



The Academic Freedom Policy of Azerbaijan Technical University

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Introduction

At AzTU, Academic freedom promotes a culture of academic excellence without interference so that the university can provide quality education, conduct cutting-edge research, and serve the public interest. This policy gives the university the right to determine the methods and standards of university services in accordance with the established norms and ethics of their respective disciplines and fields. By supporting academic freedom, AzTU is aware of the importance of providing high-quality education and research, advancing environmental responsibility, and contributing to a more sustainable future for all.

Objective

This policy's objective is to post the principles and approaches of academic freedom at AzTU and it explains the right and duty of all academic staff and students to obtain and apply knowledge through teaching, learning, research, and collaboration activities without any restriction from the university administration and other external or internal forces.

Scope

This policy determines the main directions and approaches to academic freedom regarding research, education, and engagement with third parties like public and private organizations, NGOs, and civil societies to reach AzTU's primary strategic goals.

Intellectual Property Rights

IP rights are determined by Law, in accordance with Article 94 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Clause 13 of Part I of Protection of intellectual property rights and anti-piracy Law, ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights, protecting the interests of the owners of intellectual property rights and preventing violations in this area, including the illegal production and distribution of copies of relevant intellectual property objects regulates the relations arising in connection with.

Academic freedom refers to the freedom granted to individuals or groups within the academic community at AzTU to explore, expand, and communicate knowledge and concepts via various means such as research, teaching, learning, dialogue, recording, production, creative endeavors, and writing. At AzTU, all students and faculty members have the right to equal use of all facilities created by the university and offered for intellectual property in accordance with the Clause 4.2 “*Support the creation of intellectual property and industrial application of research results*” of AzTU's Development Strategy for 2021-2030 document.

Rights of Students

Students have the right to choose the relevant subject of specialization from selective courses and can continue their education based on their education program. All students prepare their education program at the beginning of each education year and follow the classes accordingly. Faculty members must provide an appropriate environment for students to express their opinions and feel comfortable and equal in learning and engaging with the class. Students are free to apply to various kinds of international and local exchange educational programs, internships, competitions, hackathons, Olympiads, and other relevant programs that can enhance their knowledge and skills.

AzTU provides clear guidelines and information about all procedures and responsibilities related to the educational and administrative services of the university to ensure transparency and fairness in the academic path of the students.

Freedom of Expression

Students of AzTU have the right to engage in learning, explore, and challenge ideas, fostering the development and expression of their own perspectives. Within this, students are protected from unfair treatment based on their viewpoints and beliefs. Students are closely involved in the management of the university and have the right to participate. Students of AzTU are represented in management of the university in two different ways: Student Youth Association and Student-Rector.

Together with the student youth organization (SYO) of AzTU, students can express their opinions and carry out their activities at the university. One of the main goals of the SYO is to ensure students' active participation in the public, cultural, social and economic life of the country. Students are free to open any club or association related to their social activities at AzTU.

The student-rector is one of the university's equal public management bodies and is elected for one year in accordance with the "Regulation on the elections and status of the student-rector of Azerbaijan Technical University." The student-rector represents the interests of students studying at AzTU within the scope of the powers assigned to him.

AzTU develops an ecosystem that values open dialogue and respectful debate among students, faculty, and staff with mutual respect and ethical considerations. The university supports initiatives that enhance students' cultural understanding, social responsibility, and moral leadership, preparing them to be the leaders of today's and tomorrow's world.

Rights of Faculty Members

Teaching and curriculum

Academicians have the right and freedom to use innovative teaching methods to fulfil the requirements of learning outcomes without irrelevant topics of course content. They must provide equal opportunities for students to learn and engage in classes. They can use up-to-date resources for teaching and learning by cooperating with international partners and local industry entities.

Their duty is to respect students' diversity of perspectives, beliefs, and backgrounds and to foster a collegial and inclusive academic environment that is conducive to learning, discovery, and innovation.

To enhance research capabilities and bring best international practices to the curriculum design and teaching methodologies, the university implies a motivation system with equal opportunities for all academic staff.

AzTU provides professional development programs for faculty members through training opportunities, research grants, and access to cutting-edge facilities and resources.

Research

Academic staff have the right to own the patent for their scholarly research results. Azerbaijan Technical University is responsible for the patent registration of academic staff works due to research.

Academic staff can cooperate with international partners and apply for national and international grants with joint research collaborations.

AzTU encourages interdisciplinary research collaborations that leverage diverse expertise and perspectives to address global challenges and drive positive societal impact.

AzTU supports academic staff conducting research through a quality assurance concept that ensures the highest academic integrity and ethical standards.

Access to the Infrastructures

All beneficiaries have access to all educational and social infrastructure of the universities. The university provides a digital LMS system for education; all academic staff and students have the freedom to create and use their accounts. They can manage educational activities and access all education resources without any restriction. Universities have sports centres that provide various types of sports activities for academicians and students; all beneficiaries have rights to apply to different sports programs at the centre. Libraries, laboratories, work centres and other facilities related to education are free of charge and all students have equal rights to access those resources.

Cooperation and Communication

AzTU has the right to establish dedicated units and institutes for studying and conducting research in various fields related to the main areas of the university by promoting academic freedom in research and education. These units can operate as hubs for collaboration and knowledge exchange, enabling scholars to conduct research, organize conferences, and collaborate with international partners.

AzTU can collaborate internationally with academic institutions, research organizations, and NGOs to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and cooperate on global environmental initiatives. By fostering international cooperation, universities can develop an environment for students to access international programs, participate in mobilities, and participate in other kinds of study programs.

AzTU has the right to promote public engagement and communication through outreach programs, lectures, seminars, conferences, competitions and social media campaigns by involving students and academicians.

Environmental Issues

Academicians are able to study and address pressing environmental issues without constraints. This freedom allows scholars to investigate the most challenging topics, propose innovative solutions, and promote environmental conservation and sustainability.

All staff and students should follow ethical rules to prevent the wasteful use of resources and care about environmental protection on campus.

Academic freedom in environmental studies is supported by providing access to cutting-edge resources and facilities dedicated to sustainability research.

Inclusivity and Academic Freedom

Indeed, one of the main goals of academic freedom is to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within educational institutions. Upholding the right to express different opinions, as long as it's done politely and respectfully, is fundamental in fostering an environment where different

perspectives can be shared and discussed freely in the classroom and research environment regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, disability, economic status, and other diverse backgrounds at AzTU.

Limitations of Academic Freedom

With all the above mentioned, this freedom is not absolute if it fails to properly acknowledge the ways academic freedoms can infringe upon — or clearly violate — the freedoms of others. It needs to recognize how academic freedoms might interfere with or disregard the rights of others. Academic freedom, like other freedoms, are limited by the presence of other freedoms and the ethical responsibilities they impose on researchers.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years. The previous version of the policy will remain in full force and effects until the adoption of new version.