**Government of West Bengal**
**Department of Higher Education**
**Bikash Bhaban, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Salt Lake,**
**Kolkata 700091**

No. 83-Edn.(T)/10M-48/14                                                            Date: 28.02.2014

## NOTIFICATION

**Subject: Introduction of Online Admission into Under Graduate Courses from AY 2014-15**

1.        Whereas the Government in the Department of Higher Education has been receiving public feedback on the difficulties and physical hardship being faced by students seeking admission to under-graduate (UG) courses in the State-funded higher education institutions;

2.        And whereas the Government desires to streamline the admission procedure to UG courses in such a manner that the admission process becomes hassle-free and transparent, and offers convenience to students, their parents/guardians and renders the college/university authorities more accountable in completing a merit-based admission process in a time-bound manner;

3.        And now, therefore, the Governor is pleased to issue the following instructions on the matter:

   i.    From the Academic Year 2014-15, admissions to all UG courses (Honours and General) in the State-funded higher education institutions in West Bengal shall be through an online merit-based admission system. Government Colleges, Government-aided colleges, University Colleges, Universities which run UG courses, and the like shall fall within the scope of this exercise.

   ii.   Each affiliating University will be the nodal authority responsible for implementing this system. A Central Committee for Online Admissions headed by the Vice Chancellor and comprising  key officials including  the Inspector of Colleges, and Principals / Teacher-in-charge of the major colleges will be set up to plan the entire exercise, devise a calendar of events thereafter to implement the same. Similarly, there shall be an **Online Admissions Committee** in each college headed by the Principal / Officer-in-charge / Teacher-in-charge and comprising the key officials in charge of the exercise.

iii.    This Committee, inter alia, will (to the extent required) arrange to amend the rules regulating the admission process so as to enable conduct of online admissions. The objective is to ensure a rules / regulations regime that also allows for online admissions done centrally. The necessary amendments, where necessary, may be done as per the due process laid down in the University's Statute / Ordinances / Regulations, etc. and the College's rules.

iv.    Planning the exercise shall cover all aspects of the exercise: installation of requisite hardware (including servers / fail-proof UPS etc.), preparation / customisation of software tailored to the specific requirements of the constituent institutions, training of personnel for operating the system, setting up help desks at various levels, widely publicising the important dates related to the admission process, tying up with banks for deposit of fees, and bringing out a detailed advisory for admission seekers guiding them on the various procedural modalities and steps involved, along with a calendar of dates.

v.    The hardware planning should be done so as to ensure a robust, crash-proof system but with due regard to economy. The objective is to minimise expenditure to the extent practicable but ensuring that the hardware and software deliver a seamless and interruption-free delivery of service. It is expected that all the institutions already have computer facilities. However, where new acquisition or augmentation of hardware is necessary, the cost will have to be borne by the institution itself. A reliable, high-speed internet data connection will be an important component of the hardware system.

vi.    It is envisaged that each constituent / affiliated college will have a dedicated help desk facility for data entry / registration for those students who do not have a computer facility at home / in the neighbourhood. In the rural areas especially, students coming for enrolment through the online system should be given due assistance / facilitation.

vii.    It needs to be kept in mind that the reservation of seats for the OBC students (10% category A and 7% category B) commences from the ensuing Academic Year 2014-15. This is in addition to the existing reservation for SC and ST students, and the software will have to cater to this requirement too. New institutions having the required infrastructure may go in for the full 17% reservation of seats for OBCs in 2014-15 while the other institutions may make such number of seats available to OBC students in 2014-15 as are afforded by the available infrastructure. The full 17% reservation has to be achieved in a phased manner over a six-year period starting from 2014-15.

viii.    The software preparation would be under the leadership of the affiliating University since the choice of subjects on offer would be different from college to college, and the software would have to be such as to cater to the varying requirements of different institutions and be able to generate a list of successful candidates based on merit. For this, each college will have to furnish information relating to the courses on offer (Honours and General), number of seats, combination of subsidiary subjects available with Honours in one subject, fee structure, etc. Further, the interface with banks will have to be carefully planned and suitably catered to in the software. This institution-bank interface and its level of sophistication will vary, depending upon the type of electronic service the relevant banks are able to provide.

ix.    For software preparation, the affiliating University will be at liberty to entrust the work to any reliable agency subject to the observance of the due diligence and rules in this regard. Credentials of the agency would have to be verified thoroughly since the exercise does not allow any margin of error. The target should be to have the software ready and tested well before the publication of the H.S. results by the WBCHSE. The work could even be entrusted to an agency on turnkey basis, i.e. covering all aspects of the exercise such as hardware, software, personnel, help desk facilitation, generation of results, etc.

x.    For the design of the software, close consultation with the constituent / affiliated colleges will be required as the subjects / combination of subjects on offer may differ from college to college. Other factors such as the number of colleges, number of courses / combination of subjects an applicant may apply for, the schedule of dates for different stages of the online admission process will need very careful scrutiny and decision making.

xi.    A registration fee will be chargeable from the students for the online service. Since the scale of operations/ number of applicants will vary from University to University, having a uniform fee across the State may not be feasible. This fee should be carefully arrived at: it should be enough to cover all the expenses involved in implementing the system (hardware, software, personnel for helpdesk facilitation, technical hands, etc.) including incidental costs but there should not be any motive to generate a large surplus. The distribution of the proceeds between the University and its affiliated colleges shall be decided mutually in the Central Committee for Online Admissions. If feasible, the loss of income caused to colleges from stoppage in sale of admission forms may be considered. The students applying online will have to be informed beforehand the registration fee chargeable for this service along with the other 'dos' and 'donts'. Sufficient publicity through the institution's notice board, University's website (college website, where available), email or other available channels, will be necessary.

xii. Since the University of Burdwan has gathered valuable experience from implementing the online admission system for honours courses in 2013, an interaction with their key officials would be instructive and help in designing / planning the whole exercise. Some documents received from Inspector of Colleges, Burdwan University in this regard are enclosed for your ready reference. The issues raised therein will highlight different aspects involved in planning and executing the exercise. However, these papers are only illustrative in nature and for guidance; all institutions are encouraged to improve upon them. Queries in this regard may be directed to the Inspector of Colleges, University of Burdwan (email: icburuniv@gmail.com; cell phone 94342 15475). The Inspector of Colleges, Burdwan University and his team will provide guidance and also hold workshops / orientation sessions, if required.

4. This e-governance initiative is in the interest of the students and will be a major step forward for the State's higher education system in bringing about greater transparency, efficiency and accountability in the annual admissions exercise. Every effort must be made to ensure the online admission system is implemented smoothly. The State Government will not countenance any lack of interest or negligence in implementing the online admission system. Those Universities which feel they would also go in for online admissions for PG courses and B.Ed. courses are at liberty to do so but not at the cost of the online admissions to UG level courses.

5. While the overall responsibility of implementation shall rest with the University's Central Committee for Online Admissions headed by the Vice Chancellor, at the college level the Principal / Officer-in-charge / Teacher-in-charge shall be held responsible for smooth delivery of the scheme. All aspects of the matter –hardware, including high-speed internet connectivity, software, setting up of help desk, etc. will have to be ensured.

6. This is a highly time-bound exercise involving lakhs of applicants across the State, and hence, requires sustained efforts by a dedicated team of officials in every institution. The Higher Education Department will review action taken by all the Universities a month later.

By order of the Governor

Sd/-

(Amit Sanyal)
Special Secretary to the Government of West Bengal