

Azerbaijan Technological University (ATU) Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

1. Introduction

Azerbaijan Technological University (ATU) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all its activities. The university has a zero-tolerance policy toward bribery and corruption. ATU recognizes that bribery and corruption can undermine trust, distort decision-making processes, and harm the reputation of the institution.

This policy is designed to ensure compliance with national and international anti-corruption laws, such as the **Azerbaijan Anti-Corruption Law**, and to contribute to the global efforts of promoting ethical practices as aligned with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly **SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**, which promotes accountable, transparent institutions and the reduction of corruption and bribery in all forms.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish clear rules for preventing bribery and corruption in all university-related activities.
- Promote transparency, accountability, and integrity within ATU.
- Ensure compliance with relevant laws and international anti-corruption standards.
- Protect ATU's reputation and safeguard the trust of students, staff, and external partners.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the ATU community, including:

- **Students** (undergraduate, postgraduate, exchange students, etc.).
- **Academic and administrative staff**.
- **Third-party contractors**, suppliers, and business partners.
- **Visitors and collaborators** involved in university projects.

The policy covers all activities conducted on behalf of ATU, whether on-campus, off-campus, or international, including but not limited to teaching, research, procurement, admissions, and partnerships with external entities.

4. Definition of Bribery and Corruption

4.1 Bribery

Bribery refers to offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting anything of value to influence the actions of an individual in a position of trust. It involves the exchange of favors, gifts, payments, or services that are intended to improperly affect decisions or outcomes. Examples of bribery include:

- Offering money to a faculty member to influence grading.
- Accepting a gift from a contractor in return for awarding a contract.
- Offering favours to secure admissions or employment.

4.2 Corruption

Corruption refers to dishonest or unethical behaviour by individuals in positions of authority. It involves abuse of power for personal gain, including practices like embezzlement, fraud, favouritism, nepotism, and kickbacks. Corruption can occur in various forms, including financial misconduct or manipulating decision-making processes for personal or institutional benefit.

5. Prohibited Conduct

The following actions are strictly prohibited by ATU's Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy:

- **Offering or accepting bribes:** No one at ATU, whether staff, faculty, or students, may offer or accept any form of bribe.
- **Facilitation payments:** Even small payments made to expedite or secure routine services are prohibited.
- **Gifts and hospitality:** ATU employees and students must not accept or offer any gifts, entertainment, or hospitality that could be construed as an attempt to influence decision-making or secure an undue advantage. Minor and customary gifts (within approved limits) may be acceptable in certain cultural contexts, but they must be reported.
- **Favouritism and nepotism:** Hiring or granting academic privileges to relatives or close associates based on personal relationships rather than merit is strictly prohibited.

6. Responsibilities

All members of the ATU community have a responsibility to prevent and report bribery and corruption. Specific responsibilities include:

6.1 Leadership Responsibilities

- The **Rector and Senior Management** are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively across the university. They are required to lead by example and ensure a culture of ethical behaviour and integrity.

6.2 Department Heads and Supervisors

- All **department heads** must ensure that their teams understand and comply with this policy. They are also responsible for identifying risks related to bribery and corruption in their operations and taking preventive action.

6.3 Faculty, Staff, and Students

- Every individual at ATU is responsible for their own actions. Faculty, staff, and students are expected to adhere to the policy and report any instances of suspected bribery or corruption through the established reporting channels.

7. Reporting Mechanisms

ATU encourages an open and transparent environment where individuals feel comfortable reporting concerns about bribery or corruption. The university provides several channels for reporting:

7.1 Anonymous Reporting

- ATU has set up an anonymous reporting system through which anyone can report suspected bribery or corruption without fear of retaliation. Reports can be submitted online or via a confidential hotline managed by the **Ethical Commission**.

7.2 Formal Reporting

- Individuals can file formal complaints directly with the **Rector's Office, Vice-rector for Social Issues and Public Relations or Ethical Commission**. Reports should include detailed information about the incident, including dates, individuals involved, and any supporting evidence.

7.3 Protection from Retaliation

- ATU strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who report bribery or corruption in good faith. Retaliation, intimidation, or discrimination against complainants will be treated as a serious violation of this policy.

8. Investigation and Disciplinary Actions

8.1 Investigation Process

- Upon receiving a report, the university will conduct a thorough and confidential investigation. This will involve interviewing relevant parties, reviewing evidence, and, where necessary, engaging external experts. The investigation will be conducted by the **Ethical Commission**.

8.2 Disciplinary Actions

- Individuals found to have engaged in bribery or corruption will face disciplinary actions that may include:
 - **For students:** Suspension, expulsion, or revocation of academic honors.
 - **For faculty and staff:** Suspension, termination of employment, or legal action.
 - **For third parties:** Termination of contracts, financial penalties, and reporting to the relevant legal authorities.

ATU reserves the right to take legal action against any individuals or entities involved in bribery or corruption. The university may also report such cases to law enforcement agencies, where appropriate.

9. Risk Assessment and Due Diligence

ATU conducts regular risk assessments to identify potential risks of bribery and corruption in its operations. This includes reviewing:

- Procurement and contracting processes.
- Admissions and grading procedures.
- International partnerships and collaborations.

The university also ensures that thorough due diligence is conducted when engaging with third parties, including suppliers, contractors, and external collaborators. Contracts with third parties must include anti-bribery and anti-corruption clauses, ensuring that all partners comply with the university's ethical standards.

10. Training and Awareness

To foster a culture of integrity, ATU provides regular **anti-bribery and anti-corruption training** for all members of the university community, including:

- **New staff and students:** All new employees and students are required to undergo orientation that includes anti-bribery and corruption training.
- **Ongoing training:** Regular workshops and seminars will be held to update the university community on the latest developments in anti-corruption laws and best practices.

This training ensures that everyone understands their responsibilities under this policy and is aware of the procedures for reporting and responding to potential violations.

11. Monitoring and Review

ATU is committed to continuous improvement of its anti-bribery and anti-corruption efforts. The **Ethical Commission** will monitor the implementation of this policy and review it regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

Regular audits will be conducted to evaluate compliance with this policy, and the results will be reported to the university's senior management.

12. Conclusion

Azerbaijan Technological University reaffirms its commitment to maintaining a corruption-free and transparent academic environment. Through this policy, ATU aims to promote the values of integrity, fairness, and accountability in line with **SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**. The university expects all members of its community to act ethically and in compliance with the law, thereby contributing to a fairer, more transparent society.