

Empanelment Guidelines

Subject: Guidelines for evaluating suitability of IAS officers for their inclusion in the panels of Secretary and Additional Secretary

Guidelines have been framed for evaluating the suitability of officers of the Indian Administrative Service for empanelment as Secretary and Additional Secretary.

2. 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 Governments. Likewise, another officer, in view of the background and experience, may be considered more suitable for Central Government posts.

3. There shall be an Expert Panel in connection with the empanelment at the level of Additional Secretary. The Expert 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 Special Committee of Secretaries (SCOS) for making recommendations.

4. If there are gaps in the availability of ACRs during this period due to the officer being on study leave or for any other reason not within the control of the officer, at least 10 full years ACRs would be taken into account along with considering the ACRs of not more than 5 years immediately preceding the period. In the event that it is still not possible to get 10 full years ACRs, the case would be deferred until this condition is fulfilled. If the ACRs of an officer are missing for 3 or more years during the 14 year period due to his being on leave other than study leave, his empanelment would be deferred until the officer earns one more ACR for gaps of less than 4 years and two more ACRs for gaps of 4 years or more.

5. The officers would be assessed on a scale of 10 on the basis of their grades in the ACRs. The SCOS 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.

6. Officers fulfilling the prescribed benchmark will be excluded if they are in the following categories:

- a) those who are not included in the panel of officers to hold JS level posts (for empanelment at the level of AS) or AS level posts (for empanelment at the level of Secretary) at the Centre, or

- b) those who have not worked on Central deputation for a minimum period of three years at the level of DS and above, or
- c) those not vigilance clear, or
- d) those who have less than two years residual service on the 1st day of the year in which the empanelment takes place for empanelment at the level of Secretary, or less than three years residual service for empanelment at the level of Additional Secretary, or
- e) those who do not fulfill the requirements 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. Similarly, such an officer will be considered for empanelment at the levels of Additional Secretary/ Secretary after he has served for a period of one year in his cadre and has earned one annual confidential report."

7. However, officers who have less than the required residual service but are otherwise found suitable for empanelment would be placed in a separate category. Officers found suitable for holding the posts of Secretary would be given the pay of Secretary and placed as Principal Adviser in Ministries, where officers senior to them are holding the post of Secretary and they will report to the Secretary concerned; officers found suitable for holding the post of Additional Secretary would be given the pay of Additional Secretary and placed as Senior Adviser.

8. In case the selection process does not lead to adequate representation of categories like SC/ST, women, the North East and particular State cadres in the panel, the criteria for empanelment would be suitably relaxed to give due representation to these categories.

9. Review will be conducted batch wise. Cases will not be taken up on an individual basis. The reviews shall be taken up once a year. No officer's case shall be taken up for review more than twice.