

POLICY DOCUMENT

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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Document Information

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Purpose:

The main purpose of this policy is to ensure an inclusive, equitable, and respectful academic environment at Mingachevir State University, where all members of the university community—academic staff, researchers, and students—are treated with dignity and protected from all forms of discrimination. The university is committed to fostering a culture in which individuals can engage in teaching, learning, research, and other academic activities free from bias, prejudice, and unequal treatment.

Within this framework, fundamental principles such as equality, diversity, and non-discrimination are upheld, and institutional mechanisms are strengthened to prevent, identify, and address discriminatory practices. The policy promotes fairness, transparency, and accountability across all academic and administrative processes, ensuring that decisions are made based on merit and objective criteria.

The policy prioritizes equal opportunities, respect for human rights, and recognition of diversity as a core academic value. It encourages awareness, critical thinking, and the development of inclusive practices that support individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, disability, socio-economic background, or other personal characteristics.

MINGACHEVIR STATE UNIVERSITY

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Equality. Respect. Diversity. Empowerment.

“At Mingachevir State University, we are committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and equitable environment where all members of our community are valued and free from discrimination and harassment.”

- ZERO TOLERANCE**
No discrimination, harassment, or hate speech will be tolerated
- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**
Ensuring fairness in academics, employment, and campus activities
- REPORTING DISCRIMINATION**
Providing clear and confidential channels to report discrimination
- EDUCATION AND TRAINING**
Conducting workshops to raise awareness and promote diversity
- SUPPORT AND CONSEQUENCES**
Offering assistance to victims and enacting disciplinary measures


TOGETHER, WE STAND AGAINST DISCRIMINATION TO BUILD A CAMPUS EVERYONE RESPECTED AND EMPOWERED TO SUCCEED.

Mingachevir State University, as a higher education institution playing a significant role in the socio-economic and cultural development of society, is committed to creating an inclusive, safe, and respectful academic environment where equality, diversity, and human dignity are upheld as core values. The promotion of fairness and equal opportunities in education, teaching, and research reflects the university's strategic priorities and its commitment to sustainable intellectual development.

At MSU, the principle of non-discrimination is considered a fundamental requirement to ensure that all members of the academic community—academic staff, researchers, and students—can fully participate in academic and administrative life without unequal treatment or exclusion. This includes protection from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, language, religion, disability, socio-economic status, or any other personal characteristic.

The policy is grounded in both national and international legal and regulatory frameworks, including the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, relevant laws on education and science, the State Strategy for Higher Education (2022–2035), the Charter of Mingachevir State University, and internationally recognized human rights principles and equality standards.


This policy document establishes the ethical and legal foundations for preventing and addressing discrimination within the governance system of MSU, defines the rights and responsibilities of all members of the university community, and contributes to strengthening institutional integrity, promoting inclusiveness, and enhancing the university's reputation at both national and international levels.




Discrimination: Discrimination refers to any unfair or biased treatment of individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, language, religion, disability, socio-economic status, or other personal characteristics, which undermines equality and violates the principles of a fair academic environment.




Equality and Equal Opportunities: Equality and equal opportunities refer to the principle that all members of the university community have equal access to academic, professional, and administrative opportunities without unjust advantage or exclusion.



Harassment: Harassment includes any unwanted verbal, physical, psychological, or digital behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic or work environment and is considered a serious violation of university ethics and regulations.



Inclusiveness: Inclusiveness is the active promotion of a respectful and supportive academic environment where diversity is valued and all individuals feel accepted, safe, and able to fully participate in academic life.



Diversity: Diversity refers to the presence and recognition of differences among individuals within the university community, including but not limited to cultural, social, demographic, and personal characteristics, which are respected and valued as a source of strength and development.

Scope of Application

This Anti-Discrimination Policy applies to all members of the Mingachevir State University community without exception. It covers all individuals engaged in academic, administrative, research, and support activities within the university, including academic staff, researchers, administrative and technical personnel, students, doctoral candidates, and other affiliated persons.

The policy is applicable across all contexts related to university activities, including teaching and learning environments, research activities, administrative procedures, academic events, conferences, seminars, fieldwork, internships, and all forms of official communication conducted on campus or through digital/online platforms.

It also extends to interactions in external environments connected to the university, such as academic mobility programs, international cooperation activities, partnerships with other institutions, and participation in scientific or educational events where individuals represent Mingachevir State University.

Furthermore, the policy covers all forms of communication and behavior, including verbal, written, visual, and digital interactions, ensuring that discrimination is prevented and addressed regardless of where it occurs.

The university is committed to ensuring the consistent implementation of this policy across all structural units, faculties, departments, and administrative bodies, thereby fostering a safe, inclusive, and equitable academic environment for all members of the university community.

Core Principles

Equality and Non-Discrimination

The university ensures equal treatment of all members of the academic community without any direct or indirect discrimination, with decisions based solely on merit, competence, and objective criteria.

Respect for Human Dignity

Every individual has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and any behavior or practice that creates a degrading, offensive, or exclusionary environment is strictly prohibited.

Inclusiveness and Diversity

MSU promotes an inclusive environment where diversity is recognized as a core academic value and differences are respected as a source of enrichment.

Equal Opportunities

The university guarantees equal access to education, employment, and professional development opportunities without unfair advantage or disadvantage.

Zero Tolerance for Discrimination and Harassment

A strict zero-tolerance approach is applied to all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimization, with violations subject to disciplinary action.

Accountability and Responsibility

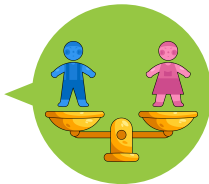
All members of the university community are responsible for upholding this policy and are accountable for actions related to discrimination or failure to prevent it.

Strategic Objectives

Strengthening an Inclusive Academic Environment: To create and sustain a university environment where all members feel safe, respected, and fully included regardless of their personal or social characteristics.



Ensuring Institutional Equality and Fairness: To integrate equality and non-discrimination principles into all academic, administrative, and governance processes, ensuring decisions are based on merit, transparency, and objectivity.



Preventing and Addressing Discrimination: To develop and implement effective mechanisms for identifying, preventing, and eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment, and bias within the university.



Promoting Awareness and Inclusive Institutional Culture: To increase awareness of equality, diversity, and human rights through continuous training, education, and capacity-building initiatives for students and staff.



Strengthening Accountability and Governance Mechanisms: To ensure clear institutional responsibility through transparent reporting systems, monitoring processes, and appropriate disciplinary procedures for addressing discrimination.



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	Indicator (KPI)	Baseline (2024)	Target (2027)	Timeline	Responsible Unit
Increase awareness on discrimination and equality	Percentage of staff trained on anti-discrimination and equality	40%	85%	2024–2027	Human Resources Department / Quality Assurance and Continuous Development Department
Ensure effective management of discrimination cases	Resolution rate of reported discrimination and complaint cases	75%	95%	2024–2027	Ethics and Disciplinary Committee
Improve accessibility of complaint mechanisms	Number of individuals using formal complaint channels	Low level	+60% increase	2024–2027	Rectorate / Quality Assurance and Continuous Development Department
Strengthen equal opportunities in academic and employment processes	Share of discrimination-related complaints in education and recruitment processes	12%	<3%	2024–2027	Human Resources Department
Enhance inclusive academic environment	Inclusiveness index in student and staff satisfaction surveys	62%	90%	2024–2027	Student Affairs Department

Implementation Mechanism

The implementation of the Anti-Discrimination Policy at Mingachevir State University is based on a structured, transparent, and accountable governance framework that ensures the effective application of all policy provisions across the institution. Overall responsibility lies with the University Rectorate, while coordination and monitoring are carried out by designated structural units such as the Human Resources Department, Ethics and Disciplinary Committee, Quality Assurance Office, and relevant academic and administrative bodies, each of which is responsible for integrating non-discrimination principles into their operational activities.

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are systematically embedded in all institutional processes, including recruitment, student admission, academic assessment, promotion, research activities, and administrative decision-making. All structural units are required to align their internal procedures with these principles, ensuring that fairness, transparency, and objectivity are consistently maintained across the university.

The university provides accessible, confidential, and secure reporting channels for individuals who experience or witness discrimination. Complaints can be submitted through written applications, digital platforms, or designated personnel, and are registered, reviewed, and resolved in a timely and impartial manner, with full protection against any form of retaliation. All reported cases are investigated by competent bodies in accordance with established procedures, ensuring objectivity, confidentiality, and respect for the rights of all parties, and leading to appropriate decisions and disciplinary measures in line with university regulations and applicable legislation.

Governance and Responsibilities

Structure / Role	Responsibilities
Rector	Ensures approval and overall oversight of the anti-discrimination policy, supports strategic decision-making, and allocates necessary resources.
Vice-Rectors	Coordinate the implementation of the policy across their respective areas and ensure alignment among structural units.
Faculties and Deanships	Ensure equal participation of all members of the academic community, oversee the application of non-discrimination principles, and address related concerns in a timely manner.
Human Resources Department	Promotes fair recruitment, employment, and career development practices, manages training on equality and non-discrimination, and supports policy implementation among staff.
Ethics and Disciplinary Committee	Investigates discrimination-related cases, ensures fair decision-making, and recommends appropriate disciplinary actions in line with university regulations.
Quality Assurance and Continuous Development Department	Evaluates policy implementation, monitors KPIs, and prepares recommendations for continuous improvement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the Anti-Discrimination Policy at Mingachevir State University is carried out through a systematic, evidence-based, and continuous process aimed at ensuring effective implementation, transparency, and ongoing improvement. The Quality Assurance Department, in collaboration with relevant structural units, regularly oversees the implementation process based on predefined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), institutional reports, and data collected from academic and administrative activities.

Relevant data are systematically gathered, including records of reported discrimination cases, outcomes of investigations, participation rates in training programs, and results of staff and student satisfaction surveys. These data are analyzed to identify trends, potential risks, and areas requiring further improvement. Based on this analysis, periodic reports—typically prepared on a quarterly and annual basis—are developed to assess progress against KPIs, highlight challenges, and provide recommendations for future actions. These reports are submitted to the Rectorate and relevant governance bodies to support informed decision-making.

The effectiveness of the policy is evaluated through measurable outcomes such as the reduction of discrimination cases, increased awareness levels, improvement in inclusiveness indicators, and overall satisfaction of students and staff. Both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods are applied to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. In addition, feedback from students, academic staff, and administrative personnel is actively collected through surveys, consultations, and other feedback mechanisms to ensure that the policy remains responsive to real needs.

Based on monitoring results and stakeholder feedback, necessary adjustments are made to institutional procedures, training programs, and policy provisions. All responsible units are required to report on their activities related to policy implementation, ensuring accountability across the institution. At the same time, the university maintains transparency in the monitoring process while strictly protecting the confidentiality of sensitive information, particularly in relation to complaints and investigations.

Stakeholder Engagement

The effective implementation of the Anti-Discrimination Policy at Mingachevir State University is based on the active participation and collaboration of all relevant stakeholders. The university recognizes that creating an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment requires a shared responsibility approach involving both internal and external actors.

All members of the university community—including academic staff, researchers, administrative personnel, and students—are actively involved in promoting and implementing this policy. They are encouraged to contribute to awareness activities, participate in training programs, and support the development of an inclusive academic culture. Their experiences and feedback play a critical role in identifying challenges and improving institutional practices. In this context, student organizations, student councils, and staff representatives also play an important role in voicing concerns, proposing initiatives, and ensuring that the interests and rights of diverse groups are adequately represented.

The university also collaborates with external stakeholders such as partner universities, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and relevant public authorities to exchange best practices and strengthen institutional capacity in the field of anti-discrimination. These partnerships support alignment with international standards and promote knowledge sharing. In addition, stakeholders are engaged through regular seminars, training sessions, conferences, and awareness initiatives aimed at strengthening understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion principles.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

Within the framework of **SDG 4** (Quality Education), the university ensures the creation of an inclusive and equitable learning environment, promotes non-discriminatory access to education, and supports equal learning opportunities for all students as key components of quality education.

In line with **SDG 10** (Reduced Inequalities), the policy focuses on eliminating inequalities based on social, economic, and individual characteristics, protecting vulnerable groups, and ensuring equal opportunities across all areas of university life.

Furthermore, under **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), the university strengthens transparent, fair, and accountable governance mechanisms, ensures the protection of individual rights, and implements effective institutional measures to prevent and address discrimination.

Evidence and Reporting

The effective implementation of the Anti-Discrimination Policy at Mingachevir State University is ensured through evidence-based management and transparent reporting mechanisms. This approach supports objective evaluation, informed decision-making, and continuous institutional improvement. All activities and cases related to discrimination—including submitted complaints, investigation outcomes, decisions taken, training and awareness activities, and participation data—are systematically documented and maintained by relevant structural units, contributing to institutional memory.

The collected data are regularly analyzed to identify trends, risk areas, and aspects requiring improvement. Such analysis plays a key role in evaluating policy effectiveness, planning preventive measures, and supporting strategic decision-making. Periodic reports prepared on a quarterly and annual basis provide detailed information on key performance indicators, achieved results, existing challenges, and future action plans. These reports are submitted to university leadership and relevant governance bodies to inform institutional decisions.

The university ensures transparency by sharing aggregated information related to policy implementation while strictly maintaining confidentiality and protecting personal data in individual cases. Each structural unit is responsible for implementing the policy within its area of activity, and compliance is continuously monitored through established control mechanisms. In cases of violations, appropriate corrective and disciplinary measures are applied in accordance with institutional regulations.