



Academic Freedom Policy

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INTRODUCTION

Academic freedom, as endorsed by BSU, encompasses the autonomy of a university to establish its intellectual priorities without unwarranted external interference. Moreover, it extends to the freedom of all stakeholders, including students, professors, teachers, deans, faculty, and subject matter experts, to foster extensive discussions on intellectual, academic, and moral matters. This freedom is exercised through teaching, studying, writing, speaking, and engaging in knowledge pursuit, inquiry, and research, all without undue interference.

Baku State University explicitly supports the autonomy of teachers to explore any subject that piques their intellectual curiosity. In doing so, instructors are entitled to critique or advocate for changes in social, academic, and institutional norms and established wisdom. They have the freedom to present their findings to students, colleagues, and the public, publish their data and conclusions without control or censorship, and employ teaching methods they consider professionally appropriate.

Furthermore, BSU upholds the rights of students to delve into subjects that captivate their interest, form their own conclusions, and express their individual opinions. This commitment to academic freedom ensures an environment where intellectual exploration and diversity thrive, fostering a culture of open dialogue and the free exchange of ideas within the university community.

OBJECTIVE

Academic freedom is integral to the university's mission, essential for the advancement of knowledge, and the free exchange of ideas among faculty, students, and librarians. Baku State University is dedicated to fostering an environment that encourages exploration and expression without fear of reprisal, contributing to the common good through the pursuit of truth and knowledge.

SCOPE

Institutions of higher education must commit to the pursuit of truth, knowledge transmission, and the creation of reliable scholarly works. Academic freedom is essential for these goals and includes the right of the university to determine its educational mission without external interference. This policy ensures protection for those engaged in academic activities such as teaching and research.

RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

Students have the right to academic freedom, accompanied by the responsibility to engage in intellectual diversity. Faculty members should create an environment where students feel assured that expressing differing opinions will not result in penalties.

RIGHTS OF TEACHERS IN CLASSROOM

Teachers have the right to teach their curriculum without undue interference. While the freedom to teach allows for the incorporation of faculty beliefs, it is important to distinguish between knowledge and belief. Controversial matters or irrelevant topics should not be introduced unless they are directly related to the course content.

FACULTY AS CITIZENS

As citizens, faculty members have the right to express their views without institutional censorship. However, faculty members must recognize their special obligations, including accuracy, appropriate restraint, and respect for others' opinions. It is crucial to indicate that personal views do not represent the institution.

RIGHT TO RESEARCH

Academic freedom extends to research and creative work. Researchers have the liberty to choose methodologies, draw conclusions, and publish findings while upholding responsibility. Freedom to engage in research must be accompanied by a commitment to accuracy and integrity.

INTELLECTUAL DEBATE

Academic freedom allows both teachers and students to engage in intellectual debate without fear of censorship or retaliation.

PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IMPAIRMENT

Cases involving alleged impairment of academic freedom should be referred to the Faculty Dean and/or Head of the Department, following established procedures for investigation and resolution.

COMPLAINT PROCESS FOR VICTIMIZED STUDENTS

Students who believe they have been penalized due to expressed opinions or beliefs can file a formal written complaint. The complaint will be investigated, and, if necessary, disciplinary action will be taken. Unsatisfied students have the right to appeal to the Rector directly by filling out the form via the webpage or throwing notes into the apply box located opposite the Rector's office. Besides them, there are boxes on other floors where you can place your complaint anonymously.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Policy at Baku State University, the following elements could be considered for addition or further elaboration:

1. Promotion of Inclusivity and Diversity:

- Explicitly state the commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that embraces diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences.
- Encourage the exploration of a variety of cultural, social, and academic viewpoints to enrich the intellectual discourse.

2. Professional Development for Faculty:

- Outline measures and programs that support the continuous professional development of faculty members to enhance their teaching methods, research skills, and awareness of emerging academic trends.

3. Integration of Technology:

- Acknowledge the role of technology in academic freedom and encourage the responsible use of digital tools and platforms for research, teaching, and communication.

4. Protection of Sensitive Research:

- Specify mechanisms in place to protect faculty and students engaged in sensitive research, ensuring their safety and the integrity of their work.

5. Collaborative Research Opportunities:

- Highlight the encouragement of collaborative research initiatives within and outside the university, fostering interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge creation.

6. Recognition of Academic Citizenship:

- Clarify the concept of academic citizenship and emphasize the responsibilities of faculty members to actively contribute to the academic community through service, mentorship, and engagement.

7. Community Engagement:

- Promote the involvement of faculty and students in community-based projects, encouraging the application of academic knowledge to address societal challenges.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Establish a system for periodic review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Academic Freedom Policy to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with the university's goals.

9. Communication Strategy:

- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to inform all members of the university community about the principles, rights, and procedures outlined in the Academic Freedom Policy.

10. Global Perspectives:

- Emphasize the university's commitment to fostering a global perspective by encouraging international collaborations, exchanges, and the inclusion of diverse global viewpoints in the academic discourse.

11. Environmental Responsibility:

- Acknowledge the importance of environmental responsibility in academic activities, promoting research and teaching that contribute to sustainability and environmental awareness.

12. Accessibility and Accommodation:

- Address the university's commitment to providing reasonable accommodations for students and faculty with disabilities to ensure that academic freedom is accessible to all.

By incorporating these elements, the Academic Freedom Policy can further reinforce the commitment of Baku State University to creating a vibrant, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating academic environment.