

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy of Azerbaijan Technological University (ATU)

1. Introduction

Azerbaijan Technological University (ATU) is committed to creating an academic and professional environment that values equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This policy reflects our dedication to fostering a welcoming environment where all students, staff, and partners can thrive regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, or socioeconomic background.

We believe that a diverse community enhances creativity and innovation, and we are dedicated to ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the university's educational, research, and employment activities.

2. Policy Objectives

The objectives of the EDI policy are as follows:

- **Promote Equality:** Eliminate all forms of discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all students and staff.
- **Enhance Diversity:** Foster a diverse and representative university community, respecting all forms of difference and variety in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.
- **Ensure Inclusion:** Create an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and supported to achieve their full potential.

These objectives are aligned with both national regulations and global standards, particularly the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

3. Commitment to Equality

ATU is committed to preventing and eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization. The university guarantees:

- **Equal Access:** Ensuring that all students and staff have equal access to educational and professional opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status.
- **Fair Treatment:** Guaranteeing that no individual is treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics.
- **Pay Scale Equity and Gender Pay Gap:** ATU is committed to ensuring pay scale equity across all roles. This includes a specific focus on the measurement and elimination of gender pay gaps. The university will regularly assess compensation structures to ensure fairness and take steps to address any disparities, guaranteeing that all staff are paid equitably regardless of gender.

- **Support for Vulnerable Groups:** Ensuring that students from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds receive the necessary support to participate fully in academic life.

Specific measures include:

- **Admission Practices:** ATU follows transparent, merit-based criteria for student admission and recruitment.
- **Hiring and Promotions:** We are committed to fair hiring practices, including inclusive job advertisements and recruitment panels, ensuring equal opportunity for all.

4. Promoting Diversity

We value the variety of perspectives and experiences that come from a diverse university community. ATU promotes diversity in the following ways:

- **Curriculum Design:** Ensuring that the curriculum incorporates diverse perspectives, historical contexts, and global issues to enhance learning.
- **Cultural Exchange Programs:** Encouraging participation in international exchange programs such as Erasmus+, to increase exposure to global cultures and ideas.
- **Inclusive Events:** Organizing multicultural events, seminars, and workshops that celebrate diversity and raise awareness of the contributions of different cultural and social groups.

The university will also establish partnerships with local and international organizations to share best practices on promoting diversity in higher education and research.

5. Ensuring Inclusion

At ATU, inclusion means ensuring that everyone feels a sense of belonging. This commitment includes:

- **Physical and Digital Accessibility:** Ensuring that the campus is physically accessible to all students and staff, including those with disabilities. We also ensure that all digital content and platforms are accessible, adhering to global web accessibility standards.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Offering support services for mental health, providing resources to ensure that all students and staff feel supported emotionally and psychologically.
- **Accommodation for Special Needs:** Providing reasonable adjustments to accommodate the specific needs of students and staff, including flexible learning arrangements, alternative assessment methods, and accessible classrooms.

Inclusion at ATU means ensuring that everyone can participate in university life without barriers. This includes tailored support for individuals from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds.

6. Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

ATU has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated, and the university will take appropriate actions, including disciplinary measures, to prevent recurrence.

The policy covers:

- **Sexual Harassment:** Addressing any unwanted behavior of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating or hostile environment.
- **Racial Discrimination:** Prohibiting any actions or behavior that disadvantage individuals based on race, color, or ethnic origin.
- **Disability Discrimination:** Ensuring that individuals with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities and accommodations as required by law.

Any staff member, student, or stakeholder found engaging in discriminatory behavior will face appropriate consequences, including potential dismissal from the university.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Leadership and Management

The Rector's Office, along with the University Senate, is responsible for leading the implementation of the EDI policy. They are tasked with:

- Developing strategies and frameworks for monitoring and improving EDI at ATU.
- Reviewing and updating this policy on an annual basis.
- Engaging with external stakeholders and partners to promote EDI values beyond the university.

7.2 Staff

All staff members, whether academic or administrative, are expected to:

- Treat all colleagues and students with respect and uphold the values of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Participate in mandatory training programs on EDI.
- Actively support and implement inclusive practices within their departments and classrooms.

7.3 Students

All students are responsible for contributing to an inclusive and respectful campus environment by:

- Engaging in university activities that promote diversity and inclusion.
- Reporting any instances of discrimination, bullying, or harassment to the appropriate authorities.
- Participating in workshops, trainings, and awareness campaigns on EDI.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

ATU will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy through:

- **Surveys and Feedback:** Conducting annual surveys among students and staff to gather feedback on EDI initiatives.
- **Data Collection:** Tracking diversity statistics across student admissions, staff recruitment, promotions, and retention.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Publishing an annual report on EDI progress, detailing achievements and areas for improvement.

This data will be used to inform future policy revisions and ensure continuous improvement in EDI practices.

9. Partnerships and Collaboration

ATU is committed to working with national and international partners to enhance EDI efforts. This includes collaborating with:

- **Local NGOs:** Partnering with organizations that support marginalized communities to enhance outreach efforts.
- **International Universities:** Engaging in cross-cultural exchange programs that enhance diversity in education and research.
- **Government Bodies:** Complying with national laws on equality and non-discrimination and contributing to government-led initiatives on higher education diversity.

10. Conclusion

ATU's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion is a core element of our mission as a leading educational institution. We recognize that a diverse, inclusive, and equitable university enhances the educational experience for all and creates a dynamic environment for learning and innovation.

By working together, we will continue to uphold these values and create a university community where everyone is welcomed and valued.