



SUMGAYIT STATE
UNIVERSITY

Academic Freedom Policy
Sumgayit State University

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1. Purpose and Principles

Academic freedom is a fundamental value of higher education and a cornerstone of scholarly excellence, innovation, and critical inquiry. It enables members of the academic community to pursue knowledge, conduct research, teach, publish findings, and communicate ideas without undue interference or censorship.

Sumgayit State University (SSU) is committed to protecting academic freedom while maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity, research ethics, and professional responsibility.

Academic freedom allows the University to fulfill its mission of generating knowledge, supporting innovation, and contributing to societal development.

2. Definitions

Academic Freedom

The right of scholars and students to conduct research, teach, publish, and discuss ideas without censorship or institutional interference.

Academic Integrity

The commitment to honesty, transparency, and ethical behavior in research, teaching, and academic communication.

Research Ethics

Standards guiding responsible research practices, including respect for intellectual property, responsible data management, and avoidance of plagiarism or research misconduct.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all members of the academic community at Sumgayit State University, including:

- faculty members and academic staff
- researchers and doctoral candidates
- students involved in research activities
- academic departments, faculties, and research units

The policy also applies to research collaborations with national and international institutions, research organizations, and industry partners.

4. Rights Associated with Academic Freedom

Members of the University community have the right to:

- Conduct independent research and determine appropriate research topics and methodologies.
 - Participate in disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary research.
 - Collaborate with national and international academic institutions.
 - Teach and discuss academic subjects within the scope of their expertise.
 - Encourage critical thinking and academic debate among students.
 - Publish research findings without censorship or institutional interference.
 - Participate in academic conferences, seminars, and public discourse.
 - Access institutional resources and research infrastructure necessary for scholarly activities.
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5. Responsibilities Associated with Academic Freedom

Academic freedom must be exercised responsibly. Members of the academic community are expected to:

- Follow principles of academic integrity and ethical research conduct.

- Avoid plagiarism, data fabrication, and falsification.
 - Respect intellectual property rights.
 - Maintain professional standards in teaching, research, and academic communication.
 - Ensure responsible dissemination of research findings.
 - Promote respectful and constructive academic dialogue.
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6. Institutional Responsibilities

Sumgayit State University commits to:

- Protecting academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
- Promoting an inclusive and respectful academic environment.
- Supporting innovative and interdisciplinary research.
- Encouraging participation in international research programs and academic networks.
- Providing research infrastructure, resources, and institutional support.
- Ensuring transparent and fair academic governance processes.

The University will take appropriate measures to prevent internal or external pressures that may threaten academic freedom.

7. Protection Against Undue Interference

No member of the academic community shall face discrimination, disciplinary action, or retaliation for exercising academic freedom in accordance with this policy.

Academic staff and researchers are protected from:

- censorship of scholarly work
- suppression of legitimate academic debate
- unfair restrictions on research activities
- retaliation related to academic expression

Any limitation on academic freedom must be justified by legal requirements, ethical standards, or professional academic conduct.

8. Research Evaluation and Academic Recognition

Evaluation of academic performance will be conducted using fair, transparent, and balanced criteria, including:

- quality and impact of publications
- research contributions and innovation
- participation in national and international research projects

- academic collaboration and knowledge exchange
- societal and economic impact of research activities

Bibliometric indicators and journal metrics may be considered but will **not be the sole basis for research evaluation**.

9. Governance and Implementation

Oversight of academic freedom at Sumgayit State University will be carried out through the University's academic governance structures, including:

- the Scientific Council
- research and innovation committees
- academic departments and faculties

These bodies will monitor academic conditions, support research development, and ensure the effective implementation of this policy.

10. Complaints and Appeals

Members of the University community who believe their academic freedom has been violated may submit a complaint through established institutional procedures.

The University will ensure that:

- complaints are reviewed fairly and transparently
 - confidentiality is respected
 - appropriate actions are taken when violations are identified
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11. Policy Authority and Approval

This policy is approved by the governing academic bodies of Sumgayit State University and applies to all academic units.

The policy supports the University's strategic goals and aligns with international higher education standards.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with international academic standards, developments in higher education, and the strategic priorities of Sumgayit State University.

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