officer posts
- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)
- The ministries of the Government of India and its enforcement agencies

DEMAND (2026)

This is the country's largest graduate-level central recruitment and is held in most years, so opportunities come round regularly and the number of vacancies is larger than in other central examinations. Three things should be known honestly alongside. First, the competition is among the sharpest in the country — a qualification of simply being a graduate takes applicant numbers into the lakhs. Second, the examination runs in several stages and a full cycle takes a long time, so the real number of attempts available inside the age limit is fewer than counting the years suggests — which is why starting early matters unusually much here. Third, post and pay depend on merit, so "clearing CGL" does not by itself produce a uniform outcome. Against that the advantage is substantial: the same preparation serves CHSL, banking recruitment, the railways, insurance and many state-level recruitments, because the base of quantitative aptitude, reasoning, English and general awareness is shared across all of them. One thing to be clear about — the "demand" described above counts posts, not your chance of getting one. Selection is by open competition and the number of applicants runs to many times the number of posts, so most candidates are not selected in any given recruitment. That is not an argument against this career; it is an argument against making it your only plan. Keep studying or building a skill alongside your preparation, so that the year is not lost whichever way the result goes.

7 Career growth

- 1 Posts such as Accountant, Auditor and Tax Assistant — central Pay Matrix Levels 4 to 5 (basic ₹25,500 to ₹29,200)
- 2 Inspector-grade posts — Inspector of Income Tax, Inspector in Customs and Central Excise, and Assistant Section Officer; Level 7 (basic ₹44,900)
- 3 Assistant Audit Officer — the highest entry level in this examination, Level 8 (basic ₹47,600); a departmental examination must be qualified during probation
- 4 Onward to senior officer level through departmental promotion and departmental examinations — the route towards Assistant Commissioner in Income Tax and Customs opens from here

EARNINGS

Starting	पद के अनुसार केंद्रीय पे मैट्रिक्स लेवल 4 से 8 — मूल वेतन ₹25,500 से ₹47,600
Mid level	₹60,000 – ₹90,000 (भत्तों सहित, कुछ वर्षों की सेवा के बाद)
Senior level	₹1,10,000 से अधिक (भत्तों सहित, पदोन्नति के बाद)

No single starting figure can be given here, and that is a real feature of this examination rather than a gap: the posts it fills spread from Level 4 to Level 8 of the central pay matrix, so the starting basic can be anywhere between ₹25,500 and ₹47,600 depending on the post that merit and preference produce. All figures are basic pay taken from the Commission's own pay-scale list; dearness allowance, house rent allowance and transport allowance are added on top, so the amount in hand is considerably higher, and in a metropolitan posting the house rent allowance makes a large difference. One caution: pay matrix level numbers do not mean the same thing in the state and at the Centre — central Level 8 is ₹47,600 while Rajasthan Level 14 is ₹56,100; compare the rupees, not the level numbers. The mid-level and senior figures are approximate and are not confirmed from any official pay statement; read them as a direction, not a promise. The starting figure is BASIC PAY, so that it can be compared directly against other careers. Dearness allowance (60% of basic since 1 January 2026) and house rent allowance are added on top of it, so take-home pay is appreciably higher. The mid-level and senior figures are approximate monthly income including allowances, not basic pay. Note — in Rajasthan a direct recruit is a probationer-trainee for the first 2 years and is paid a fixed remuneration, not the pay scale; dearness allowance and house rent allowance are not payable in those two years (Rajasthan Service Rules, rule 7(30A)). The full pay scale applies once probation is completed. The figures above rest on the Rajasthan 7th pay matrix, which is what applies as of 17 August 2026. The Terms of Reference of the 8th Central Pay Commission were approved on 28 October 2025 and it must report within 18 months of its constitution. State governments normally adopt a Central Pay Commission with modifications, and later than the Centre does — so Rajasthan pay will be revised too, though by how much and when is not yet settled.

8 The good parts · The challenges

The good parts

- Officer-grade entry on an ordinary graduation — most posts set no subject condition
- The largest graduate-level central recruitment, in most years and with substantial vacancies
- One examination opens four different kinds of career — tax, accounts, enforcement and secretariat
- The same preparation also serves CHSL, banking, the railways and state recruitments

The challenges

- Age and qualification vary post by post, so relying on one general rule is risky
- Among the sharpest competitions in the country
- A long multi-stage cycle, so the real number of attempts inside the age limit is limited
- Post and pay depend on merit — clearing the examination does not give a uniform outcome

9 Sources & further reading

1. Staff Selection Commission — official website — <https://ssc.gov.in/>
2. SSC — Scheme of Examination — <https://ssc.gov.in/for-candidates/scheme-of-examination>
3. SSC — Previous year question papers — <https://ssc.gov.in/for-candidates/previous-year-question-paper>
4. Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs — <https://www.cbic.gov.in/>
5. Rajasthan Staff Selection Board (official) — <https://rssb.rajasthan.gov.in/>
6. Department of Personnel, Rajasthan — service rules — <https://dop.rajasthan.gov.in/>
7. 8th Central Pay Commission — Cabinet approval of the Terms of Reference (PIB, 28 October 2025) — <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2183289>



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