Election Commission of Bhutan

Guidelines for the Implementation of Section 178 (d) of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 relating to Functional Literacy and Possession of Skills Test, 2026

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1. Background

Under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 requires that a candidate contesting for Local Government elections shall be functionally literate and possess skills adequate to discharge his/her duties, except the candidate for the post of *Thrompon* must possess a formal university degree.

Further, the Local Government Act of Bhutan, 2009 requires that the functional literacy and possession of skills by a person shall be certified by the Election Commission of Bhutan.

To fulfill the above legal requirements, the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) administers the Functional Literacy and Possession of Skills Test (FLT) for individuals aspiring to contest for the posts to a Local Government, except for the post of *Thrompon,* and issues certificates.

With increasing decentralization and greater decision-making and financial authority vested in Local Governments, the roles of LG leaders have become more complex and demanding. Positions such as *Gup*, *Mangmi* and *Thromde Ngotshab* now require stronger administrative, leadership and decision-making capacities, along with the ability to engage effectively in policy, planning and service delivery. At the same time, *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* and *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa* are expected to be equipped to effectively communicate with communities and facilitate grassroots service delivery efficiently.

The widespread adoption of technology for governance and public service delivery requires local leaders to possess adequate digital literacy and skills to discharge their responsibilities and functions effectively.

Therefore, the *Guidelines for the Implementation of Section 178(d) of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, relating to Functional Literacy and Possession of Skills, 2009*, are hereby revised to align the competency and skill requirements of local government leaders to meet the current needs.

2. Legal Provision

Section 178 (d) of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, provides that a person shall be qualified to be elected to a Local Government office, if he/she is:

"*Functionally literate and possesses skills adequate to discharge his/her duties, except the candidate for the post of Thrompon must possess a formal university degree.*"

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Section 21(d) of the Local Government Act of Bhutan, 2009, provides that a person shall be qualified to be elected as a member of a Local Government, if he/she is:

"*Functionally literate and possesses skills adequate to discharge his/her responsibilities as certified by the Election Commission of Bhutan or possessing a formal degree in the case of candidates for Thrompon*".

3. Definition

a. Functional Literacy

'Functional Literacy' shall mean the ability to read and write in Dzongkha, comprehend and interpret information adequately to discharge his/her functions effectively.

b. Possession of Skills

'Possession of Skills' shall mean the possession of computational, analytical, communication, managerial and leadership competencies.

C. Functional Competency Assessment (FCA)

'Functional Competency Assessment (FCA)' means the written, task-based component of the Functional Literacy and Possession of Skills Test that assesses a candidate's functional literacy and practical skills, including reading, writing, numeracy, and analytical and managerial abilities.

d. Functional Competency Engagement (FCE)

'Functional Competency Engagement (FCE)' means the oral component of the Functional Literacy and Possession of Skills Test that assesses a candidate's reading, comprehension, communication, and response to practical situations.

4. Objectives

The core objectives of the FLT are to:

1. Assess candidate's ability to read, comprehend, interpret, and effectively apply written information within the context of Local Government functions;

2. Evaluate candidate's communication skills, including the ability to convey information clearly and coherently;

3. Assess candidate's core functional competencies, including computational and analytical skills required for problem-solving, decision-making and execution of administrative and financial tasks in Local Government; and

4. Evaluate candidate's managerial and leadership capabilities to ensure effective and efficient governance.

5. Eligibility

1. A person shall be eligible to appear for the FLT if he/she intends to:

   a. Contest for a post of *Gup, Mangmi*, *Thromde Ngotshab*, *Thromde Tshogpa* and *Gewog Tshogpa.*

6. Exemption

An individual, for the purpose of contesting the 4th LG elections, shall not be required to appear for the FLT, if he/she:

a. Is already in possession of the FLT Certificates issued in the past by the ECB and intends to contest for the post of *Thromde Tshogpa* or *Gewog Tshogpa.*

7. FLT Framework and Structure

a. The FLT shall consist of two components, namely, Functional Competency Assessment (FCA) and Functional Competency Engagement (FCE) as outlined below:

Component	**Marking (%)**
Functional Competency Assessment (FCA)	50%
Functional Competency Engagement (FCE)	50%

b. There shall be a task-based assessment of 'Functional Literacy' and 'Possession of Skills' under each of the two components, delivered through five modules comprising different question types, as outlined in the table below:

Functional Competency Assessment (FCA) Component

	Module
Part A: Functional Literacy	Module 1: Reading & Interpretation
	Module 2: Practical Writing
Part B: Possession of Skills	Module 3: Computational Skills
	Module 4: Analytical Skills
	Module 5: Managerial Skills

Functional Competency Engagement (FCE) Component

	Module
Part A: Functional Literacy	Module 6: Reading
	Module 7: Comprehension
Part B: Possession of Skills	Module 8: Practical/Managerial Response

8. FLT Competency Levels and Certification

1. The FLT shall be classified into two competency levels, based on the roles and responsibilities of Local Government members, as mentioned below:

   a. Competency Level 1: *Gup, Mangmi* and *Thromde Nogtshab;* and

   b. Competency Level 2: *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* and *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa.*

2. A uniform standard of FLT shall be applied to all positions within the same competency level and shall be designated as FLT Level 1 and FLT Level 2;

3. Separate sets of questions shall be developed for each of the two competency levels as follows:

   i. Competency Level 1 Question Set: For *Gup/Mangmi/Thromde Ngotshab;* and

   ii. Competency Level 2 Question Set: For *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa/Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa.*

4. The certificate for competency level 1 may be used for contesting to any local government post, except *Thrompon;*

5. The certificate for competency level 2 shall only be applicable to *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* and *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa;* and

6. All FLT certificates issued by the Election Commission of Bhutan prior to these guidelines, shall be issued Competency Level 2 certificate.

9. Registration and Test Centre

a. The Election Commission shall notify well in advance the general public of the FLT schedule, dates, venue and registration procedures;

b. There shall be at least one test centre in the *Dzongkhag* concerned;

c. The *Dzongkhag* Electoral Officer shall be responsible for identifying the test centre(s) within their respective *Dzongkhags*;

d. An individual wishing to sit for FLT shall register in the prescribed form and format;

e. Effort shall be made to facilitate FLT in the test centre of the individual's choice; and

f. The respective *Dzongkhag* Electoral Officers shall verify the eligibility of registered individuals prior to submission to the ECB Head Office for finalization.

10. FLT Committee at the Head Office

1. The Election Commission shall designate/appoint a FLT Committee, as and when required, at the Head Office for overall conduct of the FLT;

2. The FLT committee shall be responsible for:

   a. Developing question papers in a standardized format, in accordance with the established framework and guidelines;

   b. Preparing model answers for each question;

   c. Designing marking criteria, score sheets and formats for tabulation of marks for both FCA and FCE;

   d. Distribute all relevant materials required for the FLT to respective *Dzongkhags* well in advance of the scheduled test dates using appropriate means; and

   e. Developing standard operating procedures for the conduct of FCA and FCE.

11. FLT Committee at the Dzongkhag

a. The *Dzongdag* shall designate/appoint a *Dzongkhag* FLT Committee, invariably including the DzEO, as and when required for administering the FLT;

b. The *Dzongkhag* Administration shall provide necessary support for logistics, including space for smooth conduct of the FLT;

c. The *Dzongkhag* FLT Committee shall strictly follow the SOP provided and:

   i. Be responsible for proper conduct of the FCA and FCE; and

   ii. Be accountable for the FCE quality.

12. Evaluation and Declaration of results

a. The Commission shall appoint the evaluators who shall be responsible for marking the answer scripts and tabulating the scores;

b. The Department responsible for the conduct of elections shall consolidate the results based on a combination of the scores obtained in the FCA and FCE components;

c. A candidate shall be declared successful upon achieving a minimum overall score of 50 per cent, with not less than 40 per cent in each test component;

d. The Department shall prepare and arrange for the distribution of the FLT certificates within five working days upon endorsement by the Commission; and

e. The results shall also be declared on the ECB's website and through any other means deemed appropriate by the Commission.

13. FLT Certificate

1. Each FLT certificate shall bear a unique identification number and remain valid for a period of five years from the date of issuance, unless otherwise notified to the public by the Commission;

2. The certificates shall indicate the competency level for which the candidate is certified; and

3. The certificate shall be valid for contesting Local Government elections and any bye-elections within its validity period.

14. FLT Database

1. The ECB shall maintain a comprehensive database of all individuals who have appeared for the FLT, including their test results; and

2. The database shall also be used for the reissuance of certificates upon application by an individual with valid justification.

15. Penal Provision

1. Any misconduct or violation of these Guidelines shall be dealt with in accordance with the Electoral Laws and the Penal Code of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Done under the seal of the Election Commission of Bhutan on the 13th Day of the 3rd Month of the Fire Male Horse Year, corresponding to 29 April 2026.

Election Commissioner **Election Commissioner**

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan