



POLICY ON APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY AUDITORS FOR THE YEAR 2025-26 AND ONWARDS.

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Title	Statutory Auditors Appointment Policy for the year 2025-26 and onwards
Owned by	Audit & Inspection Department
Reviewed by	Hon. Chief Executive Officer
Approved by	Hon. Board of Directors
Effective from	01.08.2025 onwards

Table of Contents

Sr. No	Contents	Page No
1	Purpose of the Policy	3
2	Scope of Application	3
3	Objectives of the Policy	3
4	Regulatory Guidelines by RBI	3
5	Prior Approval of RBI	3
6	Number of Statutory Auditors & Branch Coverage	3-4
7	Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as Statutory Auditors	4-6
	a. Basic Eligibility	4-5
	b. Additional Consideration	5
	c. Continued Compliance with Basic Eligibility Criteria	5-6
8	Tenure and Rotation	6
9	Audit Fees & Expenses	7
10	Independence of Statutory Auditors	7
11	Professional Standards of Statutory Auditors	8
12	Process Flow for Short listing /Appointment of Statutory Auditors	8-9
13	Review of the Policy	9

Preamble

The Statutory Audit function has paramount significance. The Statutory Audit is mandated by the Maharashtra State Co-operative Societies Act, 1960, section 81. This Policy shall consolidate all aspects of Statutory Auditors appointment.

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on eligibility and procedures for the appointment of Statutory Auditors of the bank in line with regulatory guidelines issued by RBI.

2. Scope of Application

This Policy is applicable for ***appointment of Statutory Auditors only.***

3. Objectives of the Policy

The purpose of the policy document is to provide guidance on the appointment of Statutory Auditors with effect from 17th July, 2021.

4. Regulatory Guidelines by RBI

This Policy has been made incorporating the latest guidelines for appointment of Statutory Auditors (SA's) of UCB's (RBI/2021-22/25, Ref.No.DoS.CO. ARG/SEC. 01/08.91.011/2021-22) dated 27th April, 2021 and communication from RBI from time to time which has superseded all previous guidelines issued on the subject.

5. Prior Approval of RBI

We have to take prior approval of RBI (Department of Supervision) for appointment/ reappointment of Statutory Auditors, on an annual basis in terms of the above-mentioned statutory provisions. For the purpose, we will apply to Department of Supervision, RBI before 31st July of the reference year.

6. Number of Statutory Auditors and Branch Coverage

- I. As per the RBI Circular at point No.4, there is no condition of "Joint Audit" by Audit firms for us since these provisions are applicable to entities with asset size exceeding Rs.15,000 crore.

- II. Therefore, we shall appoint one audit firm only as the "Statutory Auditors". Also, there is no separate concept of "Statutory Branch Auditors" for UCB's.
- III. The Statutory Auditors so appointed will ensure that 100% coverage of all operations, risks involved, etc. Core Banking Solutions has already been implemented on all branches and they are connected to the Head Office. There are no units outside the purview of CBS and therefore coverage of branches will be necessary.
- IV. The audit reports for all branches along with LFAR, Annexures and various certifications as required by RBI from time to time wherever applicable shall be submitted by the Statutory Auditors along with the Consolidated Audit Report of the bank on or before 30th June.

7. Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as Statutory Auditor

A. Basic eligibility

As per RBI guidelines spelt out in Annex I, we are covered under the second category above Rs. 100 crore (Asset size of our Bank as on 31 March 2025 is Rs. 130.46 Cr.) and therefore those criteria shall apply.

- I. There should be at least one-year continuous association of partners with the firm as on the date of short listing for considering them as full-time partners and at least two Partners of the firm shall have continuous association with the firm for at least 6 years.
 - (a) The full-time partner should not be a partner in other firm/s.
 - (b) She/ He should not be employed fulltime/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) 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.

- iii. CISA/ISA Qualification: Priority will be given to firms with fulltime partners or fulltime 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 short listing for considering them as Paid CAs with CISA/ISA qualification for the purpose.
- iv. 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 short listing for considering them as professional staff for the purpose.

B. Additional Consideration

- i. The audit firm, proposed to be appointed as Statutory Auditors, 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. We will ensure that appointment of Statutory Auditors 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 Statutory Auditors of any of the group entities of our bank.

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 us with full details. Further, the audit firm shall take all necessary steps to become eligible within a reasonable time and in any case, the audit firm should be complying with the above norms before commencement of Annual Statutory Audit for Financial Year ending 31st March and till the completion of annual audit.

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.

8. Tenure and Rotation

- I. The Statutory Auditor once appointed shall be eligible for a continuous period of three years, subject to the firms satisfying the eligibility norms each year. Further, we can remove the audit firms during the above period only with the prior approval of the concerned office of RBI (Department of Supervision), as applicable for prior approval for appointment.

However, in case of reappointment of SAs by Bank 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.

- II. An audit firm would not be eligible for reappointment with us for six years (two tenures) after completion of full or part of one term of the audit tenure. However, audit firms can continue to undertake statutory audit of other Entities.
- III. Ceiling limits: One audit firm can concurrently take up statutory audit of a maximum of 4(four) Commercial Banks [including not more than one PSB or one All India Financial Institution (NABARD, SIDBI, NHB, EXIM Bank) or RBI] ,8 (eight) UCBs and 8 (eight) NBFCs during a particular year, subject to compliance with required eligibility criteria and other conditions for each Entity and within overall ceiling prescribed by any other statutes or rules.

Note:

- (a) For clarity, the limits prescribed for UCBs exclude audit of other Co-operative Societies by the same audit firm.
- (b) A group of audit firms having common partners and /or under the same network will be considered as one entity and they will be considered for allotment of SCA/SA accordingly.
- (c) Shared/Sub-contracted audit by any other/associate audit firm under the same network of audit firms is not allowed.
- (d) The incoming audit firm shall not be eligible if such audit firm is associated with the outgoing auditor or audit firm under the same

network of audit firms.

9. Audit Fees & Expenses

- I. The Statutory Auditors will be paid fees for audit as per Maharashtra State Co- Operative Societies Act, 1960 and guidelines issued under the same from time to time. No advance fees shall be paid before commencement or during the course of Statutory Audit.
- II. Applicable GST shall be paid as per original Invoice and TDS at prescribed rates will be deducted before making the final payment.
- III. Travelling & hauling allowance, shall be payable to auditor.
- IV. The Audit Fees shall be released only after submission of all Audit reports with LFAR and certifications to all prescribed authorities within scheduled timelines.

10. Independence of Auditors

- I. The Board of Directors shall monitor and assess the independence of the auditors. Any concerns in this regard may be flagged by the Board to the concerned SSM/RO of RBI.
- II. In case of any concern with the Management of the bank such as non-availability of information/non-cooperation by the Management, which may hamper the audit process, the Statutory Auditors shall approach the Board/Audit Committee of the bank, under intimation to the concerned SSM/RO of RBI.
- III. Concurrent auditors of the bank will not be considered for appointment as Statutory Auditors. The audit of the bank and any borrower with large exposure to the bank for the same reference year will also be explicitly factored in while assessing independence of the auditor.
- IV. The time gap between any non-audit works (services mentioned at Section 144 of Companies Act, 2013, Internal assignments, special assignments, etc.) by the Statutory Auditors for the bank should be at least one year, before or after its appointment as Statutory Auditors. However, during the tenure as Statutory Auditors, an audit firm may

provide such services to the concerned bank which may not normally result in a conflict of interest, and such decision in this regard, in consultation with the Board/ACB.

11. Professional Standards of Statutory Auditors

- a. The Statutory Auditors shall be strictly guided by the relevant professional standards in discharge of their audit responsibilities with highest diligence.
- b. The Board /Audit Committee shall review the performance of Statutory Auditors on an annual basis. Any serious lapses/negligence in audit responsibilities or conduct issues on part of the Statutory Auditors or any other matter considered as relevant will be reported to RBI within two months from completion of the annual audit. Such reports will be sent with the approval/ recommendation of the Board/ Audit Committee with the full details of the audit firm.
- c. In the event of lapses in carrying out audit assignments resulting in misstatement of our financial statements, and any violations/lapses vis-à-vis the RBI's directions/guidelines regarding the role and responsibilities of the Statutory Auditors; they would be liable to be dealt with suitably under the relevant statutory /regulatory framework.

12. Process Flow for short listing / appointment of Statutory Auditors

- a. We shall short list minimum of 2 audit firms for every vacancy of Statutory Auditors, 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 Statutory Auditors does not get delayed. However, in case of reappointment of Statutory Auditors till completion of tenure of continuous term of 3 years, proposal for seeking approval for reappointment will be send to RBI as per extent guidelines there would not be any requirement of short listing and sending names of multiple audit firms to RBI while seeking approval to appointment.
- b. We shall place the name of shortlisted audit firms, in order of preference, before our Board/ ACB for selection as Statutory Auditors.

Upon selection of Statutory Auditors by the bank in consultation with our Board and verifying their compliance with the eligibility norms prescribed by RBI, the bank shall seek RBI's prior approval for appointment of Statutory Auditors.

- c. We shall obtain a certificate, along with relevant information as per Form B& C, from the audit firm(s) proposed to be appointed as Statutory Auditors by the Entity to the effect that the audit firm(s) complies with all the eligibility norms prescribed by RBI for the purpose. Additionally, the audit firms will also have to submit relevant details of Partners as well as the Professional staff that will be involved during the course of such Statutory Audit. Such certificate will have to be signed by the main partner/s of the audit firm proposed for appointment of Statutory Auditors of our bank, under the seal of the said audit firm.
- d. While approaching the RBI for its prior approval for appointment of Statutory Auditors, we will indicate our total asset size as on March 31st of the previous year (audited figures), and forward a copy of Board/ ACB Resolution recommending names of audit firms for appointment as Statutory Auditors in the order of preference and also furnish information as per requisite forms to facilitate expeditious approval of appointment /re-appointment of the concerned audit firm.
- e. We shall communicate only the Audit firms approved by RBI on their appointment as Statutory Auditors of our Bank.
- f. The Audit firm so appointed post approval from RBI, will be placed before the Annual General Meeting of members for ratification.

13. Review of the Policy

This Policy is subject to review every year at the time of appointment of the Statutory Auditors of the bank.