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All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF)

All India Railwaymen's Federation

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4, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055 (INDIA)

No. AIRF/ 53 (320)

Dated: 01.08.2026

The Director General (HR),
Railway Board,
Rail Bhawan,
New Delhi.

Sub: Request for reduction in the minimum qualifying service for eligibility to appear in the Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) for the post of Office Superintendent (OS) in Level-6 (GP ₹4200/-), ensuring parity with other ministerial categories.

- Ref: 1. Railway Board's letter No. E(NG)I/2016/PM 1/14 dated 01.03.2019 (RBE No. 38/2019)
2. Railway Board's RBE Nos. 102/2005, 147/2006, 34/2007, 133/2012 and 78/2019
3. AIRF's letter no. AIRF/53 dated 29.05.2026 and 19.06.2026.
4. Railway Board's letter No. E(NG)I-2026/PM4/7 (E-3535492) dated 30.07.2026

Dear Sir,

Kindly refer to AIRF's letters cited above, wherein the Federation had requested for reduction of the minimum qualifying service prescribed for Senior Clerks for appearing in the Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) for the post of Office Superintendent (OS) in Level-6 (GP ₹4200/-), from the existing 03 years to 02 years.

AIRF has carefully gone through the reply furnished by the Railway Board vide its letter dated 30.07.2026. The Federation appreciates the observations made by the Board; however, it is regretted that the genuine and long-pending demand has not been considered in its proper perspective. The grounds advanced by the Board, in our considered view, do not adequately justify continuation of the three-year residency period, particularly when the demand is only to make an employee eligible to appear in a competitive LDCE and does not confer any automatic right to promotion.

The Federation would, therefore, request that the matter may kindly be reconsidered in the light of the following:

1. Eligibility to appear in LDCE is not equivalent to automatic promotion: The Federation fully appreciates that the post of Office Superintendent is supervisory in nature and that adequate experience is necessary for discharging supervisory responsibilities. However, reducing the qualifying service from three years to two years would not result in automatic induction of an inexperienced employee into the supervisory post.

The proposed reduction would merely enable a Senior Clerk, after completion of two years of regular service, to participate in the competitive LDCE. The employee would still be required to qualify the prescribed examination and fulfill all other conditions laid down under the relevant rules.

Thus, the competitive examination itself provides an effective mechanism for assessing the candidate's knowledge, aptitude, suitability and competence before appointment to the supervisory post. Hence, the apprehension that reduction of one year in the residency period would compromise the quality of supervisory staff does not appear to be fully justified.

2. Experience cannot be measured merely by length of service: it is respectfully submitted that, in the present-day working environment, experience cannot be assessed solely on the basis of the number of years an employee has spent in a particular post.

The nature of ministerial work in Indian Railways has undergone a substantial transformation. The younger generation of Railway employees is generally well educated, professionally trained, computer literate and conversant with modern information technology, digital systems, e-Office, electronic communication, data management and other technology-enabled office procedures.

Many of the present-day Senior Clerks possess higher educational qualifications and updated knowledge and are fully capable of acquiring the requisite supervisory skills and shouldering the responsibilities of Office Superintendent.

Therefore, one additional year of residency by itself cannot reasonably be treated as the decisive measure of competence, particularly when the candidate is required to demonstrate his/her suitability through a competitive LDCE.

3. The demand is only for reduction from three years to two years: AIRF has never sought abolition of the experience requirement. The demand is limited to reduction of the minimum qualifying service by only one year, i.e. from three years to two years.

An employee appearing in the LDCE after two years of regular service would already possess practical exposure to Railway working and, more importantly, would have to prove his/her competence through the competitive examination.

Thus, the proposed amendment would not amount to dilution of the standard of selection; rather, it would only enlarge the field of eligible candidates.

4. Competitive examination itself safeguards the quality of selection: The very purpose of an LDCE is to identify the most suitable and meritorious candidates on the basis of competitive assessment.

If a candidate having two years of service does not possess adequate knowledge or aptitude, he/she would naturally not qualify the examination. Conversely, if an employee with two years of service possesses the requisite knowledge, competence and aptitude and successfully qualifies the LDCE, there appears to be little justification for denying such employee an opportunity to compete merely for want of one additional year of residency.

Thus, the proposal seeks equality of opportunity without lowering the standard of selection.

5. Comparison with Level-6 supervisory posts of other departments needs to be viewed in the proper perspective: The Railway Board has stated that there is no disparity with Level-6 supervisory posts in other departments and has referred to an analysis indicating three years' residency for such posts, including JEs, except in the Drawing cadre.

In this regard, AIRF respectfully submits that comparison merely on the basis of pay level and residency period does not present the complete picture. The ministerial cadre has its own distinct recruitment, promotional and career-progression structure, which cannot always be equated with technical/engineering cadres such as JEs.

The nature of duties, educational qualifications, recruitment channels, promotional avenues and examination mechanisms of ministerial and technical categories are different. Therefore, the fact that a three-year residency period exists in certain technical/supervisory cadres cannot, by itself, constitute sufficient justification for retaining the same condition in the ministerial cadre.

The relevant consideration should be whether a Senior Clerk with two years of regular service, coupled with the existing competitive LDCE mechanism, can reasonably acquire the requisite exposure and demonstrate competence for the post. AIRF firmly believes that the answer is in the affirmative.

6. Existing provisions in other ministerial categories support the demand: The demand also finds strong justification from the eligibility conditions already prevailing in other ministerial categories.

For appearing in the LDCE for Junior Clerk (Level-2), the prescribed eligibility is only two years of regular service. Similarly, for promotion to Senior Clerk (Level-5) against the 13½% LDCE quota, the required qualifying service is also two years of regular service as Junior Clerk.

Further, the Railway Board has, in the past, reduced residency requirements in supervisory cadres wherever considered necessary in the interest of career progression and administrative efficiency. Therefore, the proposal for prescribing two years' qualifying service for appearing in the LDCE for OS is neither unprecedented nor unreasonable.

7. Earlier precedent of reduction in residency period: It is particularly pertinent to mention that in the case of Chief Staff & Welfare Inspector (S&WI), erstwhile Personnel Inspector cadre, the minimum regular service prescribed for promotion against LDCE quota to the post carrying GP ₹4600/- was reduced from 03 years to 02 years vide Railway Board's letter No. E(NG)I-2005/PM1/20 dated 09.10.2007.

This itself establishes that the Railway Board has, in the past, recognized that two years' regular service can be considered adequate for eligibility to compete for a supervisory post through an LDCE.

The same principle deserves to be extended to the OS cadre, particularly when the present proposal does not seek any relaxation in the competitive examination or selection standards.

8. Previous reduction vide RBE No. 38/2019 should not foreclose further review: The Railway Board has also observed that the residency period in this cadre has already been reduced once vide RBE No. 38/2019 and that further dilution of experience is not warranted.

In this regard, it is respectfully submitted that a previous reduction in qualifying service cannot permanently preclude further review of the eligibility conditions.

Service rules and eligibility criteria are required to remain responsive to changing administrative requirements, technological developments, educational standards and the need for effective utilization of available human resources.

The fact that the Railway Board had earlier considered it appropriate to reduce the residency period itself demonstrates that such conditions can be reviewed from time to time. The substantial changes in the educational and technological profile of the present-day workforce provide sufficient justification for reconsideration of the matter now.

9. Reduction will help mitigate stagnation and improve morale: It is also necessary to consider the issue from the perspective of career progression of ministerial staff. Senior Clerks in Level-5 are already facing considerable stagnation and limited promotional opportunities in the regular channel.

Requiring them to complete an additional year merely to become eligible to appear in the LDCE for OS unnecessarily postpones their opportunity for advancement.

Permitting eligible Senior Clerks to compete after two years would provide a legitimate avenue for meritorious employees to progress on the basis of merit, thereby improving their morale and motivation.

10. The proposed change would also serve the interest of administration: The demand should not be viewed merely as an employee-oriented concession. From the administrative point of view also, the LDCE provides an effective mechanism for identifying young, meritorious, well-educated and technologically competent employees and utilizing their potential in supervisory positions.

In the present environment, younger employees are well equipped with updated knowledge, modern technology and computerized office systems. They are fully capable of learning the procedural and supervisory aspects of the post and handling the responsibilities entrusted to an Office Superintendent. Early identification and utilization of such talent would, in fact, serve the larger interests of the Railways.

11. No dilution of supervisory standards is involved: AIRF reiterates that the Federation does not seek any compromise with regard to efficiency, discipline or quality of supervision. The existing syllabus, examination, qualifying standards, merit, suitability and other prescribed conditions can remain unchanged. Only the minimum qualifying service for becoming eligible to compete in the LDCE is proposed to be reduced from three years to two years.

Therefore, the proposal would expand the field of eligible candidates without lowering the standard of selection.

In view of the above facts and circumstances, AIRF is of the considered opinion that the reasons furnished by the Railway Board for declining the demand do not adequately address the genuine concerns of the Senior Clerk cadre. It is also pertinent to point out that, by the time the selected candidates are actually promoted upon completion of the entire selection process, they may well have completed three years of service in the Senior Clerk cadre.

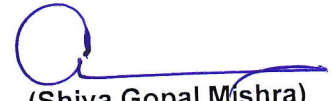
The Federation, therefore, once again earnestly requests the Railway Board to reconsider the matter in a fresh and objective manner and reduce the minimum qualifying service prescribed for Senior Clerks for appearing in the LDCE for the post of Office Superintendent (OS) in Level-6 (GP ₹4200/-) from 03 years to 02 years of regular service.

Such a decision would strike a proper balance between experience and merit. It would neither dilute the competitive nature of the selection process nor compromise the efficiency of supervisory administration. On the contrary, it would provide an opportunity to capable and meritorious employees to progress on the basis of merit, help alleviate stagnation and enable the Railways to make better use of the potential of its young, educated and technologically proficient workforce.

AIRF sincerely hopes that the Railway Board will appreciate the justification of the demand and review its decision conveyed vide letter dated 30.07.2026, with a view to issuing suitable instructions for allowing Senior Clerks with two years of regular service to appear in the LDCE for the post of Office Superintendent.

An early and favourable decision in the matter shall be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


(Shiva Gopal Mishra)
General Secretary

Copy to: General Secretaries, All Affiliated Unions – for information.