

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

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No. HE-TET-MISC-0005-2026: 19708 /HE, Dated: 15 /04/2026

From

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

To

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

The Principals (All Government/ Non-Government Autonomous Colleges coming under Higher Education Department)

Sub: Implementation of Revised Guidelines for Innovation and Start-up Competition: 2026 - Regarding

Madam/Sir,

In inviting a reference to the subject cited above, I am directed to inform you that the Higher Education Department, Government of Odisha has already placed the required funds to the Higher Education Institutions for the Innovation and Start-up Competition- 2026. The revised guidelines are enclosed herewith for your kind reference.

In this regard, all the Universities and Colleges are requested to:

- Organize and conduct the Innovation and Start-up Competition strictly as per the prescribed framework and timeline mentioned in the guidelines.
- Ensure maximum participation of students by encouraging them to showcase their creativity, critical thinking and innovative, out-of-the-box ideas.
- Promote a culture where students develop solutions addressing real-life problems, ease of living, and viable start-up ideas.
- Ensure transparency, fairness and integrity throughout the competition process.

You are, therefore, requested to take necessary steps for the timely and effective implementation of the programme in accordance with the revised guidelines.

Encl.: As above

Yours faithfully,


Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 19709 HE., Dated: 15 /04/2026

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. 19710 HE., Dated: 15 /04/2026

Copy forwarded to the Regional Director of Education (Bhubaneswar/ Berhampur/ Balasore/ Sambalpur/ Jeypore) for kind information.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 19711 HE., Dated: 15 /04/2026

Copy forwarded to the P.S. to all the Vice Chancellors of state Public Universities for kind information of Vice-Chancellors.

Joint Secretary to Government

Memo No. 19712 HE., Dated: 15 /04/2026

Copy forwarded to Member Secretary, OSHEC for kind information and necessary action.

Joint Secretary to Government

**Guidelines for
Innovation and Start-Up Competition
in Higher Education Institutions**



**Higher Education Department,
Government of Odisha**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Higher Education Department, Government of Odisha, envisions fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among its students by organizing a multi-level Innovation and Start-Up Competition. This initiative will encourage students across colleges and universities to propose creative solutions to local challenges, develop life-easing innovations, or conceptualize viable start-ups and business ideas.

The competition will create a pipeline of innovative thinkers and support them through structured guidance, financial assistance, and training. For these purposes, Higher Education Department is launching a groundbreaking initiative to revolutionize the educational landscape and foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

2. OBJECTIVE

The programme seeks to address local challenges, simplify living and business processes by promoting:

1. Start-up ventures
2. Developing entrepreneurial skills
3. Empowering students with resources and financial support to achieve regional and sectoral development.

3. SCOPE

The competition is open to all students enrolled in higher education institutions across Odisha, including colleges, universities, and other affiliated institutions. Participation is compulsory for all institutions and students.

4. THEMES

Participants may submit ideas under the following categories:

1. **Solutions to Local Problems:** Proposals that address specific issues faced by the local community.
2. **Ease of Living / Ease of Doing Business:** Innovations that simplify daily activities or business operations.
3. **Start-Up and Business Ideas:** Concepts with potential for commercial viability.

5. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

The competition will be conducted at three levels:

- Institution Level
- University Level
- State Level



5.1 Institution-Level Competition

- **Participants:** All students of the institution (all Govt and aided colleges and affiliating Universities) shall mandatorily be participating in the competition. No one should be given exemption from participation.
- **Organizing Body:** Institutions are responsible for conducting this round under the supervision of the principals of the colleges concerned / Chairpersons of PG Council of Universities.
- **Evaluation:** By a three-member panel formed by the institution (faculty members, local entrepreneurs, and alumni).

Submission Guidelines

Students must submit a detailed proposal including:

1. Title and category of the idea
2. Problem statement and proposed solution
3. Feasibility, scalability, and impact of the idea
4. Implementation plan
5. Proposals must not exceed **2000 words**
6. A **synopsis within 500 words**

A self-declaration by the participants that the proposal submitted is original must be countersigned by the teacher/mentor guiding the student.

- **Selection Process:** Evaluation based on creativity, feasibility, and impact potential.
- **Selection:** Top **3 proposals** will be forwarded to the respective university.

5.2 University-Level Competition

- **Participants:** Top **3 proposals** from each affiliated institution from the affiliating university including top 3 participants of the university. (In case of unitary university, all students of the unitary university shall participate)

Organizing Body: Universities under the supervision of Registrar / Chairperson PG Council in coordination with the Higher Education Department.

- **Evaluation Panel:** Senior faculty members, entrepreneurs, and domain experts.
- **Selection Process:** A panel of 3 experts (including 1 external member) will evaluate proposals.
- **Selection:** Top **7 proposals** will be selected for financial assistance and prototype development.



5.3 State-Level Competition

- **Participants:** Selected proposals recommended by universities.
- **Organizing Body:** Odisha State Higher Education Council (OSHEC), Higher Education Department.
- **Evaluation Panel:** Experts from academia, industry, and government.
- **Selection:** Top **10 proposals** will be selected for state-level support.

The state-level competition will be monitored and coordinated by **OSHEC**, which will finalize the top proposals and facilitate them in a state-level function.

6. SUPPORT AND INCENTIVES

6.1 State-Level (Top 10 Proposals)

- Financial assistance for prototype development (up to **₹5 lakh each**), to be paid in instalments based on progress.
- Skilling and entrepreneurship training
- Mentorship by industry leaders
- Access to co-working spaces and labs
- Logistical support for scaling and implementation
- Priority access to the facility of the University Incubation centre following due processes.

6.2 University-Level (Top 7 Proposals)

- Financial assistance of **₹1,00,000** per selected proposal for prototype development, to be paid in instalments based on progress.
- Training workshops on ideation and business planning.
- Mentorship from industry experts and alumni networks.

Disbursement Mechanism for Prototype Development Grant

To ensure proper utilization of funds, the ₹1,00,000 assistance shall be released in instalments:

Sl. No.	Instalment	Amount	Conditions for Release
1	First Instalment	₹40,000 (40%)	Released after selection of the project at the University Level to initiate prototype development and procurement of basic materials.
2	Second Instalment	₹40,000 (40%)	Released after submission of a progress report confirming substantial progress in prototype development and verification by the University Evaluation Committee.
3	Final Instalment	₹20,000 (20%)	Released after completion of the prototype and final verification by the University Evaluation Committee.

Funds shall be transferred **only through online transfer (NEFT/RTGS/DBT)** to the student/team account.

6.3 Institution-Level (All Participants)

- Certificates of participation for all participants.
- Recommendation of top proposals to university level.
- Access to training and skilling resources.

6.4 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Utilisation of ₹5,00,000 (State-Level Winners)

This SOP is issued to ensure transparent, accountable, and performance-based utilisation of financial assistance (₹5.00 lakh per team) awarded to the Top 10 State-Level winners. It aims to facilitate conversion of innovative ideas into products, or start-ups while ensuring measurable academic, social, and economic impact.

Total Assistance and Disbursement Period

- Total Amount per Team: ₹5,00,000
- Disbursement Period: 12 months
- Mode: Instalment-based and performance-linked

Bank Account Norms: Funds shall be released only through a Joint Bank Account held by:

- Student Team Lead (Mentee)
- Faculty Mentor

Mandatory requirements before first instalment:

- Joint account details
- Aadhaar & PAN of both account holders
- Cancelled cheque
-

Undertaking on proper utilisation of funds Instalment-wise Disbursement Structure:

Instalments	Amount	Purpose	Conditions
1st (Inception Grant)	₹1,00,000 (20%)	Within 30 days for Planning, design, early development	MoU signing + Project execution plan
2nd (Development Stage)	₹1,25,000 (25%)	On Product development within 3 months	QPR-1 + Review + Progress evidence
3rd (Validation Stage)	₹1,25,000 (25%)	Pilot testing & validation within 6 months	QPR-2 + Functional prototype + Field testing
4th (Scaling Stage)	₹1,50,000 (30%)	Make it market ready within 1 year/ 12 months	Final report + Proof of impact/start-up progress

*QPR: Quality Progress Report

Monitoring and Review Mechanism

Component	Details
Quarterly Review Committee (QRC)	A committee shall be constituted at the University level comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of OSHEC

Component	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain Expert / Entrepreneur • University Coordinator
Review Parameters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical progress of the project • Financial utilisation of funds • Achievement of predefined milestones • Feedback from Faculty Mentor
Note	Release of each instalment shall be strictly performance-based and subject to satisfactory review by the Committee

Mandatory Outcome Obligations

All funded teams must:

- Complete product development
- Participate in subsequent Innovation Competitions
- Showcase:
 - Product outcome
 - Business progress
 - Revenue / impact / employment (if any)

*These will be documented as **state-level success stories**.*

Utilisation Guidelines:

Category	Permissible Activities
Funds may be used for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product development and procurement of materials • Purchase of equipment, tools, and software • Testing, validation, and certification expenses • Business registration and initial market entry activities • Field trials and pilot implementation

Funds shall NOT be used for:

Category	Non-Permissible Activities
Funds shall NOT be used for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal expenses • Non-project related activities • Any unapproved or unrelated expenditures

Refund and Penalty Provisions

Full or partial refund shall be applicable in case of:

- Failure to develop product
- Non-submission of progress reports
- Non-participation in review process
- Misutilisation or false reporting

*Refund must be made within **60 days**, failing which legal action may be initiated.*

Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Student Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project execution and timely reporting• Proper utilisation of funds as per approved plan
Faculty Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide technical and business guidance• Joint monitoring of fund utilisation• Certification of progress reports
Universities / HEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct quarterly monitoring and review• Facilitate infrastructure, incubation, and institutional support
Higher Education Department / OSHEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval and release of funds• State-level evaluation, monitoring, and audit

Audit and Transparency

- All expenditures must be supported by bills/vouchers
- Subject to audit (including third-party audit)
- Non-compliance may lead to disqualification/blacklisting

7. TIMELINE

Sl. No.	Level of Competition	Duration
1	Institution-Level Competition	1 Month + 2 Weeks
2	University-Level Competition	1 Month + 2 Weeks
3	State-Level Competition	1 Month

Detailed timeline is provided in **Annexure-I** and all institutions must adhere to the timeline.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Institutions

1. Conduct awareness campaigns about the competition.
2. Provide necessary resources for proposal preparation.
3. Form evaluation panels.
4. Submit top **3 proposals** to the university.

8.2 Universities

1. Notify one **Single Point Contact Officer and Coordinator**.
2. Organize university-level competitions.
3. Form evaluation panels.
4. Select **Top 7 proposals** for prototype development.
5. Submit proposals to Higher Education Department / OSHEC.

8.3 OSHEC / Higher Education Department

1. Organize and oversee the state-level competition.
2. Provide financial and logistical support.
3. Facilitate mentorship and incubation.

9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Sl. No.	Evaluation Criteria	Description	Weightage
1	Originality	Novelty and creativity of the idea	30%
2	Feasibility	Practicality of implementation	20%
3	Impact	Potential to address local challenges or create social/economic value	25%
4	Scalability	Scope for expansion and long-term sustainability	15%
5	Presentation	Clarity and persuasiveness of the proposal	10%

10. FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

Sl. No.	Level	Budget Allocation
1	Institution Level	₹15,000 per institution
2	University Level	₹9,00,000 per university

Break-up of University Level Allocation

Component	Amount
Prototype Development Support (7 winners × ₹1,00,000)	₹7,00,000
Conduct of University Level Competition and event management	₹2,00,000
Total	₹9,00,000

(N.B: Out of the ₹2,00,000 allotted to each University for conducting the University-Level Innovation and Start-up Competition, the University may utilize the funds for organizing both intra-university and inter-institutional competitions, including an internal screening to select the top three proposals from the University to participate along with the top three proposals nominated by each affiliated college. Only the top seven proposals selected at the University-Level Competition shall be eligible for financial assistance of ₹1,00,000 each for prototype development, as per the prescribed disbursement mechanism.)

State Level (OSHEC):

- ₹45,00,000 - Event management and competition organization
- ₹50,00,000 - Prototype development (10 proposals × ₹5,00,000)

Access to state-funded incubation centres, labs, and innovation hubs will also be provided.

11. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Enhanced culture of innovation among students.
2. Real-world problem solving through student ideas.
3. Identification of talent for Odisha's start-up ecosystem.
4. Creation of a network of innovators and mentors.
5. Development of student-led start-ups.

12. CONCLUSION

The Innovation and Start-Up Competition is a transformative initiative to empower Odisha's students, drive regional development, and position the state as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Annexure-I

Timeline for the Innovation and Start-up Competition – 2026

Sl. No.	Activity	Timeline
1	Notification for Innovation and Start-up Competition at institutional level and sensitization of students for participation	20 th – 30 th June 2026
2	Competition start date at institutional level	1 st July 2026
3	Submission of detailed proposals (maximum 2000 words) with a synopsis of 500 words by students to the Principals / Chairperson PG Council	31 st July 2026
4	Refinement and monitoring of proposals by mentors at college level	August 2026
5	Declaration of results (best 3 proposals) at institutional level with provision of prizes by Principal / Chairperson, PG Council and notification of Single Point Contact Officer and Coordinator at University level	15 th August 2026

6	Submission of synopsis along with detailed contact address of selected candidates from institutions to the University	24 th August 2026
7	Screening / Shortlisting / Selection of proposals at university level through physical interaction with participants	25 th September 2026
8	Fine-tuning of the selected proposals at university level in consultation with mentors	By 16 th October 2026
9	Submission of proposals from Universities to OSHEC	31 st October 2026
10	Screening and shortlisting of proposals by OSHEC	2 nd November – 13 th November 2026
11	Felicitation of winners at State Level Competition	16 th November to 15 th December 2026

Annexure-II

Budget Provision and Expenditure (2026)

Sl. No.	Level	Budget Provision	Purpose
1	Institution Level	₹15,000 per institution	To organize the institutional-level competition, prize distribution, and provide minimum financial support for selected candidates to participate in the University-Level Competition.
2	University Level	₹9,00,000 per university	₹7,00,000 for prototype development support to 7 selected proposals (₹1,00,000 each) and ₹2,00,000 for organizing the University-Level Competition including evaluation, logistics, and event management
3	State Level (OSHEC)	₹95,00,000	₹45,00,000 for organizing the State-Level Competition and event management, and ₹50,00,000 for prototype development support to 10 selected proposals (₹5,00,000 each).

