



MINGACHEVIR  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## POLICY DOCUMENT

# STUDENT INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP CIRCLE POLICY

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# Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to foster an innovation-oriented mindset among students at Mingachevir State University, develop their leadership potential, and establish sustainable mechanisms that support their growth as creative, proactive, and responsible individuals. It aims to create an environment that connects theoretical knowledge with practical application and responds to contemporary challenges.

**MINGACHEVIR STATE UNIVERSITY**

## STUDENT INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP CIRCLE POLICY

Empowering innovation. Inspiring leadership. Shaping the future.

- INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT**  
Encouraging students to generate creative ideas, participate in innovation projects, and develop solutions to real-world challenges through interdisciplinary collaboration and research-based learning.
- LEADERSHIP SKILLS**  
Developing students' leadership capacity through active participation in student organizations, project management, and decision-making processes.
- ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING**  
Promoting entrepreneurial mindset by supporting startups, innovation hubs, and business incubation activities that transform ideas into impactful ventures.
- COLLABORATION & NETWORKING**  
Strengthening partnerships with industry, alumni, and international institutions to provide students with mentorship, internships, and real-world experience.
- PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**  
Integrating practical, project-oriented approaches into the learning process to enhance critical thinking, teamwork, and innovation capacity.
- PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**  
Providing continuous development opportunities, training programs, workshops, and leadership seminars to enhance students' competencies and career readiness.

*“Innovation distinguishes leaders from followers.”*

**STUDENT INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP ARE THE DRIVING FORCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION.**

INNOVATE | LEAD | COLLABORATE | SUCCEED

INNOVATION - LEADERSHIP - IMPACT - FUTURE READINESS

The Policy encourages student participation in projects, research, and practice-oriented initiatives, enabling them to gain real-world experience and develop innovative thinking. It also promotes analytical and critical thinking, independent decision-making, and effective teamwork through trainings, seminars, and mentorship programs. Additionally, the Policy supports the development of an innovation culture within the University by encouraging student initiatives, facilitating collaboration, and recognizing achievements. It also strengthens students' social responsibility and active engagement in society, ensuring their comprehensive development.

Rapid changes in 21st-century higher education have expanded the role of universities beyond traditional teaching to include innovation, research, and leadership. The acceleration of digitalization, the growth of artificial intelligence, and the dynamic nature of the global labor market require students to develop not only academic knowledge but also creativity, critical thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving skills.

In response, Mingachevir State University has adopted a student-centered approach as a strategic priority, aiming to ensure the comprehensive development of students. This includes not only academic achievement but also personal growth, social engagement, and the development of professional competencies. The University seeks to create an environment where students actively participate in learning processes and are prepared to meet modern challenges.

The “Student Innovation and Leadership Circle Policy,” aligned with the University’s strategic goals, promotes student engagement in innovation and leadership activities, supports their ideas and initiatives, and encourages participation in projects and research. It contributes to creating a dynamic and innovative learning environment, enhancing student involvement, and improving the overall quality of education.

Additionally, the Policy supports the development of an innovation culture within the University and strengthens collaboration between students and relevant stakeholders, further contributing to a sustainable and forward-looking academic environment.

# Key Definitions



**Innovation:** The process of generating, developing, and applying new ideas that create social, economic, or technological value, including creative and interdisciplinary approaches.



**Leadership:** The ability to take initiative, make decisions, communicate effectively, and guide individuals or teams toward achieving common goals in dynamic environments.



**Student Innovation and Leadership Circle:** An institutional platform where students voluntarily collaborate, exchange ideas, develop projects, and strengthen their innovation and leadership skills.



**Student Initiative:** Any student-led idea, project, or activity aimed at solving problems, creating value, or contributing to academic, social, or professional development.



**Mentorship:** A structured support process in which experienced individuals guide and assist students in developing their skills, knowledge, and professional competencies.

# Scope of Application

This Policy is implemented across all structural units of Mingachevir State University and covers various areas of university activities. Its application ensures the integration of students' academic, research, and social development within a unified framework while engaging all relevant stakeholders in the process.

Faculties and departments contribute by linking academic knowledge with innovative activities, supporting students' overall development. The adoption of modern teaching approaches, expansion of project-based learning, and enhancement of practical skills are key elements of this effort. Research units play an important role in developing student ideas on a scientific basis and encouraging their active involvement in research activities, thereby strengthening their analytical and investigative skills.

Student organizations and volunteer groups actively support the implementation of this Policy by fostering collaboration, increasing social engagement, and promoting leadership development among students. In addition, innovation centers, startup initiatives, and project platforms within the University provide opportunities for students to transform their ideas into practical outcomes and real projects.

Beyond internal structures, the Policy also extends to external engagement, including industry partnerships, social projects, and participation in local and international programs. These opportunities enable students to gain practical experience, engage with professional environments, and develop a global perspective, ultimately supporting their growth as adaptable and competitive individuals.

# Core Principles

## Equal Opportunities

Ensuring fair and inclusive access for all students to participate in innovation and leadership activities without discrimination.

## Transparency and Accountability

Promoting clear, open decision-making processes and continuous evaluation and improvement of activities.

## Innovation and Critical Thinking

Encouraging creative problem-solving, analytical thinking, and the development of innovative solutions.

## Student Initiative and Engagement

Supporting student-led ideas, projects, and active participation in academic and extracurricular activities.

## Collaboration and Volunteering

Fostering teamwork, cooperation, and active involvement in social and community-based initiatives.

## Ethics and Sustainability

Upholding academic integrity, ethical behavior, social responsibility, and commitment to sustainable development.

# Strategic Objectives

## Enhance Student Innovation Capacity

Increase student participation in innovation-driven projects and research activities, while strengthening their skills in idea generation, project design, and implementation.



## Develop Leadership Competencies

Foster students' abilities in decision-making, strategic thinking, effective communication, and teamwork, enabling them to take initiative and lead in diverse environments.



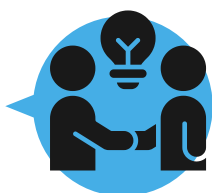
## Promote Entrepreneurship and Startups

Support student-led entrepreneurial initiatives and create conditions for transforming innovative ideas into sustainable projects with social and economic impact.



## Strengthen Industry Collaboration

Expand cooperation with industry and business sectors to provide students with hands-on experience, real-world problem-solving opportunities, and improved career readiness.



## Expand International Engagement

Encourage student participation in international programs, partnerships, and exchanges to develop global perspectives, intercultural understanding, and competitiveness.



# Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	Indicator (KPI)	Baseline (2024)	Target (2027)	Timeline	Responsible Unit
Enhance student participation in innovation activities	% of students engaged in innovation projects	25%	45%	2024-2027	Lifelong Learning Center
Develop leadership competencies	% of students completing leadership training programs	30%	55%	2024-2027	Student Affairs Department, Internship and Career Department
Promote entrepreneurship and startups	Number of student startup projects initiated	8 projects/year	15 projects/year	2024-2027	Lifelong Learning Center
Strengthen industry collaboration	Number of partnerships and joint projects with industry	10 partnerships	20 partnerships	2024-2027	Internship and Career Department
Increase international engagement	% of students participating in international programs	8%	18%	2024-2027	Department of International Relations and Cooperation

# Implementation Mechanism

The implementation of this Policy at Mingachevir State University is carried out through comprehensive and systematic mechanisms designed to ensure coordinated engagement of all relevant stakeholders and to support student development within a unified framework. In this context, the Student Innovation and Leadership Circle serves as the main operational platform, functioning in accordance with established rules and procedures. It provides an environment for students to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and develop innovative initiatives.

A variety of training programs, seminars, workshops, and project-based activities are organized to systematically enhance students' knowledge and skills. These activities strengthen both their theoretical understanding and their practical competencies in addressing real-world challenges. In addition, mentorship programs provide continuous guidance from experienced professionals and academic staff, supporting students in shaping their individual development paths and building professional capabilities.

Furthermore, financial, organizational, and technical resources are mobilized to support innovative ideas and student initiatives. The expansion of interfaculty collaboration and the strengthening of partnerships with external sectors create opportunities for implementing student projects on a broader scale. These mechanisms collectively ensure the effective, structured, and sustainable implementation of the Policy.

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# Governance and Responsibilities

Structure / Role	Responsibilities
Advisor for Social Affairs	Provides overall leadership and strategic oversight, ensures alignment with university priorities, and supports key decision-making processes.
Student Affairs Department	Acts as the main coordinating unit, manages the Student Innovation and Leadership Circle, and oversees implementation and monitoring.
Lifelong Learning Center	Supports innovation activities, startup initiatives, and provides mentorship and technical guidance for student projects.
Faculties and Departments	Integrate innovation and leadership into teaching, encourage student participation, and monitor academic-related outcomes.
Internal Control Department	Monitors, evaluates, and reports on the effectiveness and impact of the Policy implementation.

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# Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of this Policy, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are systematically implemented. This process covers all stages of implementation—from planning and execution to outcomes—and enables continuous tracking of progress and performance. Within this framework, key indicators such as student participation rates, the quality and impact of implemented projects, the level of innovation, and their socio-economic contributions are regularly analyzed and documented.

Additional emphasis is placed on students' individual development as a key outcome of the Policy. Particular attention is directed toward strengthening leadership competencies, critical and analytical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and teamwork effectiveness. These competencies are considered essential for preparing students to address complex real-world challenges and to actively contribute to sustainable development processes. Evaluation of these outcomes is conducted through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including structured surveys, defined performance indicators, feedback mechanisms, project-based assessments, and stakeholder consultations. The integration of multiple data sources enhances the reliability and validity of the evaluation process, ensuring that findings are both objective and comprehensive.

The monitoring process is carried out on a regular and systematic basis, supported by clearly defined timelines and responsibilities. Periodic reports are prepared by relevant university units and reviewed at institutional level to ensure accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. These reports provide a comprehensive overview of progress, highlighting key achievements, identifying performance gaps, and capturing emerging opportunities for further development.

Findings derived from monitoring and evaluation activities are actively utilized to inform strategic and operational improvements. Strengths are reinforced and scaled up across the institution, while identified weaknesses are addressed through targeted interventions and corrective measures. At the same time, new priorities are defined in response to evolving institutional needs, technological advancements, and external environmental factors. Such an adaptive approach ensures that the Policy remains dynamic and responsive to change.

# Stakeholder Engagement

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The successful implementation of this Policy relies on the active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. This approach ensures that the innovation and leadership environment developed within the University is effectively integrated into the broader social and economic ecosystem. University leadership and academic staff provide strategic direction and methodological support, while students act as the primary participants and driving force behind the implementation of the Policy.

In addition, collaboration with external partners—including industry and business organizations, non-governmental organizations, and various local and international institutions—is actively promoted and expanded. These partnerships create valuable opportunities for students to participate in real-world projects, gain hands-on experience, and apply their innovative ideas in practical settings. Such engagement not only strengthens students' professional competencies but also fosters an entrepreneurial mindset and innovation-driven thinking.

Partnerships also facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise between the University and external stakeholders, contributing to the development of a more dynamic and responsive academic environment. Through joint initiatives, internships, research collaborations, and exchange programs, students are exposed to diverse perspectives and best practices.

Overall, stakeholder collaboration significantly enhances the effectiveness of the Policy, supports its continuous improvement, and ensures its long-term sustainability. It also contributes to strengthening the University's innovation capacity, improving graduate employability, and reinforcing its position as a modern, competitive, and forward-looking higher education institution.



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# Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

**SDG 4** - This Policy supports inclusive and quality education by developing students' knowledge and skills. A student-centered and practice-oriented approach enhances learning effectiveness and overall student development.

**SDG 8** - The Policy improves students' employability by developing labor market-relevant, leadership, and innovation skills, contributing to economic growth and productivity.

**SDG 9** - It promotes innovation and student involvement in startup activities, supporting the development of new ideas and technological advancement.

# Evidence and Reporting

The implementation of this Policy is guided by the principles of transparency and accountability, ensuring that all activities are carried out in a consistent, measurable, and evaluable manner. This approach enhances the reliability of the implementation process and enables objective assessment of outcomes.

All activities are systematically documented, including records of project results, participation rates, and achieved outcomes. This documentation supports continuous monitoring and provides a reliable evidence base for informed decision-making and future planning.

Feedback from students, academic staff, and partners is incorporated into the evaluation process and plays a key role in assessing the Policy's real impact. Based on this evidence, strengths are reinforced, areas for improvement are identified, and necessary adjustments are made.

Regular reporting mechanisms ensure transparency in implementation and allow clear tracking of progress. Overall, this system strengthens accountability, improves internal management processes, and supports the continuous development and effectiveness of the Policy.

In addition, periodic reports are prepared and reviewed by relevant university units to ensure alignment with strategic objectives and compliance with institutional standards. These reports facilitate data-driven decision-making, enhance communication among stakeholders, and contribute to the long-term sustainability and impact of the Policy.