



**Standards and Guidelines for Disability Support Services**

**at**

**Azerbaijan Technical University Campus**

**Baku-2024**

# **Standards and Guidelines for Disability Support Services**

**at**

## **Azerbaijan Technical University Campus**

### **Introduction**

Azerbaijan Technical University (AzTU) is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities. The university strives to provide comprehensive support services to ensure equal opportunities and full participation in academic and campus life. This document outlines the support services available at AzTU for students with disabilities, as well as the conditions and implementation rules that ensure these services are effectively delivered.

### **Legal Frameworks and Standards**

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):** Promotes the rights of individuals with disabilities, including access to education.
- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):** Ensures digital resources are accessible.
- **National Laws:** Compliance with local disability rights laws and education policies.

### **Purpose**

AzTU is committed to creating an inclusive campus environment where all students, regardless of their abilities, have equal opportunities to thrive academically and socially. By providing comprehensive support services for mental health, visual and hearing impairments, mobility challenges, and learning disabilities, AzTU ensures that its campus is accessible and welcoming for all students. The implementation of these services is guided by strict conditions and rules designed to maintain quality and inclusivity, ensuring that students with disabilities have the resources they need to succeed.

## Inclusive Campus Culture

Creating a culture of inclusivity involves more than infrastructure:

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Hosting events to educate the university community about disabilities.
- **Student Organizations:** Supporting clubs or groups that advocate for disability rights and inclusion.
- **Celebrating Diversity:** Observing days like the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

## Types of Disabilities

Category of Disability	Description	Examples
<b>Physical Disabilities</b>	Impairments affecting mobility, dexterity, or physical functioning.	Spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy
<b>Sensory Disabilities</b>	Vision or hearing impairments.	Blindness, deafness, low vision, hearing loss
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>	Challenges with acquiring knowledge and skills due to neurological differences.	Dyslexia, ADHD
<b>Mental Health Conditions</b>	Emotional or psychological disorders impacting daily functioning.	Depression, anxiety, PTSD
<b>Chronic Illnesses</b>	Ongoing medical conditions that may affect stamina or concentration.	Diabetes, epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome

## Barriers Faced by Students with Disabilities

TYPE OF BARRIER	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
<b>PHYSICAL BARRIERS</b>	Inaccessible infrastructure that limits mobility or access.	Inaccessible buildings, lack of ramps, narrow doorways, absence of elevators
<b>COMMUNICATION BARRIERS</b>	Challenges in exchanging information due to lack of supportive systems for sensory impairments.	Lack of interpreters, absence of captioning, no assistive technologies
<b>ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS</b>	Negative perceptions or lack of awareness leading to exclusion.	Stereotypes, stigma, lack of awareness among peers and faculty
<b>TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS</b>	Non-inclusive digital and technological systems.	Non-accessible software, websites, or digital resources
<b>SYSTEMIC BARRIERS</b>	Policies or practices that fail to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities.	Fixed exam times, inflexible attendance rules

## **Support Services for Mental Health Conditions**

AzTU recognizes the importance of mental health and well-being in academic success. The university offers a range of mental health support services designed to help students manage stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges.

### **Conditions for Implementation:**

- **Trained professionals:** Counselors, psychologists, and mental health professionals are available to students.
- **Confidentiality:** All mental health services ensure privacy and confidentiality to encourage student engagement.
- **Awareness:** Programs to reduce stigma and increase awareness about mental health within the university community.

### **Implementation Rules:**

- Establish a confidential counseling center staffed by licensed professionals.
- Provide mental health workshops and awareness campaigns throughout the academic year.
- Integrate mental health resources into university events and orientations to ensure students are informed about available support.

### **Responsible Body: Student Support and Social Center**

- **Role:** The Student Support and Social Center is responsible for providing mental health support services, including counseling, stress management workshops, and mental health awareness campaigns. This body ensures confidentiality, availability of trained professionals, and the integration of mental health initiatives across campus activities.
- **Collaboration:** The Student Support and Social Center works closely with the University Health Center and faculty members to promote mental well-being and to offer a referral system when necessary.

## **Built-in Accessibility Computer Systems for Visually Impaired**

AzTU is committed to providing accessible digital resources and technologies for students with visual impairments. The university ensures that students have access to specialized computer materials.

### **Conditions for Implementation:**

- **Accessible content:** All online learning materials, websites, and resources meet accessibility standards.
- **Training:** Students and staff are trained in using accessibility tools.

### **Implementation Rules:**

- Provide accessible workstations in computer labs.
- Ensure that all online courses, resources, and university websites are optimized for accessibility in line with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).
- Establish a technical support team for assisting visually impaired students in using accessibility tools.
- Offer training programs for staff and students to ensure proficient use of accessible technology.

### **Responsible Body: IT Services Department**

- **Role:** The IT Services Department is responsible for providing and maintaining accessibility features in computer labs. This body ensures that the digital infrastructure of the university is accessible to visually impaired students.
- **Collaboration:** The IT department collaborates with the Disability Support Office and academic departments to ensure that all digital content, including course materials and websites, meet accessibility standards.

## **Sign Language Interpreter or Note-Takers for Hearing Impaired**

To support students with hearing impairments, AZTU provides sign language interpreters and note-taking services. This ensures that hearing-impaired students can fully participate in lectures, discussions, and other academic activities.

### **Conditions for Implementation:**

- **Qualified personnel:** Certified sign language interpreters and note-takers are available.
- **Advanced planning:** Services are scheduled in advance to ensure availability during academic activities.
- **Inclusive communication:** Faculty and staff are trained to communicate inclusively with hearing-impaired students.

### **Implementation Rules:**

- Implement a request system for students to book interpreters or note-takers in advance for lectures, exams, and other events.
- Train faculty to adopt inclusive teaching practices, such as speaking clearly, ensuring that lectures are audible, and providing captions when applicable.
- Maintain a roster of certified interpreters and note-takers for quick access.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of these services through student feedback to make necessary improvements.

### **Responsible Body: Social Center**

- **Role:** The Social Center is responsible for coordinating services such as sign language interpreters and note-takers for students with hearing impairments. The office manages requests for these services, ensures their availability during lectures and events, and monitors their effectiveness.
- **Collaboration:** The Social Center collaborates with the Registrar's Office to collect information about students requiring accommodations and coordinates with faculty members to ensure that students receive appropriate support during their courses.

## **Campus Accessibility: Wheelchair Ramps, Disabled Toilets, and Parking Access**

AzTU ensures that the campus is fully accessible to students with mobility impairments. The campus is equipped with wheelchair ramps, and designated parking spaces, and an accessibility map is preparing and will be available to guide students.

### **Conditions for Implementation:**

- **Physical infrastructure:** The campus is equipped with accessible ramps and parking.
- **Clear signage:** Proper signage are available to guide students to accessible facilities.
- **Regular maintenance:** Accessible facilities are maintained and updated as needed.

### **Implementation Rules:**

- Provide an up-to-date digital and printed map that highlights accessible routes, restrooms, and parking spots.
- Ensure all academic and public buildings are wheelchair accessible, including classrooms, libraries, and sports facilities.
- Conduct regular audits of the accessibility infrastructure to ensure functionality and compliance with accessibility standards.
- Ensure that parking spaces designated for individuals with disabilities are located near key entrances and are reserved for authorized users.

### **Responsible Body: Campus Facilities Management and Planning Office**

- **Role:** The Campus Facilities Management and Planning Office is responsible for ensuring that all campus buildings, pathways, and outdoor spaces are accessible to students with mobility impairments. This includes the installation and maintenance of wheelchair ramps, accessible toilets, and designated parking spaces.
- **Collaboration:** This office works in partnership with the University's Accessibility Committee and external contractors to maintain infrastructure and update the accessibility map. The Campus Facilities Office also coordinates with the Disability Support Office to respond to specific needs as they arise.

## Dedicated Academic Support for Students with Learning Disabilities

AzTU is committed to supporting students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, or other cognitive challenges. The university provides tailored academic support to ensure these students can succeed academically.

### Conditions for Implementation:

- **Personalized support:** Even though academic services are tailored to each student's individual learning needs, they participate in the same classes with all students.
- **Qualified staff:** The university employ specialized staff, such as learning support tutors and academic advisors.
- **Reasonable accommodations:** Students are provided with accommodations to ensure equal academic opportunities.

### Implementation Rules:

- Develop a process for students to register their learning disabilities with the disability support office.
- Offer accommodations such as extended exam times, personalized tutoring, and alternative formats for course materials.
- Work with academic departments to adapt teaching methods, providing extra tutorials, alternative assessments, or assistive learning tools.
- Provide resources like quiet study spaces, writing support, and workshops on time management and study skills.
- Regularly review and assess the effectiveness of academic accommodations based on student feedback.

### Responsible Body: Academic Support Center

- **Role:** The Academic Support Center is responsible for providing personalized academic support for students with learning disabilities. This includes offering tutoring, arranging accommodations such as extended exam times, and providing alternative learning resources tailored to individual needs.
- **Collaboration:** The Academic Support Center works closely with academic departments and faculty members to ensure that teaching methods are adapted to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities. The center also collaborates with the Disability Support Office to implement reasonable accommodations and review student progress.