BAKU
SLAVIC
UNIVERSITY



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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SECTION 1.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Baku Slavic University (BSU) is firmly committed to embedding the principles of equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion into every layer of its academic and institutional structure. Our aim is to foster a safe, respectful, and supportive environment where every member of the university community – including students, staff, faculty, and partners – feels valued and empowered.

The university embraces and celebrates diversity in all its forms, regardless of age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or belief systems. This commitment is reflected in our multinational student body and BSU's strong tradition in the teaching of multiple foreign languages, which enhances cross-cultural understanding and broadens intellectual horizons.

Diversity is seen not only as a value but also as a strategic asset that strengthens our academic and social life. By nurturing a truly multicultural community, BSU enriches the educational experience for everyone involved.

This policy aligns with the university's wider mission to deliver high-quality teaching, promote critical thinking, and conduct research that responds to societal challenges – all rooted in the core values of inclusivity, fairness, and global engagement.

SECTION 2.

2.1. LEGAL BASIS

The legal basis of Baku Slavic University's "EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION" policy document is founded on the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the university's internal normative documents. This policy is supported by legal documents such as the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Law on Education, the Law on Gender Equality, the Labor Code, and BSU's internal normative documents.

SECTION 3.

3.1. COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Baku Slavic University (BSU) is deeply committed to upholding the principles of equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion across all spheres of its academic and institutional operations. Our core objective is to ensure that every member of the university community – including students, academic and administrative staff, faculty members, and institutional partners – is treated with dignity, fairness, and mutual respect, and enjoys equal opportunities to learn, work, and thrive in a safe and inclusive environment.

We are steadfast in our efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimization, while fostering a university culture where diversity is not only respected, but celebrated as a strategic asset that enhances creativity, intercultural dialogue, and global engagement.

BSU's vision is shaped by both international human rights frameworks and national education policies, and is strongly aligned with the institutional priorities defined in the "BSU 2030: Strategic Development Plan". These frameworks collectively guide our long-term commitment to advancing inclusive education, strengthening equitable participation, and building a cohesive, rights-based academic community.

SECTION 4.

4.1. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY AT BSU

Inclusive education constitutes a central pillar of BSU's equality agenda. We affirm that every student, regardless of background, ability, or personal circumstances, has the right to access high-quality, inclusive, and culturally relevant education that nurtures both academic excellence and personal growth.

Through our inclusive education policy, BSU aims to:

- Establish and enhance inclusive teaching and learning environments across all programs and disciplines;
- Align academic content and support services with the diverse needs of the student population;
- Implement competency-based training for faculty and staff to ensure effective inclusive practices;
- Foster a workplace culture grounded in inclusiveness, openness, and collaboration.

Our ultimate goal is to become a national leader in inclusive higher education and to earn international recognition for the strength and impact of our policies and practices in this area.

SECTION 5.

5.1. SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

BSU recognizes that some learners may face additional challenges or require tailored approaches to fulfill their academic potential. We are committed to providing support for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) by ensuring flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning pathways.

The categories of students who may require additional support include, but are not limited to:

- Students with physical or mental disabilities;
- Students experiencing communication, emotional, or learning difficulties;
- Gifted and highly talented students;
- International students or those whose first language differs from the language of instruction.

Guided by the International Baccalaureate (IB) philosophy, BSU promotes both cultural diversity and individualized educational planning, ensuring that no learner is left behind.

5.2. PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT BSU

BSU's inclusive education practices are built on the following foundational principles:

- Continuity: Students with SEN receive ongoing, adaptive support throughout all stages of their academic development.
- Consistency: All forms of support are implemented systematically, taking into account students' learning environments, family contexts, socio-emotional needs, and personal growth trajectories.
- Emotional Well-being: The university places high importance on fostering students' mental health, self-confidence, and emotional resilience as part of their overall educational success.
- Differentiated Approach: Teaching and support methods are tailored to individual students' strengths, challenges, and aspirations, recognizing that one size does not fit all.

5.3. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

In order to provide targeted and meaningful support, BSU develops and monitors Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with identified SEN. Each IEP serves as a structured framework for personalized academic success and includes:

1. Individual Characteristics: A profile of the student's specific needs, such as disabilities, giftedness, or language-related challenges;

2. Developmental Goals and Prioritized Tasks: Clearly defined objectives aligned with the student's potential and educational trajectory;

3. Support Mechanisms: A set of tools, strategies, and resources that facilitate progress toward achieving the outlined goals.
IEPs are developed in close collaboration with academic advisors, support staff, and – where appropriate – the student and their family. These plans are systematically reviewed at least twice a year to ensure their continued relevance and impact.

SECTION 6.

6.1. CORE VALUES OF THE POLICY

This policy document ensures a dedication to the values of inclusivity and fair treatment of individuals related to Baku Slavic University, regardless of age, gender, religion, disability, ethnicity, economic status, political views, and other beliefs. The Policy is aligned with BSU's overall mission to foster high-quality teaching, research, and social engagement, as well as promoting values of inclusivity, equality, and diversity. As a testament to this commitment to diversity and global engagement, Baku Slavic University welcomes students from a multitude of nationalities, enriching the academic and social environment and fostering a vibrant multicultural community that encourages cross-cultural understanding and broadens perspectives for all.

SECTION 7.

7.1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The primary purpose of this Policy Document is to ensure equal and fair opportunities for all members of Baku Slavic University (BSU). It envisions the creation of an inclusive, supportive, and respectful environment where every individual can fully realize their academic, professional, and personal potential.

Committed to the principles of equality and equity, BSU guarantees fair and equal access to all educational, research, and social activities for every member of its community. This commitment ensures that no one is discriminated against on the basis of gender, socio-economic status, language, religion, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristic. The University also places strong emphasis on equal participation and representation in all university-related activities, both on campus and beyond.

This policy serves as a guiding framework for promoting fair and inclusive practices across all aspects of university life—including admissions, academic development, human resources, and community engagement—and reflects BSU's dedication to fostering diversity and advancing social justice.

SECTION 8.

8.1. POLICY STATEMENTS

Baku Slavic University (BSU) is committed to upholding the principles of equality and equity in all areas of its activities. BSU's policies are developed and implemented in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and international human rights standards.

8.2. EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL, RESEARCH, AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

BSU guarantees equal and equitable access to educational, research, social and lifelong learning activities conducted both on and off campus. This commitment extends to students, staff, external participants and members of the general public, regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, age or socio-economic background.

The University ensures non-discriminatory access to educational resources, public lectures, community educational events, executive education programmes, vocational training and educational outreach activities. Appropriate accessibility measures and reasonable accommodations are provided to support inclusive participation.

8.3. EQUALITY AND EQUITY IN ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

BSU upholds equality and equity as fundamental principles in academic work, research, and community engagement, ensuring fair and equal treatment for all members.

8.4. RESPECTFUL AND BARRIER-FREE ENVIRONMENT

BSU fosters an inclusive and barrier-free environment where diverse identities and perspectives are respected and valued promoting respect for differing opinions and identities.

8.5. LIFELONG LEARNING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BSU emphasizes the promotion of lifelong learning programs and strengthens community support through student-led initiatives.

8.6. ZERO TOLERANCE TO DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND BULLYING

BSU applies a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, harassment, and bullying. All complaints are promptly and thoroughly investigated, and appropriate actions, including disciplinary measures, are taken.

The University is dedicated to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment and provides support to affected individuals.

8.7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BSU designates responsible bodies for the implementation and monitoring of this policy and regularly reviews and updates it to ensure its effectiveness.

8.8. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AMONG TEACHING STAFF

Baku Slavic University recognizes the importance of gender equality in enhancing educational quality and academic environment. The university is committed to promoting gender balance among its teaching staff by ensuring equitable recruitment, appointment, and professional development opportunities. Increasing the representation of female faculty members and supporting their advancement to leadership positions are prioritized. This commitment contributes to building an inclusive and equitable academic community.

8.9. PROMOTING EQUAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Baku Slavic University ensures equal career development and advancement opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender. The university maintains fairness and transparency in recruitment, appointment, and professional growth, actively preventing gender-based discrimination. This supports an inclusive work environment where all staff can fully realize their potential.

8.10. WOMEN'S ACCESS, EMPOWERMENT AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS AT BSU

Baku Slavic University (BSU) is firmly committed to ensuring equal access, participation, and empowerment of women across all dimensions of academic, research, and administrative life. The University recognizes that empowering women and advancing gender equality are essential for achieving social justice, institutional excellence, and sustainable development.

The University ensures a non-discriminatory admissions system where women's application and acceptance rates are routinely monitored to guarantee equal opportunity at the point of entry.

To achieve these goals, BSU guarantees:

- Equal Access to Education and Learning Opportunities

All educational programs, extracurricular activities, and capacity-building initiatives are equally open to women and men. BSU encourages women's active participation in academic disciplines where they have been historically underrepresented, promoting gender balance in all fields.

- Equal Access to Employment, Promotion, and Leadership

The University ensures transparent and fair recruitment, evaluation, and promotion processes that support women's advancement to academic and administrative leadership positions. Special emphasis is placed on increasing women's representation in decision-making and governance bodies.

- Research, Mentorship, and Professional Development

BSU promotes mentoring programs and professional development initiatives for female students, researchers, and academic staff. Experienced mentors – both male and female – provide guidance in career planning, academic publication, and leadership development.

The University encourages participation in national and international research networks supporting women in academia and innovation.

- Scholarships and Financial Support Mechanisms

To enhance access and retention, BSU introduces scholarship and grant opportunities for women demonstrating academic excellence, leadership potential, or engagement in social impact activities. The University also collaborates with external partners and NGOs to establish women-focused scholarship schemes aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 10).

- Work–Life Balance and Family-Friendly Policies

BSU adopts flexible working conditions, parental leave, and childcare-friendly arrangements to help women balance academic and professional responsibilities with family life. The University provides awareness programs to promote shared responsibilities and gender-sensitive workplace culture.

- Safe, Inclusive, and Supportive Environment

BSU maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination. Confidential reporting channels, psychological support services, and clear disciplinary procedures ensure the protection and well-being of all community members.

- Monitoring, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement

The Department of Inclusive and Adaptive Education, together with the Vice-Rectorate for Social Affairs and Public Relations, regularly monitors women's participation rates, representation in leadership roles, and access to scholarships or mentoring programs. Progress reports are reviewed annually by the Rectorate to ensure measurable improvement in gender equality indicators.

8.11. GENDER PAY EQUITY AND ELIMINATION OF GENDER PAY GAPS

Baku Slavic University upholds the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, regardless of gender, and is committed to identifying, measuring and eliminating unjustified gender-based pay disparities across academic, administrative, technical and support staff.

The University is committed to annual gender pay equity assessments based on gender-disaggregated remuneration data, including average and median pay, comparable positions, employment grades, working hours and relevant salary components.

The Human Resources Department, in cooperation with the Finance Department, is responsible for coordinating pay equity assessments and developing corrective measures to address unjustified disparities.

BSU promotes transparency and accountability through institutional monitoring and aggregated reporting, while ensuring the confidentiality of individual remuneration data.

These commitments are implemented in coordination with the University's Labour Rights and Decent Work Policy and in accordance with applicable national labour legislation.

8.12. MENTORING, COUNSELLING AND PEER SUPPORT FOR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Baku Slavic University is committed to providing accessible and inclusive mentoring, counselling and peer support programmes for students, staff and faculty from underrepresented and vulnerable groups.

These support mechanisms include:

- Individual academic guidance and mentoring;

- Psychological and social counselling;
- Individual Education Plans and disability-related support;
- Peer mentoring and social integration initiatives;
- Career counselling and professional development support;
- Targeted mentoring opportunities for underrepresented groups.

Relevant academic and administrative units coordinate these services, ensuring equal access, confidentiality, non-discrimination and respect for individual needs. The effectiveness of support programmes is regularly evaluated to identify barriers and improve institutional practices.

SECTION 9.

BSU ensures the precise and effective implementation of the following measures aimed at guaranteeing equality, fairness, and inclusivity for all members of the university community.

9.1. PREVENTION AND COMBATTING OF DISCRIMINATION

BSU takes proactive and operational measures to prevent any form of discrimination based on age, gender, religion, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, political views, or other differences. Relevant requirements are incorporated into all internal regulations and procedures of the university and are regularly updated.

9.2 INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

BSU enhances the accessibility of existing infrastructure to ensure the barrier-free participation of students and staff with disabilities in academic, social, and cultural life. When necessary, new accessible environments are created, and individual needs are met through appropriate technical tools and support services. These steps enable them to operate in an equitable and comfortable setting.

9.3 TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR AWARENESS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

BSU organizes ongoing and targeted trainings, seminars, and practical sessions on intercultural dialogue, equality, fairness, and inclusivity for all members of the university community. These programs foster respect for diversity, prevent discrimination, and promote inclusion by building knowledge.

9.4 EQUAL ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

All members of the BSU community have fair access to institutional resources and support services. Students and staff experiencing discrimination, harassment, or violence can utilize the university's existing complaint procedures. These procedures include guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality and are provided in an accessible and transparent manner.

9.5. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

BSU widely communicates its equality, diversity, and inclusivity policy to all members of the university community, primarily through electronic means. Additionally, continuous awareness campaigns, trainings, and promotional activities are held to ensure a safe, respectful, and accessible environment for everyone.

9.6. PROMOTION OF COLLABORATION AND PARTICIPATION

BSU strengthens cooperation with student organizations, staff, and external entities to actively involve the university community in promoting inclusivity and equality. These initiatives foster dialogue among diverse social groups, encourage exchange of experiences, and contribute significantly to the development of an inclusive environment.

SECTION 10.

10.1. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Baku Slavic University regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy. This process is coordinated by the Department of Inclusive and Adaptive Education, the Vice-Rectorate for Social Affairs and Public Relations, and the Center for Higher Education. They collect feedback, analyze diversity data, prepare annual reports, and ensure the continuous improvement of the policy based on the results. The approval of the policy and the adoption of key decisions are the responsibility of the Rectorate.

Gender pay equity forms part of the University's equality and inclusion monitoring framework. BSU is committed to reviewing gender-based remuneration disparities annually, monitoring corrective measures and assessing progress towards eliminating unjustified gender pay gaps. The findings inform institutional decision-making, policy improvement and aggregated reporting, in coordination with the Human Resources and Finance Departments.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Department of Inclusive and Adaptive Education serves as an institutional body responsible for advising the University administration on diversity, equity, inclusion and human rights matters. In cooperation with relevant administrative and academic units, the Department supports the development, implementation and monitoring of institutional policies, programmes, awareness-raising initiatives and training activities related to equality, diversity, inclusion, accessibility

and human rights across the University.

10.2. MONITORING APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Baku Slavic University is committed to systematically monitoring applications, admissions and enrolment of underrepresented and potentially underrepresented groups to identify barriers to higher education and promote equitable access.

The monitoring framework covers:

- Ethnic minorities;
- Students from low-income and socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Non-traditional students, including mature and first-generation students;
- Women;
- LGBT students;
- Students with disabilities;
- Newly settled refugee students;
- Internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups.

The University is committed to annual analysis of application numbers, admission rates, enrolment patterns and representation gaps, where reliable and lawfully collected data are available.

The Student Admissions and Academic Affairs Department, in cooperation with the Department of Inclusive and Adaptive Education and the Strategy and Quality Assurance Team, coordinates the monitoring process.

Sensitive personal information is collected only where lawful, necessary and based on appropriate voluntary disclosure and consent. Confidentiality, data protection and non-discrimination are ensured throughout the process.

Findings are reported in aggregated form and used to improve inclusive admission practices, targeted support programmes and institutional policies.

10.3. TARGETED RECRUITMENT OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Baku Slavic University is committed to implementing planned and targeted actions to attract students, staff and faculty from underrepresented and potentially underrepresented groups.

The University promotes equitable access through:

- Targeted educational outreach and recruitment campaigns in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities;
- Accessible admission and recruitment procedures for persons with disabilities;
- Scholarships and financial support opportunities for students from vulnerable backgrounds;
- Initiatives encouraging women to enter academic disciplines and professional positions where they are underrepresented;
- Inclusive vacancy announcements and non-discriminatory staff recruitment procedures;
- Cooperation with schools, regional education authorities, public institutions and community organisations to reach underrepresented groups.

Recruitment initiatives are informed by available institutional diversity data and reviewed annually to identify participation barriers and improve representation.

All admission and employment decisions are based on transparent, equitable and merit-based criteria in accordance with applicable legislation.

SECTION 11.

11.1. CONCLUSION

Baku Slavic University reaffirms its strong commitment to fostering an academic and institutional environment grounded in the principles of equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This policy document serves as a comprehensive framework for promoting a respectful, accessible, and supportive atmosphere for all members of the BSU community, enabling every individual–regardless of identity or background–to fully realize their potential.

By aligning this policy with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and international human rights standards, the university is dedicated to eliminating discrimination, supporting inclusive education, ensuring equal access to resources, and strengthening social cohesion within the university.

The successful implementation of this policy depends on the active involvement of all stakeholders–students, academic and administrative staff, and partners–and reflects BSU's strategic vision to be a modern, globally engaged institution that upholds human dignity, academic excellence, and social justice.

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