

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy document is to define the principles aimed at establishing an academic, professional, and social environment at Azerbaijan State Agricultural University that is entirely free from forms of gender-based discrimination and violence. It seeks to outline the framework for the informational, preventative, supportive, and empowerment initiatives that will be undertaken within this scope and to contribute to the processes that will be activated in response to instances of gender-based discrimination and violence.

This document does not intend to strictly regulate interpersonal relationships, prevent consensual relationships between equals, impose a specific sexual behavior or morality, restrict freedom of expression or the environment for open discussion, or subject individuals to official processes and sanctions. Rather, its aim is to create an academic and professional environment free from sexual harassment and violence.

2. Scope

Through this document, the university pledges to raise stakeholders' awareness, prevent incidents related to discrimination, harassment, and violence, and to establish and implement investigative, support, and empowerment mechanisms as necessary in response to complaints and allegations.

The provisions in this policy document encompass all forms of non-consensual sexual conduct, gender-based discrimination, and behaviors such as threats and deprivation of freedom directed at others by any stakeholder of the university, whether directed at one another or third parties. These provisions apply not only on the university campus and during working hours but also extend to all physical and digital environments where university students, employees, campus-based private personnel, contractors, and visitors may be present together.

3. Definitions and Properties

The university is committed to respecting the individual rights and cultural diversity of its students and staff. Any behavior that constitutes discrimination or harassment, whether direct or indirect, is strictly prohibited. Such behaviors include:

- Any verbal, physical, or sexual approach that is not consented to by the other party, including unwelcome physical contact, suggestions, or touching;
- Remarks or comments on an individual's personal appearance, body, or lifestyle related to their race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any other characteristic;
- Statements or threats that imply or suggest a connection between an employee or student's tolerance of sexual harassment and their employment status, promotion prospects, salary, or academic grades;
- The display of obscene or discriminatory graphics, cartoons, pictures, or photographs related to race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any other personal characteristic in the workplace, except when utilized explicitly for educational purposes;
- Obscene stories, jokes, suggestive remarks, or comments about race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any personal attribute;
- Emotional or physical relationships involving any faculty member from Kadir Has University that extend beyond a student-teacher or administrator-employee dynamic with

any student, especially if such relationships result in favoritism of the involved party compared to others; behaviors that indicate, attempt, or can be interpreted as an intent toward such a relationship are also included;

- Verbal assaults;
- Mobbing (harassment): unwarranted accusations, humiliation, general harassment, or emotional abuse perpetrated by a group toward an individual.

4. Prevention and Investigation Processes

1. In situations that may be considered sexual harassment, psychological pressure, or discrimination, the Rector shall, upon receiving a complaint from the employee who is a victim or a witness to the incident, promptly instruct a commission composed of at least three members to conduct an immediate investigation.
2. Azerbaijan State Agricultural University takes both written and verbal complaints regarding potential sexual harassment, psychological pressure, or discrimination seriously; it acts swiftly with appropriate procedures that consider the nature and severity of the reported incident to clarify the matter. These procedures include initiating investigation and inquiry, implementing protective measures to ensure the well-being of those involved, and applying disciplinary sanctions based on the investigation's outcome.

5. Right to Defense

No investigation report may be prepared without first obtaining the defense of the individual under investigation. The established commission allows a minimum period of seven business days for the individual to submit a written defense or to provide an oral defense on a specified date. Those who do not submit their defense within the given time frame or fail to provide documented justification for their absence within this period will be considered to have waived their right to defense. In the invitation letter sent to the person under investigation, it is stated both the nature of the act for which their statement is being sought and that failure to present a defense within the specified time will be deemed as a waiver of their right to defense.

6. Ensuring Confidentiality

Azerbaijan State Agricultural University upholds the principle of confidentiality at all stages of handling allegations of sexual harassment, psychological pressure, and discrimination. This commitment applies to both the accused and the complainant, as well as witnesses involved in the process. Members of the commission and all individuals responsible for implementing these guidelines are required to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved, with the highest level of care. At each stage of implementing these guidelines, it is essential to protect the confidentiality of parties and witnesses, preventing any risk to their security or safety from others.

7. Education and Awareness

1. All new employees at Azerbaijan State Agricultural University receive training as part of the orientation program on the relevant procedures outlined in these Guidelines and aimed at increasing awareness regarding Sexual Harassment, Psychological Pressure, and Discrimination.

2. All academic and administrative staff, as well as representatives and employees of subcontractor firms at Azerbaijan State Agricultural University, are required to attend an awareness program on Sexual Harassment, Psychological Pressure, and Discrimination every two years, with a minimum duration of two hours.

8. Enforcement

These Guidelines entered into force on October 26, 2022, and are published on the Azerbaijan State Agricultural University website to ensure accessibility for all.

The date the policy was created	26.10.2022
The date the policy was reviewed	29.08.2024