



# **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Good equality, diversity and inclusion practices make sure that the University services provided to internal and external stakeholders are transparent, fair and accessible. It is necessary to ensure that people are treated as equals, they get the dignity and respect that they deserve and that their differences are celebrated. Main belowmentioned protected characteristics are included in this policy are (hereinafter all unfair behaviors due to these characteristics are defined as “unfair behaviors” in this policy):

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Gender reassignment
4. Sexual orientation
5. Religion and belief
6. Disability
7. Race
8. Pregnancy or maternity
9. Financial disadvantages
10. Marriage or civil partnership
11. Freedom to choose areas of research and to speak and teach publicly about the area of their research

### **1.2. Current situation**

The current situation is as follows:

- University promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion policy among academic, administrative staff and students.
- University raises awareness for equal rights and encourages individuals to show off for the injustice.
- University conducts regular workshops, training and informative sessions for employees and students.
- University set merit-based recruitment procedure for academic, administrative, and technical staff.

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- University created a mechanism for reporting any unfair actions.
- All students can get in touch with the Rector directly via website and address their appeals and grievances according to any kind of unfair behaviors.
- All students can appeal and state grievances in person in a written form to the respective Unit and demand to act for any kind of unfair behaviors.
- The Ethic Code for Academicians and Employees was accepted by the Scientific Council and according to the respective provision(s), any kind unfair behavior is taken as a violation of the provisions of the abovementioned Code. In this case, it is needed to put sanctions or take preventive actions with the decision of The Disciplinary Committee.
- The Disciplinary Committee performs autonomously according to its statute, and audits the violations of the abovementioned Code provisions, including any kind of unfair behavior, and makes binding decisions.
- Holds training courses, seminars, and other informative sessions for students regarding their rights and responsibilities.
- During examination period, The Appeal Commission is formed, and students can address The Appeal Commission in any case of grievances.
- Conduct survey on monthly basis among students and according to the results preventive actions are taken regarding concerning issues and launch a prompt and in-depth examination into the claims following a report of unfair behavior. Then, take immediate measures and report the issues to responsible bodies.
- Community members who violate this policy may face sanctions, including expulsion of students or termination of workers. Employees who believe they are the victims of unfair behavior should report it right away.
- During policy making process and other related activities, different internal and external stakeholders are included within the process.
- There is the Disciplinary Committee which performs and investigates any violation cases on equality, diversity and inclusion and monitors the implementation of the policy.
- Providing academic and administrative staff and students with trainings are planned on Quality Assurance Center's action plan.

### **1.3. Legal base**

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The legal base of **the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (hereinafter – EDI)** is based on the respective provisions of the respective legislations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Decrees and (or) the orders of the President and the Cabinet of Ministries of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Labor Code and the Law on Education and other related legal documents.

## **SECTION 2: MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

### **2.1. Mission of the policy**

**The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (hereinafter - EDI)**, aims to maintain equal rights for representatives from various races, genders, religions, ages, ethnical diversities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and people with disabilities. The policy ensures that individuals are treated fairly and even within the University community according to a set of principles, guidelines, and other state legislative acts. The mission of the Policy is to promote even chances, eliminate discrimination, and reform biases regardless of background. Moreover, EDI policy aims to foster inclusivity and create an equitable community that gives a sense of respect and belonging. Additionally, this policy sets the targets for admission and graduation/completion of students who fall into the bottom 20% of household income group. Moreover, this policy support academic freedom (freedom to choose areas of research and to speak and teach publicly about the area of their research).

### **2.2. Objectives of the policy**

- To make sure that all there are equal rights for representatives from various races, genders, religions, ages, ethnical diversities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and people with disabilities.
- To make sure that individuals are treated fairly and even within the University community according to a set of principles, guidelines, and other state legislative acts.
- To promote even chances, eliminate discrimination, and reform biases regardless of background.
- To foster inclusivity and create an equitable community that gives a sense of respect and belonging.

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- To refer point and framework, also increase consciousness and awareness on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- To ensure participation from different academic and administrative roles but also includes student representatives and voices from various committees and organizations.
- Set targets for admission and graduation/completion of students who fall into the bottom 20% of household income group.
- Support academic freedom (freedom to choose areas of research and to speak and teach publicly about the area of their research).

### 2.3. Scope of the policy:

The Policy encompasses all the individuals within the University community, including not only the employees and students but third parties as well. All kinds of members are responsible for maintaining the policy by the disciplinary rules.

## SECTION 3. PLANNED ACTIVITIES, MONITORING, AND REPORTING

### 3.1. Planned activities

Planned actions in for the short-term and long-term period is as follows:

#### SHORT-TERM PERIOD ACTIONS (within 3 years)

**Action 1:** To hold a series of workshops, trainings, and seminars to increase awareness

**Action 2:** To outline a mechanism of the investigation of the violence cases

**Action 3:** To establish transparent and classified reporting mechanisms

**Action 4:** To create an anonymous feedback mechanism for reporting

**Action 5:** To offer support centers for victims (counseling, legal advice, etc.)

**Action 6:** To draw up EDI metrics for assessment of the collected data

**Action 7:** To collaborate with different organizations and refer to their practices

#### LONG-TERM PERIOD ACTIONS (within 10 years)

**Action 8:** To establish several mentoring and coaching programs for creating professional growth

**Action 9:** To conduct regular audits to evaluate the effectiveness of the EDI policy

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**Action 10:** To collaborate with community organizations and engage them actively in the process

**Action 11:** To hold surveys, open meetings, and hotline calls to provide feedback

**Action 12:** To establish awards and recognition programs to bestow individuals for a significant contribution

**Action 13:** To update the policy and regulations for effective results

**Action 14:** To promote equal chances for all individuals

**Action 15:** Involvement of different internal and external stakeholders to the process

### **3.2. Execution, Monitoring and Reporting**

Execution, Monitoring and Reporting actions will be taken as the following:

- The Disciplinary Committee is performing according to its statute in line with local legislation.
- An Appeal Commission performs daily and investigates any kind of appeals and grievances from students regarding violations of the provisions of internal agreed Codes regarding unfair behaviors.
- During the final assessment period in each semester, An Appeal Commission is established by the order of the Rector and investigates any kind of appeals of students regarding unfair behavior.
- The above-mentioned Commissions prepare reports regarding violations and misbehaviors, analyze them, put sanctions, and take preventive actions in the probability of its occurrence in the future.
- The responsible bodies create a group of people to investigate the reported violence.
- To determine monitoring methodology and criteria regarding equality, diversity and inclusion and then conduct monitoring on semi-annual and annual basis by Quality Assurance Center.
- To prepare semi-annual and annual monitoring report regarding equality, diversity, and inclusion.

## **SECTION 4: RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

### **4.1. Resource Allocation**

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For achieving the goal of this policy, the below-mentioned resources will be used by respective units, comities, and working groups:

- Experienced and qualified human resources.
- Adequate financial resources.
- Sufficient infrastructure.
- Legal support.
- Awareness campaigns.

### History and Updates

Date	Updates	Page	Purpose
20/12/2022	Issue date Revision date Revision number	All pages. Footer	To show the history and updates
25/09/2023	Page number	All pages. Header	To define the information spot
25/09/2023	Added one point to Objectives	5	To ensure participation
25/09/2023	History and Updates table	8	To illustrate changes and corrections

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