



MİNGƏÇEVİR
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UNİVERSİTETİ

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Purpose:	<p>The aim is to ensure that all staff and students have equal opportunities, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, social status, disability, religious belief, language, culture, thought, or other differences. The primary objective of this policy is to prevent all forms of discrimination, respect the dignity of every individual, recognize differences as values and strengths, and create an inclusive environment that fosters cohesion and collaboration.</p> <p>The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy envisions the establishment of educational and work environments based on justice, mutual respect, and social equity, enabling everyone to realize their full potential. Within this framework, the goal is not limited to providing equal opportunities but also includes recognizing diversity as a resource and source of innovation, and integrating inclusive approaches as an inseparable part of the organizational culture.</p>

Introduction

All forms of discrimination are strictly prohibited at the university, and a zero-tolerance approach is adopted in this regard. The mission of Mingachevir State University (MSU) is to foster a tolerant, understanding, and inclusive culture, ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities regardless of their identity, affiliation, or social status. The university aims to create an environment where each staff member and student can fully realize their potential and pursue personal and professional development.

The effective application of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles is a core value of MSU, both in its internal operations and in collaborations with external partners. Implementing these principles ensures transparency, fairness, trust, and accessible services in the university's management and teaching processes.

Equality Statement

Mingachevir State University is fully committed to preventing discrimination and promoting fair opportunities and respect-based interactions.

The university's activities support diversity, create an inclusive environment, and ensure equal opportunities for all staff, faculty, and students, in line with the trends of equality reflected in existing legislation.

All individuals participating in the university's academic and scientific environment are granted equal opportunities without distinction. This includes, but is not limited to, the following criteria:

- Age
- Gender
- Disability
- Family status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religious belief or faith
- Financial hardship
- Social origin and place of residence
- Freedom to choose research areas, engage in public discussion, and exercise teaching rights

The university aims to create an open, safe, and fair academic environment where every student and staff member can realize their potential. Particular emphasis is placed

on freedom of expression, the free exchange of diverse scientific and creative ideas, and respectful academic debate in teaching, research, and public activities.

Mingachevir State University believes that an inclusive environment with equal opportunities is not only essential for individual development but also supports the sustainable development of society.

Policy Objectives

The main objectives of MSU's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy are as follows:

1. **Ensuring equal rights** – Guarantee equal rights for individuals of diverse racial, gender, religious, age, and ethnic backgrounds, including persons with disabilities.

2. **Fair treatment** – Ensure that all members of the university community are treated fairly and transparently, in accordance with established regulations, internal policies, and relevant state legislation.

3. **Elimination of discrimination** – Address cases of discrimination based on origin or other personal characteristics, promote equal opportunities, and contribute to the elimination of stereotypes.

4. **Creating an inclusive community** – Foster an open and supportive environment where every student and staff member feels valued, respected, and included.

5. **Raising awareness** – Increase the university community's awareness of diversity, equality, and inclusion and establish a common reference framework for action in these areas.

6. **Promoting participation** – Support the active involvement of all stakeholders in management and teaching processes, including student representative bodies, committees, and other decision-making structures.

7. **Defending academic freedom** – Protect and develop the freedom to choose research areas, publicly discuss results, and exercise teaching rights.

Legal Basis

The legal foundation of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy is defined by the current legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and international obligations.

The policy is based on the following national legal documents:

- Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Labor Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Education"

- Law on Guarantees of Gender Equality
- Law on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Presidential decrees and orders of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Resolutions and decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Other relevant normative legal acts

Additionally, the EDI policy aligns with international legal documents adopted by the UN, of which Azerbaijan is a member, including:

- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
- UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- European Convention on Human Rights (1950) and relevant protocols

This legal framework provides a sustainable basis for MSU to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion and to create a fair and safe environment for all staff and students.

Scope

This policy applies to all areas of Mingachevir State University and covers the following individuals:

- University staff – academic, administrative, and technical personnel
- Researchers and doctoral candidates – individuals engaged in scientific activities on a permanent or temporary basis
- Students – all undergraduate, graduate, doctoral students, as well as participants in additional and lifelong learning programs
- Applicants – candidates applying for employment or admission to study
- Partners – guests, contractors, service providers, suppliers, representatives of partner organizations, and other relevant parties

The principles of this policy—ensuring equal opportunities, preventing discrimination, and creating an inclusive environment—apply to all parties directly or indirectly collaborating with the university.

Current Status

Mingachevir State University actively implements measures to ensure the application of equality, diversity, and inclusion principles. Current initiatives include:

1. Training and seminars

The university encourages faculty, administrative staff, and students to focus on the EDI policy and apply its values in daily activities.

This encouragement is implemented through awareness events and social responsibility centers.

Key centers supporting EDI policy implementation include:

✚ **Inclusive Education Center** – promotes equal educational opportunities and removes physical and social barriers.

✚ **Social Services Center for Veterans** – provides social integration, psychological, and legal support for war veterans.

✚ **Psychological Services Center** – supports psychological well-being of students and staff, reducing stress and social tension.

Students are encouraged to defend equal rights, remain vigilant against injustices, and address relevant issues. The centers actively support these efforts through awareness initiatives and individual assistance mechanisms.

2. **Open dialogue mechanisms**

- Students can meet directly with the rector every Tuesday to report unfair practices or concerns.
- A 24/7 hotline allows students, staff, and community members to report issues or suggestions anonymously or openly.
- Suggestion and feedback boxes are placed in each faculty for submitting daily activity-related observations, proposals, or complaints.

3. **Monitoring and supervision**

- The Quality Assurance and Sustainable Development Department oversees EDI policy implementation, investigates violations, conducts regular surveys among students, and implements corrective actions based on results.
- Cases of unfair behavior are investigated immediately, responsible parties are informed, and necessary measures are taken.
- The department also manages faculty-student and self-assessment surveys, report preparation, and implementation of decisions based on outcomes.

4. **Appeals mechanism**

- The Appeals Committee operates during exam sessions to review student requests.

Freedom of Choice

Mingachevir State University promotes personal development and an innovation culture

by providing freedom of choice for students and other university community members in various areas:

1. **Research Freedom**

- ✓ Students are free to select topics across a wide range of scientific research.
- ✓ The university supports students with resources and guidance to foster innovative ideas and research development.

2. **Academic Freedom**

- ✓ Students can explore fields according to their interests and academic goals.
- ✓ Selection of academic directions and participation in the teaching process is fully voluntary.

3. **Student Club Freedom**

- ✓ Through the Student Youth Organization (SYO), students can create or join clubs according to their interests and hobbies.
- ✓ This enhances leadership, collaboration, and creative activity opportunities.

4. **Extracurricular Activity Freedom**

- ✓ The university respects students' rights to participate in events, sports, and cultural activities based on their interests.
- ✓ This ensures social and cultural development alongside academic life.

5. **Respect for Diversity of Thought**

- ✓ MSU engages students, faculty, and staff in an inclusive environment where diversity of thought is accepted, and open dialogue is promoted.
- ✓ The university supports the free expression of various scientific, social, and cultural perspectives, with discussions conducted respectfully.