



**SUMGAYIT STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Sumgayit State University

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1. Purpose and Principles

Sumgayit State University is committed to providing an academic and working environment that is **respectful, inclusive, and free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.**

The University promotes equality and diversity in all academic, administrative, and social activities. Every member of the University community must be treated with dignity and respect.

This policy establishes standards and procedures to **prevent discrimination, respond to complaints, and promote an inclusive educational environment.**

The policy supports the University's mission of advancing knowledge and innovation in a community that values diversity and equal opportunity.

2. Definitions

Discrimination

Discrimination refers to unfavorable or unequal treatment of an individual based on personal characteristics or protected attributes.

Harassment

Harassment is unwelcome conduct related to a protected characteristic that is severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Retaliation

Retaliation refers to any adverse action taken against an individual because they reported discrimination or participated in an investigation.

Protected Categories

Protected characteristics include, but are not limited to:

- age
 - gender
 - sexual orientation
 - disability or physical limitation
 - health condition
 - race or ethnicity
 - religion or belief
 - marital status
 - pregnancy or parenthood
 - social status or family background
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3. Legal Framework

This policy is implemented in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and relevant international principles of equality and human rights.

The University ensures compliance with national laws relating to:

- equality and non-discrimination
- employment rights
- human dignity and protection from harassment

The University also supports international standards promoting **equal opportunity and inclusive education**.

4. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including:

- faculty and academic staff
- administrative staff
- researchers and project personnel
- students
- visiting scholars
- contractors and external collaborators

The policy applies to conduct occurring:

- on campus
 - during University-related activities
 - through digital communication platforms and social media
 - in any context connected to University activities
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5. Principles of Equality and Non-Discrimination

The University is committed to the following principles:

- equality of opportunity
- respect for diversity and inclusion
- fairness in academic and employment decisions
- dignity and respect for all individuals
- prevention of discrimination and harassment
- transparency and accountability in institutional processes

These principles guide all University policies, procedures, and decision-making processes.

6. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited:

- discrimination based on protected characteristics
- harassment or bullying
- offensive or hostile conduct that interferes with academic or professional participation
- exclusion from educational or employment opportunities
- discriminatory hiring, promotion, or evaluation practices
- retaliation against individuals who report discrimination

Prohibited conduct may occur **in person or through electronic communication**, including emails, social media, or other digital platforms.

7. Harassment and Retaliation

Harassment includes behavior that:

- is severe, persistent, or pervasive
- creates a hostile or intimidating environment
- interferes with participation in academic or work activities

Examples may include:

- offensive comments or jokes
- verbal or written abuse
- threatening behavior
- unwanted physical conduct
- discriminatory treatment

Retaliation against individuals who report misconduct or participate in investigations is strictly prohibited.

8. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

Sumgayit State University recognizes the importance of **academic freedom and freedom of expression** in higher education.

Faculty members, researchers, and students are free to express ideas and engage in academic debate within the framework of scholarly standards.

However, academic freedom and freedom of expression **do not protect conduct that constitutes discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.**

The University balances the protection of academic freedom with the responsibility to maintain a respectful and inclusive environment.

9. Supportive and Remedial Measures

The University provides appropriate support measures for individuals affected by discrimination or harassment.

Support measures may include:

- confidential consultations
- academic or workplace adjustments
- mediation and conflict resolution
- counseling or support services

- temporary protective measures where necessary

These measures are provided **free of charge whenever possible** and are intended to ensure a safe and supportive environment.

10. Responsibilities of the University Community

All members of the University community are responsible for:

- respecting diversity and inclusion
- avoiding discriminatory behavior
- promoting a respectful academic environment
- reporting suspected violations of this policy

Managers, supervisors, and academic leaders have additional responsibilities to:

- address complaints promptly
 - promote equality and fairness in decision-making
 - ensure compliance with institutional policies.
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11. Reporting and Complaint Procedures

Individuals who experience or witness discrimination or harassment are encouraged to report concerns as early as possible.

Reports may be submitted to:

- supervisors or line managers
- academic leadership
- designated University administrative offices
- confidential support resources

The University will ensure that complaints are **investigated promptly, fairly, and confidentially**.

12. Protection Against Retaliation

The University strictly prohibits retaliation against individuals who:

- report discrimination or harassment
- participate in investigations or complaint procedures
- support individuals who raise concerns

Individuals who raise concerns in good faith will be protected from negative consequences.

13. Monitoring, Compliance, and Review

The University will monitor the implementation of this policy through internal oversight mechanisms.

Monitoring activities may include:

- periodic policy reviews
- analysis of reported cases
- institutional assessments of equality and inclusion
- training and awareness programs

These measures help ensure continuous improvement of the University's commitment to equality.

14. Policy Authority and Review

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

The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with national legislation, international standards, and the University's strategic objectives.

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