

Consolidated Empanelment Guidelines for evaluating suitability of officers of IAS and other All India Services and Group-'A' Central Services for holding Joint Secretary / equivalent posts at the Centre.

Guidelines framed for evaluating the suitability of officers of the Indian Administrative Service and other All India Services and Group 'A' services for empanelment as Joint Secretary/equivalent have been revised.

1. Eligibility:

- (i) Officers who have rendered 17 years of service in Group 'A' , AND
- (ii) Drawing pay in the scale of Rs. 37400-67000+Grade Pay Rs.10000 (Pre-revised Rs. 18400-22400) in their respective parent cadre/service, OR

Where an officer is on deputation he should be on the panel approved by the ACC for the scale of Rs. 37400-67000+Grade Pay Rs. 10000 in that service/cadre and an officer junior to him on the panel should have been appointed to the post in the scale of pay of 37400-67000+Grade Pay Rs.10000 in the service/cadre, OR

For the AIS, the appointment of at least one officer of the batch year of the service of any State cadre in the scale of Rs.37400-67000+Grade Pay Rs.10000 (Pre-revised Rs. 18400-22400) would be a pre-condition for consideration of an officer of a particular year of allotment.

2. Consideration Norms:

- (a) For the purpose of evaluating the overall performance of an officer the ACRs during the 10 year period, immediately preceding and inclusive of the cut off year, would be taken into account.
- (b) If there are gaps in the availability of ACRs during the period due to the officer being on study leave, or for any other reason beyond the control of the officer, at least 8 full years ACRs would be taken into account by considering the ACRs for a maximum of 3 years immediately preceding the period. In the event that it is still not possible to get full 8 years ACRs, the case would be deferred until the condition is fulfilled.
- (c) If the ACRs of an officer are missing for 3 or more years during the 10 year period due to his being on leave other than study leave, his

empanelment would be deferred until the officer earns 1 more ACR for a gap of less than 4 years and two more ACRs for a gap of 4 years or more.

- (d) However, for the purpose of meeting the shortfall of ACRs at the time of initial empanelment in respect of officers, who were on study leave or for any other reason beyond the control of the officer, the additional ACRs earned by the officer in the subsequent years would be taken into account. Further, for the purpose of counting the adequacy of ACRs, the 13 year period will continue to be reckoned with reference to the cut-off year for that batch.
- (e) Officers fulfilling the prescribed eligibility criteria will not be considered for empanelment, if they are in the following categories: -
 - (i) those have less than four years residual service on the 1st January of the calendar year in which the empanelment takes place*; or
 - (ii) those with less than the prescribed number of ACRs; or
 - (iii) those who do not fulfil the requirement of Clause 16 of the Central Staffing Scheme. According to Clause 16 of the Central Staffing Scheme "An officer who is or was on a foreign assignment for a period of two years or more will be considered for empanelment at the level of Joint Secretary only if on return from such an assignment he has served for a period of at least two years in his cadre and has earned two annual confidential reports thereon."

Procedure for Empanelment and Other Provisions

1. Procedure for Empanelment:

- (a) Empanelment should be considered not as a reflection of the intrinsic merit or otherwise of an officer but the suitability of an officer to occupy senior levels in the Central Government. Given the background and experience of an officer, she or he may be highly suited to occupy senior positions in State Government. Likewise, another officer, in view of the background and experience, may be considered more suitable for Central Government posts.
- (b) There shall be separate Experts Panel in connection with the empanelment at the level of Joint Secretary. The Experts Panel will be required to examine the ACRs, year-wise in detail for each batch and will give their own assessment of the gradings of officers for each year, which will be taken into account by the CSB(Civil Services Board) for making recommendations.

- (c) - Officers who wish to represent specific concerns regarding their performance appraisal over the years which would be relevant for assessing their suitability for empanelment may be permitted to do so at the initial stage itself. These would include issues such as arbitrary down gradation of the overall grade, mismatch between grading and pen-picture, missing ACRs, assessment recorded for periods less than three months, assessments recorded long after due date, etc. These would be particularly relevant for the period of assessment that fall under the old ACR system which did not provide for disclosure of the assessment to the officer concerned unless it was adverse. Such representations would be first examined and dealt with in DoPT in the light of factual information regarding any violation or oversight of relevant rule/instructions in recording the assessments or any error apparent on the face of the record. Those representations that are not accepted by the DoPT must be placed before the Experts Panel so that the Panel could take into account any valid point raised by the officer while making an assessment about his or her suitability for empanelment. If required, the Experts Panel may seek additional factual information from the Establishment Officer but the views/opinion of the Establishment Officer may not be sought. If the process of obtaining factual information is likely to take time, the Experts Panel may recommend deferment of such cases for the time being along with its assessment in respect of periods of ACRs/APARs which are not in dispute. The CSB may then take a view on such cases once information is available and make an appropriate recommendation for ACC orders.
- (d) For the purpose of evaluating the overall performance, numerical values of 9, 7, 5 and 0 are assigned to 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good' and 'Average' grade given by the Reporting, Reviewing and Accepting authorities during the time period under consideration. In respect of the Performance Appraisal Reports submitted under AIS (PAR) Rules 2007, the numerical grades as suggested in paragraph 2 of DOPT letter No. 11059/23/2008-AIS.III dated 4th June, 2009 will be applicable and will be rounded to 9, 7, 5 and 0 as their numerical equivalents to the range of 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good' and 'Average' grades. Thus, the officers would be assessed on a scale of 9 on the basis of their grades in the ACRs.
- (e) The CSB would take into account the experience profile of officers, carefully scrutinize the ACR dossiers and evaluate such qualities as general reputation, merit, competence, leadership and a flair for participating in the policy making process to recommend the list of officers to be included in the panel.

- (f) Of the batch strength, around 60% of the officers are normally to be considered for empanelment for Joint Secretary or equivalent level. For the batches to be considered till 31.12.2014, this ceiling has been raised to 75% of the batch strength. The batch strength for a particular batch shall be the actual strength, less the number of officers due to retire within next four years for Joint Secretary level empanelment as on 1st January of the calendar year in which empanelment takes place*. For the purpose of determining the ceiling on the number of officers to be empanelled in a particular batch, this batch strength would be taken without any further exclusions.

2. Other Provisions:

- (a) 'Vigilance denied' officer shall not be empanelled, which means that they exhaust their first chance of empanelment. The cases of officers who have defaulted in filing property returns shall also be treated as vigilance denied, for a period of one year for every default. Adverse impact of default in filing of IPR would be one year applicable to the empanelment due in the year of default.
- (b) In case the selection process does not lead to adequate representation of categories like SC/ST, women, particular State cadres, the North East etc. in the panel, the criteria for empanelment would be suitably relaxed to give due representation to these. For this purpose, adequacy of representation would mean the cumulative representation in four batches i.e. the current batch and the immediately preceding three batches being less than 66- 2/3% of all India percentage of empanelment. The number of officers to be selected on this basis shall not exceed about 15% of the number included in the panel and these selections would follow the process outlined above albeit with suitably relaxed norms.
- (c) In respect of representations received after the process of empanelment is over from the non-empanelled officers, the CSB will decide them on merits within a period of three months from the date of receipt of the representation, after obtaining the recommendations of the Experts Panel, if necessary.
- (d) Review will be conducted batch wise. Cases will not be taken up on an individual basis. Review will be taken up after two more ACRs are added. No officer's case shall be taken up for review more than twice.

* 'By 1st January of the calendar year in which empanelment takes place' means the year in which the case is considered by the CSB.
