

Election Commission of Bhutan



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Guidelines for Conduct of Elections in Schools, Educational Institutions and Other Agencies, 2015

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Guidelines for Conduct of Elections in Schools, Educational Institutions and Other Agencies, 2015

The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), though under the Constitution, is mandated to conduct elections only to Parliament and Local Governments, and hold National Referendums, it is often requested by various organizations and agencies to assist in conduct of elections for the posts of Speaker of National Assembly and Chairperson of National Council, Executives and Office Bearers of Political Parties, Chairpersons and Dy. Chairpersons of Dzongkhag Tshogdus, Executives and Office Bearers of BOC, Sports and Athletic Federations, President and Executives of Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Student Leaders in Schools and Educational Institutions, Office Bearers of the National Graduate Orientation Programme (NGOP), etc. In order to use the opportunity for the purpose of educating voters on the electoral processes through real-life polling experience the Election Commission hereby adopts the Guidelines for Conduct of such in a free and fair manner conforming to the accepted norms and standards as laid down herein after:

1. Short Title, Extent, Application and Commencement

1.1. These *Guidelines shall be called the Guidelines for Conduct of Elections in Schools, Educational Institutions and Other Agencies, 2015:*

1.1.1 These Guidelines shall extend to the whole of Kingdom of Bhutan;

1.1.2 These Guidelines shall apply to the conduct of Elections in Schools, Educational Institutions and Other Agencies; and

1.1.3 These Guidelines shall come into force with effect from 24th of June 2015 corresponding to 8th Day of the 5th Month of the Wood Female Sheep Year of the Bhutanese Calendar.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. In these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:
 - 2.1.1 “Act” means the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008;
 - 2.1.2 “Candidate” means a person whose nomination has been duly accepted by the concerned Agency;
 - 2.1.3 “Commission” means the Election Commission of Bhutan formed in accordance with the Article 24 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan;
 - 2.1.4 “Nominee” means an eligible person nominated from the Agency/Organization, to contest the said election; and
 - 2.1.5 The words importing the singular number shall include the plural number and *vice-versa*.

3. General

- 3.1. An organization that seeks the assistance of the Election Commission in conduct of elections shall submit an application, at least three days in advance from the proposed date of poll to give adequate time for preparation in the Application Form, **Form No. 1** as in **Annexure 1**.
- 3.2. The concerned agency shall provide, either to the ECB or respective Dzongkhag Election Office, the number of voters and elective posts.
- 3.3. Nominations of candidates for the respective posts shall be made prior to the poll day by the concerned agency.
- 3.4. The concerned agency shall allow the nominees for respective posts to campaign in an organized manner allotting equal time for each of the candidates before the Poll Day.
 - 3.4.1 The order of the Speakers at a Campaign shall normally be in alphabetical order of the family/second name or the name in case of a single name.

- 3.4.2 Candidate must refrain from defamatory and derogatory attacks on a rival Candidate and avoid the use of inflammatory language, provocative actions, images or manifestations that incite violence, hatred or intimidation against another Candidate or any person or group of persons.
- 3.5. The names and photos of the candidates for respective elective posts shall be provided to the election team prior to the poll day by the concerned agency.
- 3.6. The agency requesting for the conduct of election in their organization shall arrange transportation of EVMs and officials.
- 3.7. The Democracy Clubs shall take the lead role in the conduct of the elections in an institution where there is a Democracy Club and where there is no Democracy Club an Election Committee must be appointed by the competent authority of the entity to work with the Polling Team to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections.

4. Preparation for Election

- 4.1. The Department of Elections of the ECB or concerned Dzongkhag Election Office shall prepare adequate number of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in accordance to the number of voters and elective posts.
- 4.2. The officials responsible for the conduct of such elections shall be appointed through office order of the Election Commission of Bhutan/Dzongkhag Election Office.
- 4.3. The Polling Team so appointed shall make necessary preparation for the poll day of the said election.

- 4.4. All the EVMs required in the said election shall be checked and prepared by the Polling Team as would be done in a Parliamentary or Local Government election. Wherever possible, soft copy of the voters list will be used for a digital Electoral Roll and the *E-Roll Search* used for the polling.
- 4.5. The agency shall make a separate register for male and female voters in the respective group(s).
- 4.6. The officials of the ECB Team must carry and display their election ECB ID Card while on such duty.
- 4.7. The contesting Candidates shall give an Undertaking, as **Form No. 2** as in **Annexure 2**, that they shall abide by these Guidelines in regard to the said election.

5. Polling

- 5.1. The hours of polling shall be fixed by the Polling Team as per the number of candidates for the elective posts and the number of voters communicated by the agency.
- 5.2. The Polling Team shall brief the voters and candidates before the commencement of the poll and demonstrate how the EVM operates and votes are recorded as would be done by the Polling team on a Poll Day.
- 5.3. The agency shall assist the Polling Team throughout the polling hours.
- 5.4. The agency shall make arrangements for queuing of voters.

6. Code of Conduct

- 6.1. An Election Team, herein after referred as the ECB Team on election duty must be familiar with the Guidelines for Conduct of Elections in Schools, Educational Institutions and other agencies.

- 6.2. The ECB Team must comply with the Guidelines for Conduct of Elections in Schools, Educational Institutions and other agencies.
- 6.3. The ECB Team must not participate in any unauthorized activity, including any private activity that could lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest with his or her duties as an Election Officer.
- 6.4. The ECB Team must ensure that every candidate, voter and other participant in the election process is treated in a neutral and unbiased manner and perform his or her duty without fear or favour.
- 6.5. The ECB Team must not express a view on any subject which is likely to affect the results of the election.
- 6.6. The ECB Team must, at all times, conduct himself or herself in an irreproachable manner, exercise sound judgment, and observe the highest level of personal conduct without any prejudice.
- 6.7. The ECB Team must not indulge in any campaigning or electioneering activities on behalf of any candidate.
- 6.8. The ECB Team must provide every voter, the highest quality of service required to enable a voter to exercise his or her right to vote with the least possible inconvenience.
- 6.9. The ECB Team must provide all necessary assistance to the physically challenged, to enable them to exercise their right to vote effectively.

7. Procedure of Polling

- 7.1. In case of elections in a school or educational institution, there shall be a separate voting compartment prepared by the Polling Team for male and female voters for each polling station.

- 7.2. There shall be three polling officers, one processing the male voters and other the female voters in respective polling station and to support them.
- 7.3. The voters shall come in one line to cast their votes in accordance with the serial number of their names in the register maintained by the agency for elections in smaller agencies, such as the CFM or BCCI.
- 7.4. The Polling Officer shall put a tick mark against the name in the voters list upon releasing the Ballot.
- 7.5. The Polling Team shall close poll after all the voters present have cast their votes and count the results immediately thereafter.
- 7.6. The Polling Team shall record the result of the poll in the prescribed form and submit a copy of it to the person in charge of the agency.
- 7.7. The Polling Team shall also maintain a copy of votes recorded for future reference, in case of any dispute regarding such election.

8. Equality of Votes

- 8.1. The Agency or the Educational Institute shall, if the highest numbers of votes are secured by two or more candidates in equal numbers on the completion of counting of votes, order for re-election between candidates securing equal number of votes.
- 8.2. The Agency shall, if at the re-election conducted, the highest numbers of votes are secured by two or more candidates in equal numbers on the completion of counting of votes, forthwith decide between those candidates by draw of lots in the presence of candidates.

- 8.3. For the purpose of ‘Drawing of Lots’ the contesting Candidates shall pick up a slip of paper out of a ballot box which is as **Form No. 3** as in **Annexure 3**. The person who picks the Ballot Paper with the word “ELECTED” printed on it shall be declared as elected.

9. Declaration of Election Results

- 9.1. The election results, counted by the Team immediately after the close of polls, shall be declared in the presence of the concerned authorities and candidates/voters by the Team.
- 9.2. Election Officials, Head of the Concerned Agency and all the contesting candidates elect and non-elect shall sign on the result sheet **Form No. 4** as in **Annexure 4**.

10. Dispute

- 10.1. Any disputes related to Election under these Guidelines shall be adjudicated by an Election Dispute Settlement Committee comprising of the following members appointed by the Head of concerned Agency prior to the Poll. :

10.1.1 Chairperson; and

10.1.2 Two Members.

- 10.2. A copy of decision given by the Committee shall be shared with the Election Commission and concerned Dzongkhag Election Office for reference.

11. Interpretation and Amendment

- 11.1. The Election Commission of Bhutan shall be the competent authority to interpret the provisions of these Guidelines.

- 11.2. The Election Commission of Bhutan shall have the power to amend the existing Guidelines by way of addition, variation or repeal.

Done under the seal of the Election Commission of the Kingdom of Bhutan on this 24th Day of June 2015 corresponding to the 8th Day of the 5th Month of the Wood Female Sheep Year in the Bhutanese Calendar.



Election Commissioner



Election Commissioner



Chief Election Commissioner

Annexure 1

To,
The Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan
Election Commission of Bhutan
Thimphu

Dear Sir,

The (name of entity) would like to request the Election Commission of Bhutan to help us in conducting election(s) to the post(s) of:

1. and
2.

This request is made to ensure that the election(s) are conducted as per the best standards as well as to orient all on electoral process.

Yours respectfully,

(Name)
Designation

Contact No.:

Undertaking

I, (name of the candidate) contesting for the post of in the election to be conducted on (date), hereby, agree to abide by the provisions of the Guidelines for Conduct of Elections in Schools, Educational Institutions and Other Agencies.

Name of Candidate: Signature:

Dated:

Annexure 3

1. The specification of the slip to be used in the draw of lots shall be A5 sized paper (half of A4).
2. The Polling Team shall type the word “ELECTED” in Times New Roman, font size 12 as in Figure 1 at the top middle of a slip.

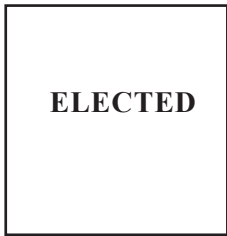


Fig. 1

The slip for the draw shall be like in Figure 1 before folding

3. One slip with the word “ELECTED” printed on it and blank slips, the numbers of which should be such that the total is equivalent to the number of Candidates. E.g. If 3 Candidates tie, then there should be 1 slip with “Elected” printed on it and 2 blank slips.
4. The slips shall be folded in the following steps:

Step 1:

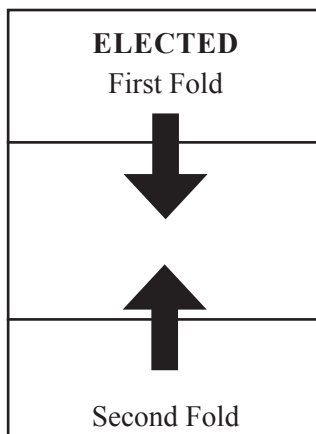


Fig. 2

Each of the A5 size paper, with and without the word “ELECTED” printed on it, shall be folded in three equal parts. Folding of the slip shall start from the top where the word “Elected” has been typed as in Figure 2.

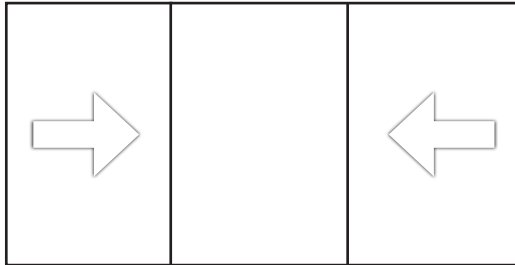


Fig. 3

Step 2:

The slip for the draw of lots has to be again folded into three equal parts as in Figure 3.

5. The final slips for the draw of lots shall be a small rectangular shape with no visible or detectable sign or indicator of the contents.
6. The Polling Team shall make sure that the slips made for the draw of lots are identical and those drawing are not able to distinguish between the slips.

Form No. 1 Final Result Sheet

Consolidation of Final Results

Sl. No.	Name of Candidate	Total No. of Voters	Total Votes Secured as per EVM

Name _____

Name _____

Signature of Polling Official

Signature of Competent Authority

Name & Signature of Candidates

(A) Elected Candidate

(B) Not Elected Candidates

1. Name and Signature

2. Name & Signature

List of elections conducted in Schools, Educational Institutions and other agencies in Thimphu;

1. Centenary Farmer Market (CFM)
2. Graduate Orientation Programme
3. National Council
4. National Assembly
5. Royal Thimphu College
6. Political Parties
7. Lhaksam Tsekpa Zhitshog
8. Bhutan Media Foundation
9. Journalist Association of Bhutan
10. Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan
11. Yangchen Gatshel LSS
12. Lungtenphu LSS
13. Dechencholing MSS
14. Babesa MSS
15. School for Language and Cultural studies
16. Motithang HSS
17. Loselling
18. Changzamtog LSS
19. Sunshine School
20. Early Learning Centre
21. Kelki HSS
22. Changangkha MSS
23. Thimphu Pry school
24. Lungtenzampa MSS
25. Chang Rigphel LSS
26. Royal Institute of Tourism and Hospitality
27. Royal Institute of Health and Science
28. Youths in Vounlents (Dept. of Youth and Sports)