GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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No.: 53237 /HE, Dated: 05 /10/2026

HE-PTC-POLICY-0015-2026

From

Smt. Mousumi Nayak, OAS (S)
Joint Secretary to Government

To

The Registrars
(All State Public Universities under Higher Education Department)

The Principals
All Government/ Autonomous/ Aided Degree Colleges
(under the Higher Education Department)

Sub: Conduct of election for different officers of the Students' Union and other Student Societies/Associations of Universities and Degree Colleges for the Academic Session 2026-27

Madam/ Sir,

In inviting a reference to the subject cited above, I am directed to say that the election of the Students' Union and other Student Societies/Associations shall be conducted in the State Public Universities, Government and Non-Government Aided Degree Colleges of the State during the Academic Session 2026-27 in accordance with the schedule indicated below.

Sl No.	Name of the Event	Proposed Timeline
1	Official Notification regarding dateline for election	07.10.2026 (Wednesday)
2	Nomination Filing	09.10.2026 (Friday) (10:00 AM to 01:00 PM)
3	Scrutiny of Nominations	09.10.2026 (Friday) (02:00 PM to 04:00 PM)
4	Publication of Valid Nominations	09.10.2026 (Friday) (05:00 PM)
5	Withdrawal of Nominations	10.10.2026 (Saturday) (10:00 AM to 01:00 PM)

6	Publication of Final Candidate List	10.10.2026 (Saturday) (03:00 PM)
7	Meeting on "Why I Stand For"	14.10.2026 (Wednesday)
8	Date of Polling	15.10.2026 (Thursday) (08:00 AM to 02:00 PM)
9	Counting & Result Declaration	15.10.2026 (Thursday) (02:00 PM to till the completion of counting and declaration of results)
10	Oath-Taking Ceremony and Reserved Day (Presidential Holiday)	16.10.2026 (Friday) (11:00 AM)

The aforementioned schedule shall be adhered to ensure orderly conduct of the election process and minimum disruption of teaching-learning activities. The guidelines issued in pursuance of the directions/observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court shall also be followed scrupulously.

The Principal/ Head of the institutions are requested to follow the SOP/Process Flow and the step by step procedure to enter and download the details of the candidates on the HIMS portal.

Accordingly, the following instructions/guidelines shall be strictly observed from the issue of the election notice until completion of the oath-taking ceremony:

i. There shall be complete disassociation of student elections and student representation from political parties.

ii. During the election period, no person who is not a student on the regular rolls of the college shall be permitted to participate in the election process in any capacity. Further, students enrolled in Self Financing Courses under PPP mode will not be permitted to participate in the election process either as candidate or voter.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CANDIDATES

i. Undergraduate (+3 Degree) students between the ages of 17 and 22 years, and Postgraduate students up to a maximum age of 25 years as on the date of notification may contest in the election.

ii. A candidate shall not have any academic arrears in the year in which he/she contests for the election.

iii. A candidate shall have the minimum classroom attendance of 75% to participate in the election.

iv. A candidate shall have one opportunity to contest for the post of an office-bearer and two opportunities to contest for the post of an executive member.

v. A candidate shall have no previous criminal record and shall not have been tried or convicted for any criminal offence or misdemeanor. Further, the candidate shall not have been subjected to any disciplinary action by the University/College authorities, nor shall any disciplinary proceeding be pending against him/her at the time of contesting the election.

vi. A candidate must be a regular, full-time student of the concerned Institution, admitted through SAMS in either a Regular or Self-Financing Programme. Students enrolled under **Distance Education or Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode shall not be eligible to contest the election.**

ELECTION-RELATED EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

i. The maximum permitted expenditure per candidate shall be Rs. 5,000/-.

ii. Each candidate shall, within two weeks of declaration of the result, submit complete accounts of election expenditure, certified by the candidate, to the University/ college authorities.

iii. The college shall publish such accounts within two days of submission through the HIMS Portal.

iv. The election of a candidate shall be liable to be nullified in the event of non-compliance with the expenditure requirements or in the event of excessive expenditure.

v. To prevent the inflow of funds from political parties into the student election process, candidates are specifically barred from utilizing funds from any source other than voluntary contributions from the student body.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CANDIDATES AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATORS

i. No candidate shall indulge in, or abet, any activity which may aggravate existing differences, create mutual hatred, or cause tension between different castes, communities, religious or linguistic groups, or groups of students.

ii. Criticism of other candidates shall be confined to their policies, programmes, past record and work. Candidates shall refrain from criticism of private life unrelated to public activities, and from unverified allegations or distortion.

iii. During the election period, candidates and their supporters shall maintain due decorum while using social media and other digital platforms. They shall not use abusive, offensive or derogatory language; make personal attacks or defamatory allegations; circulate false, misleading, manipulated or AI-generated fake content.

iv. There shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes. Places of worship, within or outside the campus, shall not be used for election propaganda.

v. Candidates shall not indulge in or abet corrupt practices or offences such as bribing or intimidating voters, impersonation, canvassing or propaganda within 100 meters of polling stations, holding public meetings during the 24 hours

ending with the hour fixed for close of poll, or transporting voters to and from polling stations.

vi. No candidate shall use printed posters, printed pamphlets or other printed material for canvassing. Only hand-made posters may be used within the prescribed expenditure limit.

vii. Hand-made posters may be displayed only at places in the campus notified in advance by the college authority.

viii. No candidate shall carry out processions or public meetings, or canvass/distribute propaganda, outside the college campus.

ix. No candidate or supporter shall deface or damage college property for any purpose without prior written permission of the college authorities. Candidates shall be jointly and severally liable for any destruction or defacement of college property.

x. During the election period, candidates may hold processions and/or public meetings only with prior written permission of the college authority and only where such activities do not disturb classes or other academic/co-curricular activities.

xi. Use of loudspeakers, vehicles and animals for canvassing shall be prohibited.

xii. On polling day, student organizations and candidates shall cooperate with election-duty officers to ensure peaceful and orderly polling and free exercise of franchise; shall not serve or distribute eatables or other solid/liquid consumables except water; and shall not distribute election propaganda.

xiii. Except voters, no person without a valid pass/letter of authority issued by the University/college authorities shall enter the polling booths.

xiv. The University/ college authorities shall appoint impartial observers from within the institution who shall not be assigned other any election duties. Candidates may bring specific complaints concerning conduct of the election to the notice of the observer(s). Observers shall also oversee the nomination process in institutions following the nomination model of student representation.

xv. All candidates shall be jointly responsible for ensuring that the polling area is cleaned within 48 hours from the conclusion of polling. In case of non-compliance, a penalty of ₹1500/- shall be imposed on each candidate.

xvi. Contravention of these instructions including not cleaning of the polling area may render a candidate liable to cancellation of candidature or loss of an elected post, as the case may be. The Institutional Head/ college authorities may also initiate appropriate disciplinary action against the violator.

xvii. **In addition to the above Code of Conduct, the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Act No. 45 of 2023), including Section 196 relating to promotion of enmity between different groups and acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony, and the provisions contained in Chapter IX (Sections 169 to 177) relating to offences concerning elections, shall, wherever applicable, also govern the conduct of Students' Union/Students' Association elections.**

GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM

i. There should be a Grievances Redressal Cell with the Dean (Student Welfare) / Teacher in charge of student affairs as its chairman. In addition, one senior faculty member, one senior administrative officer and two final year students – one boy and one girl (students can be nominated on the basis of merit and/or participation in the co-curricular activities in the previous year). The grievance cell shall be mandated with the redressal of election-related grievances, including, but not limited to breaches of the code of conduct of elections and complaints relating to election-related expenditure. This cell would be the regular unit of institution.

ii. In pursuit of its duties, the grievance cell may prosecute violators of any aspect of the code of conduct or the rulings of the grievance cell. The grievance cell shall serve as the court of original jurisdiction. The institutional head shall have appellate jurisdiction over issues of law and fact in all cases or controversies arising out of the conduct of the elections in which the grievance cell has issued a final decision. Upon review, the institutional head may revoke or modify the sanctions imposed by the grievance cell.

iii. In carrying out the duties of the office, the Grievance cell shall conduct proceedings and hearings necessary to fulfil those duties. In executing those duties, they shall have the authority:

   a. to issue a written notice/summons requiring candidates, their agents or workers to appear before the Grievance Cell, give evidence, and produce relevant records/documents, as required.

   b. to inspect the financial reports of any candidate and make these records available for public scrutiny upon request.

iv. Student members of the Grievance cell are prohibited from filing complaints. Any other student may file a complaint with the Grievance cell, within a period of 3 weeks from the date of declaration of results. All complaints must be filed under the name of the student filing the complaint. The Grievance cell shall act on all complaints within 24 hours after they are received by either dismissing them or calling a hearing.

v. The Grievance cell may dismiss a complaint, if:

a. the complaint was not filed within the time frame prescribed in Recommendation (iv) above;

b. the complaint fails to state a cause of action for which relief may be granted;

c. the complainant has not and / or likely will not suffer injury or damage.

vi. If a complaint is not dismissed, then a hearing must be held. The Grievance cell shall inform, in writing, or via e-mail, the complaining party and all individuals or groups named in the complaint of the time and place of the hearing. The parties are not considered notified until they have received a copy of the complaint.

vii. The hearing shall be held at the earliest possible time, but within twenty-four (24) hours after receipt of the notice described above, unless all parties agree to waive the 24-hour time constraint.

viii. At the time notice of a hearing is issued, the Grievance cell, by majority vote, may issue a temporary restraining order, if it determines that such action is necessary to prevent undue or adverse effects on any individual or entity. Any restraining order, once issued, will remain in effect until a decision of the Grievance cell is announced after the hearing or until rescinded by the Grievance cell.

ix. All Grievance cell hearings, proceedings, and meetings must be open to the public.

x. All Parties of the Grievance cell hearing shall present themselves at the hearing, may be accompanied by any other student from which they can receive counsel, and have the option to be represented by that counsel.

xi. For any hearing, a majority of sitting Grievance cell members must be in attendance with the Chair of the Grievance cell presiding. In the absence of the Chair, the responsibility to preside shall fall to a Grievance cell member designated by the Chair.

xii. The Grievance cell shall determine the format for the hearing, but must require that both the complaining and responding parties appear physically before the board to discuss the issues through a complaint, answered, rebuttal, and rejoinder format. The purpose of the hearing is to gather the information necessary to make a decision, order, or ruling that will resolve an election dispute. To effectuate this purpose, the following rules should prevail at all hearings:

(a) Complaining parties shall be allowed no more than two witnesses, however the Grievance cell may call witnesses as required. If said witnesses are unable to appear at the hearing, signed affidavits may be submitted the Grievance Cell Chair for the purpose of testifying by proxy.

(b) All questions and discussions by the parties in dispute shall be directed to the Grievance cell.

(c) There shall be no direct or cross-examination of any party or witness by complaining or responding parties during hearings.

(d) Reasonable time limits may be set by the Grievance cell, provided they give fair and equal treatment to both sides.

(e) The complaining party shall bear the burden of proof.

(f) Decisions, orders, and rulings of the Grievance cell must be concurred to by a majority of the Grievance cell present and shall be announced as soon as possible after the hearing. The Grievance cell shall issue a written opinion of the ruling within 12 hours of announcement of the decision.

The written opinion must set forth the findings of fact by the Grievance cell and the conclusions of law in support of it. Written opinions shall set a precedent for a time period of three election cycles for Grievance cell rulings, and shall guide the Grievance cell in its proceedings.

Upon consideration of prior written opinions, the grievance cell may negate the decision, but must provide written documentation of reasons for doing so.

(g) If the decision of the Grievance cell is appealed to the institutional head, the Grievance cell must immediately submit its ruling to the commission.

(h) The Grievance cell shall select the remedy or sanction most appropriate to both the type and severity of the infraction, as well as the state of mind or intent of the violator as determined by the Grievance cell. Possible remedies and sanctions include, but are not limited to, fines, suspension of campaigning privileges, and disqualification from the election.

(i) Any fine or total amount of fines against a candidate in an election cycle may not exceed the spending limit as defined herein above.

(j) If, after a hearing, the Grievance cell finds that provisions of this Code were violated by a candidate, or a candidate's agents or, workers, the Grievance cell may restrict the candidate, or the candidate's agents or workers, from engaging in some or all campaign activities for some or all of the remainder of the campaign. If an order is issued covering only part of the remaining period, it shall take effect immediately so that after its termination, the candidate will have an opportunity to resume campaigning during the days immediately prior to and including the election days.

(k) If, after a hearing, the Grievance cell finds that provisions of either this Code or decisions, opinions, orders, or rulings of the Grievance cell have been

willfully and blatantly violated by a candidate, or a candidate's agents or workers, the Grievance cell may disqualify the candidate.

(l) Any party adversely affected by a decision of the Grievance cell may file an appeal with the institutional head within twenty-four (24) hours after the adverse decision is announced. The institutional head shall have discretionary appellate jurisdiction over the Grievance cell in all cases in which error on the part of the Grievance cell is charged.

(m) The decision of the Grievance cell shall stand and shall have full effect until the appeal is heard and decided by the institutional head.

(n) The institutional head shall hear appeals of Grievance cell rulings as soon as possible, but not within twenty-four (24) hours after the Grievance cell delivers to the Appellant and the institutional head a copy of its written opinion in the case. Appeal may be heard prior to this time, but only if the Appellant waives the right to a written opinion and the institutional head agrees to accept the waiver.

(o) The institutional head can issue suitable orders to suspend or halt the operation of the ruling issued by the Grievance cell until the appeals are decided.

(p) The institutional head shall review findings of the Grievance cell when appealed. The institutional head may affirm or overturn the decision of the Grievance cell, or modify the sanctions imposed.

xiii. It may be noted that: -

"Where the atmosphere of the university/College campus is adverse to the conduct of peaceful, free and fair elections, the university, its constituent colleges and departments must initiate a system of student representation based on nominations, especially where elections are being held at present. It would be advisable, however, not to base such nomination system on purely academic merit, as is being practised throughout the country."

The Vice-Chancellor and Principals may note the above observation of the Supreme Court. They may take into consideration the assessment of Staff Committee/PG Council as the case may be, and take a decision on a case to case basis to take decision to follow the nomination option during 2026-27, rather than election, <u>limiting to such cases of serious nature where conduct of election is not possible due to the atmosphere prevailing in such college/University.</u>

xiv. Any instance of acute lawlessness or the commission of a criminal offence shall be reported to the police by the University/ College authorities as soon as possible, but not later than 6 hours after the alleged commission of the offence.

Additionally, the District Nodal Officers, appointed by the Higher Education Department vide Letter No. 50596 dated 21.09.2026, shall oversee and monitor the conduct of the Students' Union/Students' Association Election in the institutions falling under their respective jurisdictions and ensure adherence to the prescribed guidelines and election schedule.

All concerned are requested to ensure strict compliance with the above schedule and guidelines. This is for your kind information and necessary action.

Yours faithfully,

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53238 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the P.S. to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha for kind information of Hon'ble Chief Minister.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53239 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the P.S. to Hon'ble Minister, Higher Education for kind information of Hon'ble Minister, Higher Education.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53240 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the P.S. to Chief Secretary, Odisha for kind information of Chief Secretary.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53241 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the P.S. to Commissioner-Cum-Secretary, Higher Education Department for kind information of Commissioner-Cum-Secretary.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53242 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the Vice Chancellors of all State Public Universities (coming under this Department) for kind information.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53243 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to all Collectors for information and necessary action. They are requested to ensure that the Government instruction is brought to the notice of all concerned Institutions in their respective districts.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53244 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the Director, Higher Education for kind information.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53245 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the Regional Director of Education, Bhubaneswar/Berhampur/Baleswar/Sambalpur/Jeypore for kind information and necessary action.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53246 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to the Director, Information & Public Relations Department, Odisha / Director, Doordarshan Kendra, Bhubaneswar / Director, All India Radio, Cuttack for information and necessary action. Necessary arrangements may be made for dissemination/publication of the Government instruction, as appropriate.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 53247 **/HE, Dated:** 05 **/10/2026**

Copy forwarded to all Officers/ all Sections of the Higher Education Department for information.

Joint Secretary to Government