AZERBAIJAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are fundamental to Azerbaijan Technical University's (hereinafter "AzTU") mission as a public higher-education institution. An inclusive academic and working environment supports academic excellence, fair access to opportunity, institutional integrity, and the wellbeing of students and staff.

AzTU is committed to fostering an environment in which individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and where differences are recognised as a source of strength. AzTU seeks to ensure that decisions, practices, and institutional culture do not create unjustified barriers or result in discrimination, whether direct or indirect.

The purpose of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy (hereinafter the "Policy") is to establish a clear institutional framework for equality, diversity, and inclusion at AzTU. It defines core principles, governance expectations, and oversight mechanisms applicable across AzTU. This Policy applies to both students and staff and informs how equality and inclusion considerations are embedded across academic, administrative, and decision-making processes.

This Policy does not replace specific procedures related to recruitment, admissions, assessment, or grievance handling. Such processes are governed by separate instruments, which are expected to align with the principles and standards set out in this Policy.

2. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following terms are used with the meanings set out below. These definitions support a shared understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion across AzTU:

- **Equality:** The principle that individuals are afforded fair treatment and equal opportunity, and are not disadvantaged by unjustified barriers or discriminatory practices;
- **Diversity:** The presence and recognition of differences among individuals and groups, including but not limited to differences in background, experience, identity, and perspective;
- **Inclusion:** The creation of an environment in which all individuals feel respected, valued, and able to participate fully in academic, professional, and institutional life;
- **Discrimination:** Unjustified differential treatment of an individual or group that results in disadvantage, whether direct or indirect, and whether intentional or unintentional;
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a personal characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment;
- **Bullying:** Repeated or persistent behaviour that is intended to intimidate, undermine, or harm an individual, including through misuse of power or position;
- **Victimisation:** Unfavourable treatment of an individual as a result of raising, supporting, or participating in an equality- or inclusion-related concern or complaint;
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** Appropriate and proportionate adjustments made to enable individuals to access education, employment, or services on an equal basis with others;
- **Protected Characteristics:** Personal attributes or circumstances for which discrimination is prohibited under applicable law or institutional policy, including those recognised within the higher-education context.

3. APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies across AzTU and sets expectations for equality, diversity, and inclusion in institutional conduct, decision-making, and interactions within the AzTU community.

Specifically, this Policy applies to:

- students, including applicants, enrolled learners, and participants in academic activities;
- staff, including academic, administrative, and support personnel, regardless of contract type;
- institutional decision-making, including policies, practices, and processes related to admissions, recruitment, progression, assessment, and access to services;
- learning, working, and social environments associated with AzTU, including on-campus and AzTU-related activities.

This Policy establishes principles and governance expectations. It does not replace specific procedures governing admissions, recruitment, performance management, disciplinary action, or grievance handling. Such procedures are set out in separate instruments and are expected to operate in alignment with this Policy.

4. GOVERNANCE

Governance of equality, diversity, and inclusion at AzTU is exercised through institutional structures responsible for leadership, people management, and the academic environment. This Policy assigns clear accountability for setting EDI expectations, overseeing their application, and ensuring that equality and inclusion considerations are embedded into institutional decision-making.

Governance responsibilities under this Policy are allocated as follows:

- **Rectorate:** Provides overall institutional oversight of the EDI framework, approves this Policy and any subsequent revisions, and ensures alignment with AzTU's strategic objectives and public-institution responsibilities;
- **Vice-Rector responsible for Human Resources and Social Affairs:** Holds executive responsibility for EDI governance, including oversight of Policy implementation, coordination across staff- and student-related domains, and escalation of material EDI-related risks or issues;
- **Department of Human Resources Management:** Ensures that EDI principles are integrated into staff-related policies and practices, including recruitment, progression, performance management, and workplace conduct, in alignment with this Policy;
- **Education Department:** Supports the application of EDI principles within academic processes, including curriculum delivery, assessment practices, and learning environments, consistent with the scope of this Policy.

Governance and escalation arrangements operate within AzTU's established institutional decision-making framework. This ensures that responsibility for EDI remains clearly assigned to functions with direct relevance, without extending governance obligations beyond what is necessary for effective oversight.

5. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FRAMEWORK AND INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

This section sets out the institutional standards that guide how AzTU promotes equality, values diversity, and fosters inclusion across its academic and working environment. The standards apply to students and staff and inform institutional culture, decision-making, and conduct.

5.1. Equality of Opportunity and Fair Treatment

AzTU is committed to ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged by unjustified barriers or discriminatory practices. Equality considerations are integrated into institutional processes affecting access, participation, progression, and outcomes for both students and staff.

AzTU seeks to identify and address structural or procedural factors that may result in unequal treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, and to promote fair and transparent decision-making across the institution.

5.2. Diversity and Inclusive Institutional Culture

AzTU recognises diversity as an integral feature of the academic community and values differences in background, experience, identity, and perspective. An inclusive institutional culture supports collaboration, innovation, and academic excellence.

In fostering inclusion, AzTU emphasises:

- respectful interaction and communication within the AzTU community; and
- practices that enable participation and engagement across diverse groups.

5.3. Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation

AzTU seeks to ensure that learning and working environments are accessible and that reasonable accommodation is provided where required. Accessibility considerations are addressed proactively to reduce barriers and support equitable participation.

Reasonable accommodation is approached as a shared institutional responsibility and applied in a manner that is proportionate, transparent, and aligned with academic and operational requirements.

5.4. Dignity, Respect, and Freedom from Harassment

AzTU expects all members of the AzTU community to act with dignity and respect. Behaviour that constitutes harassment, bullying, or victimisation is not compatible with AzTU's values or institutional standards.

Students and staff have access to established institutional mechanisms for raising EDI-related concerns or complaints. Such matters are addressed through defined escalation and oversight processes, consistent with this Policy and applicable institutional procedures.

5.5. Awareness, Capability, and Institutional Responsibility

Effective implementation of EDI standards depends on awareness and shared responsibility across the University. AzTU promotes understanding of equality and inclusion principles and encourages practices that support an inclusive academic and working environment.

Responsibility for EDI is embedded across leadership, management, and academic roles, ensuring that equality and inclusion considerations are integrated into institutional activities.

5.6. Forms of Discrimination and Unacceptable Conduct

AzTU does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, or other forms of conduct that undermine dignity, equality, or inclusion. Such conduct may occur intentionally or unintentionally and may arise through actions, omissions, or institutional practices.

Unacceptable conduct under this Policy includes, but is not limited to:

- direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of protected or personal characteristics;
- harassment, including verbal, non-verbal, physical, or digital behaviour that violates dignity;
- bullying, intimidation, or abuse of power; and
- victimisation of individuals who raise, support, or participate in EDI-related concerns.

These standards apply across academic, administrative, and social contexts associated with AzTU and form part of AzTU's expectations for professional and respectful conduct.

5.7. Institutional Standards for Raising and Addressing EDI Concerns

AzTU recognises the importance of accessible, fair, and trusted mechanisms for addressing equality- and inclusion-related concerns. AzTU ensures that students and staff are able to raise concerns or complaints related to discrimination, harassment, or exclusion without fear of retaliation.

Institutional standards for handling EDI-related concerns include:

- clarity regarding available reporting and complaint channels;
- impartial and timely handling of concerns;
- protection of confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible; and
- safeguards against victimisation.

These standards govern how formal EDI-related complaints are addressed at institutional level. Detailed procedures, evidentiary requirements, and timelines are defined in separate instruments and applied in alignment with this Policy.

5.8. Employment Placement of Persons from Special Groups

AzTU provides employment opportunities to persons with disabilities, family members of martyrs and war veterans (Qazi). In accordance with the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and, where applicable, the conclusion of the medical and social expert commission and the individual rehabilitation programme, persons from these groups are directed to non-technical positions, including humanitarian, administrative and clerical, assistant, library and other similar positions.

Working conditions for these positions are arranged in line with the Labour Code, including reduced working hours for employees with category I and II disabilities (Article 91), part-time work on the employee's application where supported by medical findings (Article 94) and night work only with the employee's written consent (Article 98). The Department of Human Resources Management coordinates placement and keeps records of employees from these groups.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation focuses on integration into existing academic, administrative, and people-management processes rather than the creation of parallel systems.

6.1. Integration into Institutional Processes

EDI standards are embedded into institutional processes affecting students and staff, including recruitment, admissions, teaching and learning, assessment, performance management, and access to services. This ensures that equality and inclusion considerations are addressed at the decision-making stage rather than retrospectively.

Integration is achieved through alignment of internal policies, guidance, and practices with the principles set out in this Policy.

6.2. Supporting Instruments and Procedures

Where necessary, AzTU maintains supporting instruments that operationalise this Policy. These instruments provide practical guidance on matters such as reasonable accommodation, conduct expectations, and complaint handling, while preserving this Policy's governance-level focus.

Supporting instruments are developed and applied in a manner consistent with this Policy and reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment.

Formal EDI-related complaints are addressed through established institutional procedures that give effect to the standards set out in this Policy and support consistent, fair, and timely resolution.

7. MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Monitoring under this Policy ensures that equality, diversity, and inclusion principles are applied consistently across AzTU and that institutional practices align with the standards set out in this document. Monitoring focuses on governance oversight, identification of systemic risks, and continuous improvement, rather than individual case management.

Information relevant to EDI governance is drawn from existing institutional sources, including staff and student feedback, periodic internal reviews, and aggregated information from EDI-related processes. Monitoring outcomes support informed decision-making and guide institutional priorities related to equality and inclusion.

7.1. Institutional Monitoring of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

AzTU monitors the application of EDI standards across academic, administrative, and working environments. This includes oversight of how equality and inclusion considerations are reflected in institutional practices affecting access, participation, progression, and treatment of students and staff.

Monitoring at institutional level is intended to identify patterns, emerging risks, and areas requiring improvement, and to support evidence-informed development of EDI-related initiatives and measures.

7.2. EDI Complaints and Grievance Oversight

Oversight of EDI-related complaints forms a key component of monitoring under this Policy. AzTU does not monitor individual cases within this Policy but ensures that complaint-handling mechanisms operate in line with agreed institutional standards.

7.2.1. Right to Raise Concerns

AzTU monitors whether students and staff are able to raise EDI-related concerns and complaints without fear of retaliation or disadvantage. This includes oversight of awareness of available reporting channels and confidence in institutional responses.

7.2.2. Principles Governing Complaint Handling

Monitoring assesses whether EDI-related complaints are handled in accordance with institutional principles of fairness, impartiality, confidentiality, and protection from victimisation[1]. Oversight focuses on process integrity and consistency rather than case-specific outcomes.

7.2.3. Outcomes, Corrective Measures, and Sanctions

Aggregated monitoring considers the outcomes of EDI-related complaint processes, including the use of corrective actions and, where applicable, disciplinary or institutional sanctions. This enables AzTU to identify recurring issues, address systemic weaknesses, and strengthen preventive and educational measures.

Monitoring results are reviewed through established governance channels and inform updates to supporting instruments, awareness activities, and, where necessary, revisions to this Policy.

8. POLICY EVOLUTION

This Policy is subject to periodic review to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional priorities and external expectations. Reviews consider monitoring outcomes, institutional experience, and developments in best practice related to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The Policy is reviewed every two years or earlier if required due to material institutional or regulatory changes. Any revisions are approved by the Rectorate and communicated through established institutional channels. Substantive procedural changes are addressed through separate supporting instruments rather than through this Policy.

[1] Principles of impartiality and victim-protection reflect UN Women's "Safe Universities Initiative" Framework (2021)

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

