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The Combined Medical Services Examination is the route by which an MBBS doctor becomes a medical officer in the service of the Union government. The Union Public Service Commission holds it every year, and it fills posts in two...



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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

The Combined Medical Services Examination is the route by which an MBBS doctor becomes a medical officer in the service of the Union government. The Union Public Service Commission holds it every year, and it fills posts in two broad categories. The first is the General Duty Medical Officers sub-cadre of the Central Health Service, much the larger of the two. The second covers Assistant Divisional Medical Officer in the Railways, General Duty Medical Officer in the New Delhi Municipal Council, and General Duty Medical Officer Grade-II in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The reason this page exists is simple: the portal already described Rajasthan's Medical Officer, AYUSH Medical Officer and Dental Officer posts, and described no central route at all — so an MBBS student could read it end to end and never learn that the Union government recruits doctors by open examination. And one feature sets this examination apart from every other on this portal: there is no general knowledge paper. The entire written examination is medicine.

2 At a glance

Minimum qualification	Passed both the written and practical parts of the final M.B.B.S. examination. A candidate who has appeared, or is yet to appear, at the final M.B.B.S. may also apply, but their admission remains provisional. No postgraduate degree (MD/MS) is required
Recruiting body	Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) — the posts belong to the Central Health Service, the Railways, the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi
Age limit	Must not have attained 32 years (as on 1 August 2026 for the 2026 cycle). But for the General Duty Medical Officers sub-cadre of the Central Health Service the limit is 35. Relaxation of 5 years for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and 3 years for Other Backward Classes
Starting salary	A regular central government pay scale — the notification does not print a rupee figure for this examination, so this page does not state one either
Demand	The examination is held every year and its dates are published in advance in the Commission's annual calendar. The largest share of the posts is in the Central Health Service

3 What you need

INTERESTS

- Treating patients, and clinical work
- Practising medicine within settled conditions of service
- Public health, and service in a government hospital

ABILITIES

- Clinical judgement — a government hospital or dispensary sees large numbers and decisions have to be taken quickly
- Patience and communication, because the patients are often those with no private alternative
- Command of the subject, because this examination asks about medicine alone and that is where the whole difference is made

KEY SKILLS

- Clinical practice in general medicine and paediatrics
- Preventive and social medicine — immunisation, epidemic control and public health programmes
- Records, reporting, and running government health programmes
- Working knowledge of surgery, and of gynaecology and obstetrics
- Managing emergencies and accident cases

4 How to get there

- 1 Pass Class 12 science with Biology, clear NEET and take admission to MBBS. The route to this point is the same as for any doctor — nothing separate is needed at the degree stage for this examination.
- 2 You can apply while still in the final year of MBBS, and this is the most practical point on the page. A candidate who has appeared, or is yet to appear, at the final MBBS may apply; the admission is provisional and proof of passing must be produced within the prescribed time limit.

- 3 Do not wait for the compulsory rotating internship to finish. The notification states plainly that a candidate who has yet to complete it is educationally eligible for the examination, and that on selection appointment follows only after the internship is completed. So the examination can be taken first and the internship can run alongside. With an age ceiling of 32, losing a year costs far more here than it does on a state post with a ceiling of 40.
- 4 Note that there are two different age ceilings, a distinction most candidates do not know: 32 in general, but 35 for the General Duty Medical Officers sub-cadre of the Central Health Service. Since that category is the largest, the practical ceiling for many candidates is 35 — but it does not apply to all the posts.
- 5 Apply online through the Commission's website. The dates are published in advance in the annual examination calendar, so preparation can be planned months ahead.

MAIN EXAMS

- This examination differs from every other government examination on this portal in one respect, and it is its most important feature: there is no paper of general knowledge, reasoning or aptitude. The written examination is two papers, each of 250 marks and two hours. Paper I — General Medicine and Paediatrics, 120 questions in all (96 from General Medicine, 24 from Paediatrics). Paper II — Surgery (including ENT, Ophthalmology, Traumatology and Orthopaedics), Gynaecology & Obstetrics, and Preventive & Social Medicine — 120 questions, 40 from each part. So the whole written examination is 500 marks and all of it is medicine.
- After the written examination comes the Personality Test (interview), carrying 100 marks, for those candidates who qualify on the results of the written. So the total is 600 marks — 500 written and 100 personality test. That distinguishes this from those Rajasthan recruitments which have no interview at all.
- The practical consequence is that a doctor who has already spent five and a half years on clinical subjects has no new subject to take up for this examination. It suits candidates who do not want to prepare general studies and current affairs — which is why many doctors choose this route over the Civil Services. Note that the converse holds too: weakness in the subject cannot be covered here by general knowledge, because there is nothing to cover it with.
- Negative marking applies and its rule is worth understanding carefully, because it is the reverse of the Rajasthan arrangement. Each question has four alternatives; for a wrong answer one third of the marks for that question is deducted. Giving more than one answer counts as wrong even if one of them is correct. But a question left blank carries no penalty. Several Rajasthan examinations deduct marks even for unattempted questions — this one does not. So the strategy here is that a question you are unsure of is better left alone. Calculators are not permitted.

- It is also worth knowing where selection actually leads, because the working lives of the categories differ greatly. A General Duty Medical Officer in the Central Health Service works in the Union government's hospitals and dispensaries, and this is the largest category. An Assistant Divisional Medical Officer in the Railways works in railway hospitals and health units, treating railway staff and their families and also carrying responsibility in accident management. The New Delhi Municipal Council and Municipal Corporation of Delhi posts are urban public health posts. The order of preference given at the time of applying deserves thought.

5 Where to study

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTES

- National Medical Commission — the list of recognised medical colleges, which is where to check that an MBBS course qualifies — All India (<https://www.nmc.org.in/>)
- Medical Counselling Committee — the counselling through which NEET ranks become MBBS seats — All India (<https://mcc.nic.in/>)

ONLINE

- संघ लोक सेवा आयोग — विज्ञप्ति, वार्षिक कैलेंडर, पाठ्यक्रम एवं परिणाम — New Delhi (<https://www.upsc.gov.in/>)
- राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी — नीट, जिससे एम.बी.बी.एस. में प्रवेश होता है — All India (<https://neet.nta.nic.in/>)
- 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=Xj4ICb9vGxpQnfLs%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://ndli.iitkgp.ac.in/>)
- एन.सी.ई.आर.टी. — निःशुल्क पाठ्यपुस्तकें — The foundation for general knowledge, maths and science (<https://ncert.nic.in/>)

FEES

The real cost of this route is the MBBS, not this examination. Fees at a government medical college are far below those of a private one, and admission to the government colleges in Rajasthan is through NEET — so doing well in NEET is the single largest financial saving on the whole route. No expensive separate course is needed for this examination, because the syllabus is what was already studied in MBBS; preparation is mainly revision and past papers. The application fee is stated in the notification.

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

WHO HIRES

- Central Health Service — General Duty Medical Officers sub-cadre (the largest category)
- Indian Railways — Assistant Divisional Medical Officer
- New Delhi Municipal Council and Municipal Corporation of Delhi — General Duty Medical Officer

DEMAND (2026)

The examination is held every year and its dates appear in advance in the Commission's annual calendar, so this is one of the routes where the wait is not measured in years. The largest share of posts is in the Central Health Service. It should be seen not as an alternative to the Rajasthan Medical Officer post but as a parallel route: the qualifying degree is the same MBBS for both, so preparation runs together and both should be applied for. The difference is mainly where you are posted — state service keeps you in Rajasthan, this examination can send you anywhere in the country. 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 This is a post in regular central service, so a pay scale, annual increments, seniority and pension-related benefits attach to it.
- 2 Within the Central Health Service the way forward to senior medical officer grades and above lies through promotion under the service rules.
- 3 A postgraduate degree (MD/MS) is not required for this examination, but a postgraduate qualification taken before or during service leads on towards specialist posts. Many doctors take this post for the security of service and prepare for postgraduate study afterwards — a practical order, especially when the age ceiling is 32 and waiting is expensive.

EARNINGS

Starting	केन्द्र सरकार का नियमित वेतनमान (विज्ञप्ति में रुपये में आँकड़ा नहीं)
Mid level	वार्षिक वेतन-वृद्धि एवं भत्तों के साथ, सेवा के वर्षों के अनुसार
Senior level	पदोन्नति पर वरिष्ठ चिकित्सा अधिकारी एवं उससे ऊपर के स्तर पर

No rupee figure for pay is given on this page, deliberately, and for the same reason as on other pages of this portal: the examination notification does not print a pay scale at all. This is a post in regular central service and pay follows the seventh pay commission structure, but its exact level is not established by this document. Guessing a number would have been easy; a wrong number shapes a candidate's decision, so only what the document states appears here. The pay scale is stated plainly in the office order issued at the time of appointment. 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

- The written examination is entirely medical — no paper of general knowledge, reasoning or current affairs. What was studied in MBBS is what is tested, and that cannot be said of any other government examination on this portal.
- MBBS alone is enough; no MD or MS is required. It is the direct route into regular central government medical service without a postgraduate degree.
- The examination can be taken before the internship is complete, so a year is saved — and against an age ceiling of 32 that year matters.
- The examination is held every year with dates published in advance, so it can be planned for.

The challenges

- The age ceiling is tight — 32 in general and 35 for the Central Health Service category. Most Rajasthan posts allow up to 40, so there is less time here for repeated attempts.
- The posting can be anywhere in the country. For a candidate who wants to remain in Rajasthan for family or language reasons this is a real difficulty — and it is the main reason the decision should be weighed against the state Medical Officer post.
- The Personality Test carries 100 of the 600 marks, so selection does not rest on written marks alone. Many recruitments on this portal have no interview; this one does.
- There is nothing with which to cover weakness in the subject. Where other examinations allow general studies to compensate, here the whole paper is medicine and the subject is the only ground there is.

9 Sources & further reading

1. — <https://www.upsc.gov.in/sites/default/files/Notification-CMSE-2026-English-110326.pdf>
2. — <https://www.upsc.gov.in/examinations/Combined%20Medical%20Services%20Examination%2C%202026>
3. — <https://www.upsc.gov.in/>
4. Rajasthan Staff Selection Board (official) — <https://rssb.rajasthan.gov.in/>
5. Department of Personnel, Rajasthan — service rules — <https://dop.rajasthan.gov.in/>
6. 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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