ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

(Registered under the Trade Unions Act 1926, Registration No.3427/Delhi)
C/o State Bank of India Officers' Association (North-Eastern Circle)
State Bank of India, LHO, Dispur, Guwahati, Assam – 781006
9957563825 @aiboc_in
aiboc.sectt@gmail.com ; rupamr.aiboc@gmail.com

Circular No. 2026/38 **Date:10.07.2026**

To All Affiliates/ State Units (Please Circulate)

Dear Comrades,

CAREER PROGRESSION POLICY FOR SPECIALIST OFFICERS
AIBOC SUBMITS DETAILED REPRESENTATION TO SECRETARY, DFS

The Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, vide its letter dated 17.03.2026, circulated a Career Progression Policy for Specialist Officers to all Public Sector Banks, forwarded by the IBA vide Circular No. HR & IR/PLI/2025-26/3095 dated 27.03.2026 for adoption with Board approval.

The Confederation has examined the policy in depth, along with the bank-level implementing circulars and the representations received from Specialist Officers across affiliates. While its stated objectives of uniformity and transparency are unexceptionable, several provisions are restrictive and retrograde, and the complete silence on recruitment into the specialist cadre is unacceptable. Accordingly, we have submitted a comprehensive representation to the Secretary, DFS, with a copy to the Chairman / Chief Executive, IBA, seeking that the policy be kept in abeyance and referred to the IBA for structured consultation with the officers' organisations, together with a clear specialist recruitment and succession plan. The full text is reproduced below for the information of members.

Affiliates and State Committees are requested to circulate this widely, particularly among Specialist Officers, and to forward any bank-level implementing circulars and members' representations to strengthen our follow-up. The Confederation shall pursue the matter earnestly with DFS and IBA at every appropriate forum, and developments shall be advised in due course.

With revolutionary greetings,

Yours comradely,

Rupam Roy
General Secretary

Ref. No. AIBOC/2026/14 **DATED 10.07.2026**

To,
The Secretary,
Department of Financial Services,
Ministry of Finance, Government of India,
Jeevan Deep Building, Parliament Street,
New Delhi – 110 001.

Respected Sir,

Sub: Career Progression Policy for Specialist Officers circulated vide DFS letter dated 17.03.2026 and IBA Circular No. HR & IR/PLI/2025-26/3095 dated 27.03.2026 - request for review, withdrawal/modification of restrictive provisions and consultative finalisation.

At the outset, we acknowledge the stated objectives of the policy, uniformity, transparency and enhanced career opportunities for Specialist Officers across Public Sector Banks. These are objectives the Confederation wholeheartedly shares. It is precisely because we share them that we consider it our duty to place before you, certain provisions which, in our considered assessment, may operate contrary to those very objectives, as well as our respectful concerns regarding the manner of the policy's finalisation.

1. Human resource matters, including promotion and career progression policies, have traditionally been formulated by the Boards of individual banks in consultation with the officers' organisations. This arrangement is consistent with the statutory scheme of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Acts, with the Government's own vision of *"Minimum Government, Maximum Governance"*, with the assurance of non-interference recorded in the Department's Office Memorandum dated 13.01.2015 following the Hon'ble Prime Minister's interaction with the chiefs of Public Sector Banks, and with the recommendations of the P. J. Nayak Committee on Board empowerment, which the Indradhanush framework and the EASE agenda have sought to carry forward.

2. When a largely finalised policy framework is forwarded to the Boards for adoption, with substantive issues having been determined centrally and only procedural aspects left to the Boards' discretion, the effective role of the Boards under the statute, as well as under the Government's own reform vision may get somewhat constrained. We would, therefore, respectfully urge that the framework be treated as indicative in nature, leaving its substantive design to the respective Boards through the established bipartite machinery.

3. **On the substance of the policy, we request a review of the following provisions:**

   a. **Mandatory CAIIB for conversion (Cl. 3.4):** Officers recruited for their domain expertise are required to qualify in an examination outside their discipline. The existing qualifications, coupled with the prescribed years of service and field experience, would adequately serve the purpose; JAIIB/ CAIIB may appropriately be incentivised rather than mandated.

b. **Three-year standstill after conversion (Cl. 3.3 & 3.4):** Rendering converted officers ineligible for further promotion for three years operates, in effect, as a fresh probation upon serving officers, disturbs their seniority vis-à-vis their batchmates, and discourages the very mobility the policy seeks to enable. Officers recruited under earlier norms also merit a protective (grandfathering) provision, as the policy presently applies retrospectively to them.

c. **Conversion subject to absolute discretion (Cl. 3.4):** Conversion is expressly stated not to be a right of the officer, the window opens only once in three years, and the selection criteria remain open-ended. We request annual windows, objective and published criteria, and due weightage for field experience already rendered. Implementing circulars issued at the bank level pursuant to the policy already illustrate the difficulty: residual clauses such as "any other criteria as decided by the Bank" leave otherwise eligible officers in a state of continuing uncertainty regarding their prospects.

d. **Progression ceilings and vacancy-linked stagnation (Cl. 3.2):** Several categories are capped at Scale V, and the residual "Others" category at Scale IV, while progression even within these ceilings is contingent upon vacancies identified administratively. Where vacancy identification is decentralised, a single administrative determination can foreclose the career path of an entire cadre in a region. Officers may instead be afforded the option either to continue in the specialist stream, with clearly defined roles at higher scales, or to convert, according to their choice.

e. **Qualification weightages (Cl. 5.3):** Early bank-level formulations confine additional marks to full-time courses, thereby disregarding distance and part-time qualifications acquired by serving officers, and assign only nominal marks to CA, CS, CFA, ICWA and Ph.D. A serving officer can seldom pursue full-time study; the framework may expressly recognise duly accredited part-time, distance and professional qualifications.

f. **Eligibility and assessment norms (Cl. 4, 5.4, 5.6 & 7):** The 75% APAR threshold, a single merit-only channel, the introduction of Group Discussion as an additional layer, and the residual service requirement, taken together, exclude a large number of competent officers from consideration. Field specialists attached to multiple branches further contend with appraisal systems that capture the performance of only one branch, understating their actual contribution. We request suitably calibrated thresholds and appraisal safeguards for field cadres.

g. **Absence of provisions on recruitment:** The policy provides for conversion out of the specialist cadre but contains no corresponding provision for recruitment into it. In several banks and cadres, there has been no specialist recruitment for years; each conversion and retirement will further deplete the cadre, increase the workload of the remaining officers and affect their work-life balance, at a juncture when supervisory expectations on risk management, information technology and compliance are steadily rising. A recruitment and succession plan may therefore accompany the policy.

4. We would further respectfully submit that wherever service conditions of officers are affected, a well-established structure of bilateral negotiation exists between the officers' trade unions and the Indian Banks' Association, a mechanism that has, for decades, delivered industry-level settlements and joint notes with mandates drawn from the Boards of member banks. Career progression, conversion and promotion norms squarely affect service conditions, and rightfully belong within that framework. The Confederation represents more than 3.25 lakh officers of the banking industry, among whom are tens of thousands of Specialist Officers who today find their legitimate career aspirations curtailed by the provisions indicated above, and who await a positive change in the policy and the removal of these retrograde clauses. We accordingly request the Department to keep the policy in abeyance for the present and refer the matter to the IBA for structured consultation with AIBOC and other officers' organisations, along with a clear specialist recruitment and succession plan. The Confederation assures of its fullest constructive cooperation in evolving a policy that genuinely advances the careers of Specialist Officers and thereby strengthens the Public Sector Banks.

With best regards,

Sd/-
Rupam Roy
General Secretary