



The Azad Co-op Bank Ltd., Gadag
Policy for Appointment of Statutory Auditor



THE AZAD CO-OP BANK LTD GADAG

Version Control:-

Document Version	Description of changes	Date	Agenda Item No.	Prepared by	Approved by
1.0	Ref.No.DoS.CO.AR G/SEC.01/08.91.0 01/2021-22, dated April 27, 2021	October 20, 2022	SEC.xx	RBI	Board
1.1	Amendment of Policy	July 8, 2022	02	Compliance Dept	Board
1.2	Review of Policy	April 19, 2024	20	Compliance Dept	Board
1.3	Review of Policy	April 11, 2025	19	Compliance Dept	Board



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Document Details

Version No.	Date	Approved by	Approval Date	Document owner	Custody and controlled copy
1.1		Accounts, Audit and Investment committee of Board (AAI)		Audit Department	HOD-Audit Department

Note:

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- Only the controlled copy will be valid for interpretation / dispute settlement.

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Preamble:

As per Guidelines for Appointment of Statutory Auditors (SAs) of UCBs, vide Ref.No.DoS.CO.ARG/SEC.01/08.91.001/2021-22, dated April 27, 2021, Each Entity shall formulate a Board/LMC Approved Policy to be hosted on its official website/public domain and formulate necessary procedure there under to be followed for appointment of SAs. Apart from conforming to all relevant statutory/regulatory requirements in addition to these instructions, this should afford necessary transparency and objectivity for most key aspects of this important assurance function.

1. Statutory Audit Policy and Appointment Procedure

Guidelines on minimum procedural requirements are given at **Annex I**



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ANNEX I

Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as SCA/SA

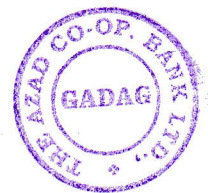
A. Basic Eligibility

Asset Size of Entity as on 31st March of Previous Year	Minimum No. of Full-Time partners (FTPs) associated with the firm for a period of at least three (3) years Note 1	Out of total FTPs, Minimum No. of Fellow Chartered Accountant (FCA) Partners associated with the firm for a period of at least three (3) years	Minimum No. of Full Time Partners/ Paid CAs with CISA/ISA Qualification Note 2	Minimum No. of years of Audit Experience of the firm Note 3	Minimum No. of Professional staff Note 4
Up to ₹ 1,000 Crore	2	1	1	6	8

Note 1: There should be at least one-year continuous association of partners with the firm as on the date of empanelment (for PSBs)/ shortlisting (for other Entities) for considering them as full time partners. Further, for appointment as SCAs/SAs of all Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs), and other Entities with asset size above ₹ 1,000 crore, at least two partners of the firm shall have continuous association with the firm for at least 10 years.

For all Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs), and UCBs/NBFCs with asset size above ₹ 1,000 crore, the full-time partner's association with the firm would mean exclusive association. The definition of 'exclusive association' will be based on the following criteria:

- (a) The full-time partner should not be a partner in other firm/s.
- (b) She/He should not be employed full time / part time elsewhere.
- (c) She/He should not be practicing in her/his own name or engaged in practice otherwise or engaged in other activity which would be deemed to be in practice under Section 2(2) of the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949.
- (d) In case of PSBs, the income of the partner from the firm/LLP should not be below the threshold limits prescribed by the Office of C&AG for the purpose of consideration as full-time partners for appointment as auditors of Public Sector Undertakings. For other Entities, the Board/ACB/LMC shall examine and ensure that the income of the partner from the firm/LLP is adequate for considering them as full-time exclusively associated partners, which will ensure the capability of the firm for the purpose.



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Note 2: CISA/ISA Qualification: -

For UCBs and NBFCs with asset size upto ₹ 1,000 crore, there is no minimum requirement in this regard. However, such Entities may give priority to firms with full time partners or full time CAs having CISA/ISA qualification. There should be at least one-year continuous association of Paid CAs with CISA/ISA qualification with the firm as on the date of empanelment (for PSBs)/ shortlisting (for other Entities) for considering them as Paid CAs with CISA/ISA qualification for the purpose.

Note 3: Audit Experience:

For Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs), audit experience shall mean experience of the audit firm as Statutory Central/Branch Auditor of Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs)/ AIFIs. For UCBs and NBFCs, audit experience shall mean experience of the audit firm as Statutory Central/Branch Auditor of Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs)/ UCBs/NBFCs/ AIFIs. In case of merger and demerger of audit firms, merger effect will be given after 2 years of merger while demerger will be effected immediately for this purpose.

Note 4: Professional Staff

Professional staff includes audit and article clerks with knowledge of book-keeping and accountancy and who are engaged in on-site audits but excludes typists/stenos/computer operators/ secretaries/subordinate staff, etc. There should be at least one-year continuous association of professional staff with the firm as on the date of empanelment (for PSBs)/ shortlisting (for other Entities) for considering them as professional staff for the purpose.

B. Additional Consideration

- i. The audit firm, proposed to be appointed as SAs for Entities, should be duly qualified for appointment as auditor of a company in terms of Section 141 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- ii. The audit firm should not be under debarment by any Government Agency, National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), RBI or Other Financial Regulators.
- iii. The Entities shall ensure that appointment of SAs is in line with the ICAI's Code of Ethics/any other such standards adopted and does not give rise to any conflict of interest.
- iv. If any partner of a Chartered Accountant firm is a director in any Entity, the said firm shall not be appointed as SCA/SA of any of the group entities¹³ of that Entity.
- v. The auditors for Entities with asset size above ₹1,000 crore should preferably have capability and experience in deploying Computer Assisted Audit Tools and Techniques (CAATTs) and Generalized Audit Software (GAS), commensurate with the degree/ complexity of computer environment of the Entities where the accounting and business data reside in order to achieve audit objectives.
- vi. For audit of UCBs, the SA of the firm should have a fair knowledge of the functioning of the cooperative sector and shall preferably have working knowledge of the language of the state in which the UCB/branch of the UCB is located.



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C. Continued Compliance with basic eligibility criteria

In case any audit firm (after appointment) does not comply with any of the eligibility norms (on account of resignation, death etc. of any of the partners, employees, action by Government Agencies, NFRA, ICAI, RBI, other Financial Regulators, etc.), it may promptly approach the Entity with full details.

In case of any extraordinary circumstance after the commencement of audit, like death of one or more partners, employees, etc., which makes the firm ineligible with respect to any of the eligibility norms, RBI will have the discretion to allow the concerned audit firm to complete the audit, as a special case.



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ANNEX II

Procedure for Appointment of SAs

1. The Entities shall shortlist minimum of 2 audit firms for every vacancy of SCAs/SAs so that even if firm at first preference is found to be ineligible/refuses appointment, the firm at second preference can be appointed and the process of appointment of SCAs/SAs does not get delayed. In case of reappointment of SAs by banks/UCBs till completion of tenure of continuous term of 3 years, there would not be any requirement of shortlisting and sending names of multiple audit firms to RBI while seeking approval to appointment.
2. The banking companies shall continue to follow the existing procedure followed by them for selection of SCAs/SAs. They shall place the name of shortlisted audit firms, in order of preference, before their ACB/LMC for selection as SCAs/SAs. Upon selection of SCAs/SAs by the bank in consultation with their ACB/LMC and verifying their compliance with the eligibility norms prescribed by RBI, the bank shall seek RBI's prior approval for appointment of SCAs/SAs.
3. The UCBs shall place the name of shortlisted audit firms, in order of preference, before their Board for selection as SCA/SA. Upon selection of SCAs/SAs by the UCBs in consultation with their Board and verifying their compliance with the eligibility norms prescribed by RBI, the UCBs shall seek RBI's prior approval for appointment of SCAs/SAs.
4. The Entities shall obtain a certificate, along with relevant information as per **Form B**, from the audit firm(s) proposed to be appointed as SCAs/SAs by the Entity to the effect that the audit firm(s) complies with all the eligibility norms prescribed by RBI for the purpose. Such certificate should be signed by the main partner/s of the audit firm proposed for appointment of SCAs/SAs of the Entities, under the seal of the said audit firm.
5. The UCBs shall verify the compliance of audit firm(s) to the eligibility norms prescribed by RBI for the purpose and after being satisfied of their eligibility, recommend the names along with a certificate, in the format as per **Form C**, stating that the audit firm(s) proposed to be appointed as SCA/SA by them comply with all eligibility norms prescribed by RBI for the purpose.
6. While approaching the RBI for its prior approval for appointment of SCAs/SAs, Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs)/UCBs shall indicate their total asset size as on March 31st of the previous year (audited figures), forward a copy of Board/ACB Resolution recommending names of audit firms for appointment as SCAs/SAs in the order of preference and also furnish information as per **Form B** and **Form C** as mentioned above, to facilitate expeditious approval of appointment/re-appointment of the concerned audit firm.



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FORM B

Eligibility Certificate from (Name and Firm Registration Number of the firm)

A. Particulars of the firm:

Asset Size of Entity as on 31 st March of Previous Year	Number of Full-Time partners (FTPs) associated* with the firm for a period of three (3) years	Out of total FTPs, Number of FCA Partners associated with the firm for a period of three (3) years	Number of Full Time Partners/ Paid CAs with CISA/ISA Qualification	Number of Years of Audit Experience#	Number of Professional staff

*Exclusively associated in case of all Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs), and
UCBs/NBFCs with asset size of up to ₹ 1,000 crore

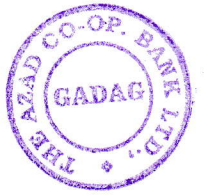
#Details may be furnished separately for experience as SCAs/SAs and SBAs

B. Additional Information:

- (i) Copy of Constitution Certificate.
- (ii) Whether the firm is a member of any network of audit firms or any partner of the firm is a partner in any other audit firm? If yes, details thereof.
- (iii) Whether the firm has been appointed as SCA/SA by any other Commercial Bank (excluding RRBs) and/or All India Financial Institution (AIFI)/RBI/NBFC/UCB in the present financial year? If yes, details thereof.
- (iv) Whether the firm has been debarred from taking up audit assignments by any regulator/Government agency? If yes, details thereof.
- (v) Details of disciplinary proceedings etc. against firm by any Financial Regulator/Government agency during last three years, both closed and pending.

C. Declaration from the firm

The firm complies with all eligibility norms prescribed by RBI regarding appointment of SCAs/SAs of Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs)/UCBs/NBFCs (as applicable). It is certified that neither I nor any of our partners / members of my / their families (family will include besides spouse, only children, parents, brothers, sisters or any of them who are wholly or

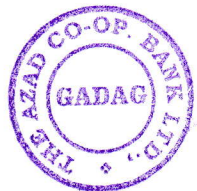


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mainly dependent on the Chartered Accountants) or the firm / company in which I am / they are partners / directors¹⁵ have been declared as willful defaulter by any bank / financial institution.

It is confirmed that the information provided above is true and correct.

Signature of the Partner
(Name of the Partner)



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FORM C

Certificate to be submitted by UCBs regarding eligibility of audit firm proposed to be appointed as SCA/SA

The bank/UCB is desirous of appointing M/s_____, Chartered Accountants (Firm Registration Number_____) as Statutory Central Auditor (SCA)/ Statutory Auditor (SA) for the financial year _ for their 1st/2nd/3rd term and therefore has sought the prior approval of RBI as per the section 30(1A) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949/ Section 10 (1) of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970/1980/ Section 41(1) of SBI Act, 1955.

2. The bank/UCB has obtained eligibility certificate (copy enclosed) from (name and Firm Registration Number of the audit firm) proposed to be appointed as Statutory Central Auditor (SCA)/Statutory Auditor of the bank/UCB for FY _ along with relevant information (copy enclosed), in the format as prescribed by RBI.

1. The firm has no past association/association for years with the bank/UCB as SCA/SA/SBA.

2. The bank/UCB has verified the said firm's compliance with all eligibility norms prescribed by RBI for appointment of SCAs/SAs of Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs)/UCBs.

**For The Azad Co-op. Bank Ltd., GADAG for The Azad Co-op. Bank Ltd. Gadag
H.O. Gangapurpeth, Gadag**

Signature

MANAGER

Managing Director

(Name and Designation)

DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR

Date:

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For The Azad Co-op. Bank Ltd. Gadag

PRESIDENT