

Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), commonly known as the Censor Board, is an important body that handles film certification in India. The CBFC is often in the news because of censorship issues. In this article, you can read about the CBFC, the Cinematograph Act, and the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal for the [UPSC exam](#).

CBFC

The CBFC handles film certification in India.

- It is a statutory body under the **Information and Broadcasting Ministry**.
- It regulates the public exhibition of films under the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952.
- Films can be exhibited to the public only after they have been certified by the CBFC.

History of Film Certification in India

The first film made in India was Raja Harishchandra, which was released in 1913, and produced by Dadasaheb Phalke.

- The Indian Cinematograph Act was passed in 1920 and it created Censor Boards in a few cities. These boards (which were autonomous) were placed under the city's police chiefs.
- After independence, the regional boards' autonomy was abolished and they were brought under the Bombay Board of Film Censors.
- In 1952, it was reconstituted as the Central Board of Film Censors.
- In 1983, the name was changed to Central Board of Film Certification.

How does a Film get Certificates in India?

The certification is given by the CBFC which is situated in nine regional offices in India, Mumbai being the prime regional office. The film has to be applied for clearance at the regional office and then, an examining committee views the film to grant it the relevant clearance. If the applicant is not satisfied with the clearance, he or she can go to the head office of the CBFC which is in Mumbai. If the applicant is not satisfied even with the head office's order, an appeal can be made to the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal at New Delhi.

Film Certification in India

Films are certified into four categories in India. They are:

1. U – unrestricted
2. UA – unrestricted but with a parental discretion advisory for children under 12 years
3. A – adult
4. S – only for a special class of persons

Film certification is frequently in the news because of the tussle between the Censor Board and filmmakers. While filmmakers want absolute freedom while making and exhibiting films to the audience, the Board sees it as its duty to recommend suitable edits and cuts to the films and make it appropriate for viewing for the public.

CBFC Vision

“To ensure the good and healthy entertainment in accordance with the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952 and the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules 1983.”

CBFC Mission

- Ensuring healthy entertainment, recreation and education to the public.
- Making the process of certification more transparent and responsible.
- Creating awareness among advisory panel members, media and film makers about the guidelines for certification and current trend in films through meetings and workshops.
- Adopting modern technology for certification process by computerisation and technology infrastructure.
- Maintaining transparency about CBFC's activities through voluntary disclosures, replies to RTI queries, implementation of e-governance and annual report publication.
- Developing CBFC as a centre of excellence.

The Cinematograph Act

The Cinematograph Act, 1952 is an Act to make provision for the certification of cinematograph films for exhibition and for regulating exhibitions by means of cinematographs.

- The Act states that a film will not be certified if any part of the film is:
 - Against India's sovereignty and integrity
 - Against the State's security
 - Against friendly relations with foreign nations
 - Against public order
 - Against decency
 - Involves defamation or contempt of court
 - Likely to incite commission of any offence
- A film is judged based on the overall impact and is evaluated in light of the film's period depicted and contemporary standards in the country, also in light of the people whom the film relates to, and that the film does not deprave the audience's morality.
- While certifying films for **unrestricted public exhibition**, the CBFC shall ensure that the movie is suitable for family viewing, indicating that the film shall be such that all the members of the family including children can watch it together.
- Even the film's title will be scrutinised as per the rules and guidelines.
- Objectives of film certification:
 - The film medium is and continues to be responsible and sensitive to the standards and values of society.
 - There is no undue curbing on the artistic freedom of creative expression.
 - Certification should be responsible to social changes.
 - Film medium offers a healthy and clean environment.
 - As far as possible, the film has aesthetic value and is of a good cinematic content.
- Generally, although there are several minor details in the rules, scenes showing extreme violence, obscene language, vulgarity, contempt of court, insult to national symbol, incorrect portrayal of personalities, religion, etc. are not permitted.

Film Certification Appellate Tribunal

The Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT) is a statutory body constituted under the Ministry of

Information and Broadcasting as per Section 5(D) of the Cinematograph Act, 1952.

- The FCAT hears appeals filed by applicants aggrieved by any order of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
- The FCAT was established in 1991 and it is headquartered in New Delhi. Generally, an appeal against a CBFC order to the FCAT would be followed by a second review of the film by the Censor Board.
- An aggrieved person has to file an appeal within 30 days from the date of the CBFC order.
- An appeal against a decision of the FCAT can be made to the head of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting or through the country's legal system.

The FCAT is headed by a Chairman who is generally a retired Supreme Court judge. He/she is assisted by other members of the Tribunal.

UPSC Questions related to Central Board of Film Certification

Who is the chairman of Central Board of Film Certification?

The chairman of the CBFC is Praseen Joshi.

What is U A certified film?

U/A indicates unrestricted but with a parental discretion advisory for children under 12 years.

What is an S rated movie?

S-rated movies are restricted to specialized audiences such as doctors or scientists.

