

# POLICY DOCUMENT

# HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY POLICY

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## Document Information

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# Purpose:

In accordance with the strategic development model and current corporate governance standards of Mingachevir State University, the primary objective of this policy is to establish a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all staff and students by recognizing the human factor as the highest value within the university. This strategic target, defined by the university administration, serves to create the physical and psychological safety foundation necessary for conducting teaching and research activities free from any external interference.

**MINGACHEVIR STATE UNIVERSITY**

## HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY POLICY

*A safe and healthy environment for learning, working and thriving.*

- SAFE ENVIRONMENT**  
We are committed to providing a secure and safe campus environment by identifying risks, reducing hazards, and promoting a culture of safety for all students, staff and visitors.
- HEALTH AND WELLBEING**  
We support the physical and mental wellbeing of our university community through accessible health services, wellbeing programs and awareness initiatives.
- RISK MANAGEMENT**  
We proactively assess and manage health and safety risks through effective policies, procedures, training and continuous improvement.
- SUPPORT AND INCLUSION**  
We promote an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected, supported and empowered to speak up and seek help.
- EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**  
We are prepared to respond to emergencies through effective plans, regular drills and clear communication to ensure the safety of all.
- SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**  
Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. We work together to follow safety guidelines, care for one another and create a healthier, safer university.

*“Healthy students, safe campus, stronger community.”*

**PREVENT RISKS** | **PROMOTE WELLBEING** | **PROTECT EVERYONE** | **WORK TOGETHER** | **IMPROVE CONTINUOUS**

**A HEALTHY, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE UNIVERSITY BUILDS STRONG MINDS AND BRIGHT FUTURES.**

The approach implemented within this policy framework encompasses not only compliance with technical safety regulations but also the enhancement of individual well-being, the proactive management of professional risks, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle at the institutional level. This goal is directly aimed at strengthening the university's academic culture, which supports scientific creativity, innovative approaches, and critical thinking.

At the same time, one of the key priorities of this document is the establishment of a transparent and accountable safety management system in line with international higher education standards and global ranking criteria. This entails protecting the rights of university members, integrating ethical codes of conduct into internal processes, and ultimately ensuring a healthy and competitive academic ecosystem for the sustainable development of Mingachevir State University.

As a modern higher education institution playing a leading role in the socio-economic and cultural development of society, Mingachevir State University (MSU) places the human factor and individual well-being at the core of its activities. This policy document, adopted by the University, is based on the vision that the principles of academic freedom and diversity of thought can only be effectively realized within a healthy and safe environment. The promotion of independent thinking in education and research, as well as the success of the intellectual development model, directly depends on the protection of the physical and mental health of every university member, as well as a risk-free working environment.

The Health, Well-being, and Safety Policy is a fundamental pillar ensuring the continuity of MSU's teaching, research, and scientific activities. This approach establishes a secure environmental infrastructure that fosters the creative potential of university members, the implementation of innovations, and the development of critical thinking. The policy aims to ensure that the environment in which every educator, researcher, and student operates complies with international standards.

From a legal perspective, this document is in full harmony with key regulatory acts such as the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Law on Education, the Law on Science, and the Higher Education Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2022-2035), as well as the Charter of MSU. By clearly defining the rights and responsibilities in the field of health and safety for all MSU members, this policy document plays a significant role in the university's international cooperation activities and the enhancement of its global academic reputation. The document serves as a guarantor of an inclusive, dialogue-based, and risk-protected academic culture by increasing transparency and accountability within the university's management system.

# Key Definitions

**Well-being in the Workplace and Education:** This concept represents the synergy of physical, mental, and emotional states necessary for every individual operating at MSU to realize their full potential. Well-being is defined not merely as the absence of illness, but as a state in which employees and students feel valued, motivated, and socially fulfilled within the university environment.



**Occupational Health and Technical Safety:** A system of legal, socio-economic, organizational, and technical measures aimed at eliminating hazardous factors that could impact human health during work processes across all university infrastructure, particularly in laboratories and research centers. This system ensures physical integrity and the continuity of academic activities.



**Psychological Safety and Academic Integrity Environment:** An inclusive environment where academic staff and students can freely express their scientific views and proposals without experiencing any administrative, political, or social pressure. This concept encompasses a system of relationships based on mutual respect and professional ethics, which are essential for the development of critical thinking.



**Academic Responsibility and Safety Ethics:** The obligation of every individual benefiting from a free and safe academic environment to respect the health and dignity of both themselves and other university members. This responsibility requires unconditional compliance with ethical norms, professional standards, and MSU's internal disciplinary regulations.



**Protection Against Harassment and Mobbing:** A concept that prohibits systematic forms of psychological pressure (insult, discrimination, isolation) that undermine the moral or psychological well-being of any individual and decrease their work or educational productivity. It entails institutional protection mechanisms against such occurrences.

# Scope of Application

At Mingachevir State University, the principles of health, well-being, and safety are systematically applied to encompass both research and teaching activities, serving as one of the fundamental pillars of the university's academic environment. These principles are differentiated according to the various levels of the university community, establishing clear rights, opportunities, and protection mechanisms for each group.

For senior academic staff, including professors and associate professors, this policy guarantees the right to conduct scientific activities and laboratory research in a fully secure and independent manner. This approach creates a favorable environment for the advancement of scientific creativity, the risk-free implementation of innovative methodologies, and the achievement of internationally competitive research results. Simultaneously, ensuring that these faculty members feel professionally and psychologically secure while shaping curriculum content and applying modern pedagogical approaches contributes directly to the enhancement of educational quality.

For junior academic staff, particularly doctoral students and young researchers, the implementation of this policy aims to facilitate their involvement in independent scientific activity and protect them from pressures they may encounter during the academic development process. While they are granted the opportunity to undertake projects through individual initiatives, a healthy working environment is maintained through institutional support mechanisms and academic supervision, which serves to realize the potential of young specialists more effectively. The use of innovative and interactive teaching methods by young lecturers, along with their ability to conduct open and pressure-free discussions with students, increases dynamism in the educational process and positively impacts the development of critical thinking skills.

## Physical and Psychological Integrity

MSU ensures that the academic staff, administrative personnel, and students carry out all activities within the university in full safety. Teaching and research activities must be realized free from physical hazards, occupational diseases, and psychological pressures.

## Ethical Conduct and Social Responsibility

The University ensures adherence to the principles of integrity, objectivity, and personal responsibility in the implementation of safety regulations. Any behavior or negligence that risks the health of others is considered unacceptable. A healthy working environment must be maintained in conjunction with ethical responsibility.

## Inclusivity and Respect for Individual Well-being

MSU fosters a healthy, democratic, and inclusive environment by prioritizing the physical and mental well-being of all individuals. We uphold personal dignity and strictly prohibit discrimination, mobbing, or psychological pressure.

## Transparency and Accountability

The University adheres to the principles of transparency in decision-making and risk assessment related to health and safety. All safety-related processes, incident investigations, and remedial actions are conducted in an open and justified manner. Relevant structural units bear responsibility for their activities in this field, and regular accountability is ensured.

## Protection from External Risks

MSU ensures that academic staff and students are protected from any environmental, physical, or work-related external threats. It is guaranteed that safety decisions within the university are made solely based on scientific and professional criteria. Institutional mechanisms are applied against any interferences that may lead to the disruption of well-being.

## Critical Thinking and Safety Dialogue

MSU recognizes critical thinking and open discussion as essential elements in improving the safety culture. Faculty and students can freely exchange views on existing working conditions and safety standards. This serves to enhance the quality of the university's infrastructure.

# Strategic Objectives

## Ensuring a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Academic Environment at MSU

MSU prioritizes a safe, inclusive, and hazard-free environment for all staff and students. By ensuring institutional transparency and robust infrastructure, the university guarantees physical and psychological well-being across all administrative and academic activities.



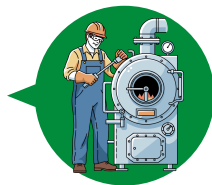
## Development of a Mental Health and Psychological Well-being Culture

MSU prioritizes stress management and psychological support as key strategic goals. By promoting work-life balance, educational seminars, and a positive academic atmosphere, the university aims to bolster the emotional resilience and motivation of both students and staff as a core part of its human capital strategy.



## Strengthening Workplace Safety and Technical Infrastructure

MSU prioritizes aligning all laboratories and facilities with modern safety standards to ensure the physical protection of researchers and students. This objective is achieved by enforcing strict technical safety regulations, participating in international occupational safety projects, and implementing advanced monitoring systems.



## Protection of Social and Health Rights of University Members

MSU is committed to protecting the health and well-being of its community through equal access to medical services and a zero-tolerance policy toward harassment or mobbing. By strictly adhering to ethical codes and providing effective grievance mechanisms, the university ensures an inclusive, safe environment where every individual is valued.



## Ensuring Compliance with International Safety Standards and Ranking Criteria

MSU's strategic goal is to align its health and occupational safety activities with international higher education standards. By integrating THE Impact Rankings criteria and ISO standards, the university ensures continuous improvement across management, teaching, and infrastructure through the application of global best practices.



# Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Baseline (2024)	Target (2027)	Timeline	Responsible Department
Enhancing Safety Culture	Percentage of staff trained in occupational health and safety	70%	95%	2024-2027	Human Resources Department
Minimizing Incidents	Number of accidents and injuries recorded on university premises	2 cases	0 cases	Annual	General Services (Maintenance) Department
Supporting Mental Well-being	Satisfaction rate with psychological support and stress management services	65%	90%	2024-2027	Quality Assurance Department
Infrastructure Safety	Number of laboratories certified according to international safety standards (e.g., ISO 45001)	1	5	2024-2027	Science and Innovation Department
Social Well-being and Equality	Resolution rate of grievances regarding workplace mobbing and discrimination	80%	100%	Regular	Ethics and Discipline Committee

# Implementation Mechanism

A multi-faceted and proactive management mechanism is applied at Mingachevir State University (MSU) to effectively realize the health, well-being, and safety policy. This system integrates safety standards into daily workflows by unifying the activities of all structural units around a single strategic goal. The implementation of the policy is coordinated by relevant departments under the general supervision of the university administration, ensuring that decisions are executed through a "bottom-up" principle by designating responsible persons at each faculty level.

Regular risk audits and assessment measures, which constitute a fundamental part of the implementation process, serve to pre-identify potential hazards across all physical and digital environments of the university. Within this framework, physical safety norms in laboratory settings are verified, and psychological risks are analyzed through surveys measuring the mental well-being of the academic staff. Preventive action plans developed based on these results are funded by specific allocations within the university budget, enabling the continuous improvement of infrastructure—particularly technical protection systems and accessibility for persons with physical disabilities.

Awareness-raising and capacity building serve as another vital direction for the successful execution of the policy. Regularly organized training sessions, seminars, and orientation programs foster a safety culture among university members and enhance the ability of each individual to react swiftly during incidents. Simultaneously, feedback from every employee and student is promptly evaluated through "hotlines" or digital application systems based on the principles of transparency and confidentiality. This approach eliminates subjectivity in administrative decision-making and fully aligns MSU's health and well-being standards with international higher education criteria.

# Governance and Responsibilities

Structure / Role	Responsibilities
<b>University Administration and Scientific Council</b>	Defines the strategic directions of the policy, ensures the allocation of necessary financial and technical resources, and provides institutional guarantees.
<b>Human Resources Department, Trade Union Committee</b>	Responsible for the social well-being of employees, maintaining work-life balance, health insurance, and the coordination of mental well-being programs.
<b>Facilities Department</b>	Ensures the compliance of physical infrastructure, buildings, auditoriums, and laboratories with technical safety and fire protection standards.
<b>Ethics and Discipline Committee</b>	Investigates cases of psychological pressure, mobbing, and discrimination arising in the work and educational environment; protects the moral well-being and rights of individuals.
<b>Faculty Deans and Departments</b>	Oversees the implementation of safety norms during the teaching and research processes; regularly monitors the well-being of academic staff and students.
<b>Internal audit</b>	Conducts regular risk audits, develops preventive action plans to forestall accidents, and monitors their implementation.
<b>Individual Level (Staff and Students)</b>	Must comply with established safety regulations, report potential risks, and bear responsibility for maintaining an environment based on mutual respect.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the health, well-being, and safety policy at Mingachevir State University is subject to a systematic monitoring and evaluation process to measure the level of achievement of defined strategic targets and to ensure continuous improvement of activities. Based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators, this process establishes a transparent accountability mechanism carried out by the relevant structural units of the university. Monitoring activities include both scheduled annual audits and extraordinary assessments conducted during significant incidents or organizational changes.

One of the primary tools of the evaluation mechanism is the anonymous well-being and satisfaction surveys conducted among academic and administrative staff, as well as students, at the end of each academic year. Through these surveys, empirical data are collected regarding the safety of the working environment, the effectiveness of psychological support services, and the overall well-being of individuals. The gathered data are compared with the targets set in the "Key Performance Indicators" (KPIs) section, and if any deviations are detected, justified proposals are submitted to the university administration to address the shortcomings.

This process, carried out within the framework of the university's internal quality assurance system, also verifies compliance with the requirements of international standards and global ranking criteria (e.g., SDG 3 criteria). The annual "Health and Well-being Report," prepared based on the monitoring results, is discussed at the MSU Scientific Council and publicly disclosed. This approach not only ensures transparency in university governance but also allows for the dynamic updating of health and safety policies and the establishment of more effective preventive mechanisms.

# Stakeholder Engagement

Mingachevir State University recognizes the active participation of all stakeholders in the process of defining and implementing health, well-being, and safety standards as a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development. This approach ensures that the safety culture is shaped not only from the top down but also through the feedback and proposals of every member of the university community. Participation mechanisms established at the university encourage an open dialogue between academic staff, administrative employees, students, and external partners, facilitating more transparent and objective decision-making regarding well-being.

The participation of academic and administrative staff is ensured through regular internal consultations, working groups, and "open door" days. Employees have the right to identify risks in the working environment, improve occupational safety regulations, and propose initiatives that enhance work-life balance. The university administration incorporates these proposals into the strategic planning process, which helps staff feel valued within the governance process and strengthens institutional commitment.

Student participation is realized through self-governance bodies such as the Student Youth Organization (SYO) and the Student Scientific Society (SSS). Students can directly convey their views to the university administration regarding physical and psychological safety issues in the learning environment, the accessibility of campus infrastructure, and social well-being services. Simultaneously, collaboration platforms established with external stakeholders—including parents, alumni, employers, and local community representatives—enhance the university's social responsibility and ensure that health standards are aligned with societal expectations. This multilateral participation model transforms MSU into a modern academic space where every member's voice is heard and collective well-being is protected.

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# Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

**SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being** - Focus on institutionalizing mental health services, promoting physical health through medical centers, and creating a healthy infrastructure for the university community.

**SDG 4: Quality Education** - Focus on ensuring a safe, inclusive, and barrier-free learning environment that allows students and staff to focus on innovation and academic potential.

**SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** - Focus on ISO-standard occupational safety, prohibiting workplace harassment, and maintaining work-life balance to foster a productive and motivated workforce.

# Evidence and Reporting

Mingachevir State University ensures the implementation of its health, well-being, and safety policy not merely through declarations, but through a transparent accountability mechanism based on concrete evidence. According to the university's management philosophy, the sustainability of the safety environment is directly linked to the documentation of every activity, the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of results, and public disclosure. This approach strengthens internal discipline and enhances the university's credibility in international accreditation and ranking processes.

To establish an evidence base, the university regularly documents technical safety inspections, laboratory audits, and risk assessments of campus infrastructure. Every training session, medical examination course, or well-being-oriented seminar is archived with participant lists, outcome surveys, and photo-video materials. Additionally, anonymous survey results collected via the university's digital platform and registration logs for safety incidents serve as objective evidence of policy implementation. Analytical reports prepared based on this data allow the university administration to evaluate the current situation with real facts.

Under the principle of accountability, MSU prepares an annual "Sustainable Development and Well-being Report," presents it to the Scientific Council, and publishes it on its official online resources. The report reflects the progress achieved regarding defined KPIs, schemes for allocating budget funds to safety measures, and plans for future risk management. To ensure transparency, every university member has the right to review this information and provide critical feedback on gaps in the implementation process. Such an accountability environment is the most vital guarantee of Mingachevir State University's institutional commitment to building a safe and healthy academic ecosystem.