



Approved by the decision of the Academic Council
of Azerbaijan University dated ____, No. ____, and
by the order of the Rector dated ____, No. ____.

Academic Integrity and Ethics Policy at Azerbaijan University

Approved by: _____ Rector S. N. Aliyeva

Responsible person: _____

Agreed: _____ Head of the Quality Assurance Department L. Abasova

Agreed: _____ Senior Lawyer

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ETHICS POLICY

AT AZERBAIJAN UNIVERSITY

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. The Academic Integrity and Ethics Policy (hereinafter referred to as the *Policy*) has been prepared to ensure a fair and transparent approach to issues of academic integrity and ethics at Azerbaijan University (hereinafter referred to as the *University*).

1.2. The Policy has been prepared in accordance with the normative legal acts of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the field of science and higher education, the University Charter, the Research Strategy, and international standards of academic ethics.

1.3. The main purpose of implementing the Policy is, alongside the preparation of qualified specialists, to ensure the fulfillment of the University's academic mission in accordance with relevant local legislation (Civil Code, Law on the Protection of Intellectual Property, and others), regulations, and international obligations (recommendations of the Bologna Process).

1.4. Academic integrity at the University is regarded as a set of principles and values applicable to all participants of the academic process and promoting personal honesty during teaching and assessment.

1.5. Academic integrity, as an integral component of the academic ethics policy, is considered an inseparable element of the University's overall culture at all levels of education, and compliance with it is mandatory for all University members, including students, academic staff, and administrative employees.

1.6. There are various forms and methods of violations of academic ethics and integrity, including: plagiarism, collusion, cheating, falsification of assessed work data, obtaining answers to assessed work through unlawful means, and misuse of information or illegal technologies and devices.

1.7. This Policy is based on relevant values and principles and includes measures to ensure anti-plagiarism, forms of combating plagiarism, and disciplinary procedures applied to individuals who commit plagiarism. Except for plagiarism, other types of violations of academic integrity and ethics are mainly observed during teaching and examination processes; such cases, methods of prevention, and disciplinary procedures are reflected in the relevant Rules and Guidelines governing the educational process.

II. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ACADEMIC ETHICS POLICY

Academic Ethics Policy

Considering that the Academic Ethics Policy of Azerbaijan University plays an essential role for academic institutions, it requires and ensures that research and activities conducted by the University's staff and students are carried out in accordance with ethical standards. The main purpose of this Policy is to preserve

the integrity of research, protect the rights of participants in research, and monitor that all activities are conducted in accordance with ethical values and rules.

Research proposals are reviewed and evaluated for compliance with ethical standards based on the principles of the Ethics Policy. This process includes risk assessment for participants, obtaining consent, and ensuring the protection of confidentiality and privacy.

Academic integrity is the most fundamental value for the academic community, requiring responsible and honest behavior in all areas of academic activity and forming the foundation of quality education.

Academic integrity implies adherence to six main principles under any circumstances: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

- **Honesty** – The fundamental principle of academic integrity. This value is demonstrated by proper attribution of sources in written and oral works and by objective evaluation of student work by instructors.
- **Trust** – Belief in the honesty of students' actions is of significant importance in ensuring academic integrity. This principle is ensured through clear expression of expectations in the teaching process and transparent assessment.
- **Fairness** – Requires the exclusion of discrimination and favoritism in the academic environment. Existing rules must be applied consistently and fairly at all stages of University activity.
- **Respect** – Students, academic, and administrative staff demonstrate respect by actively participating in research and teaching processes and completing tasks and responsibilities on time, in accordance with socially accepted ethical behavior. Academic staff demonstrate respect by taking students' opinions seriously, valuing them as individuals, supporting the development of their ideas, providing objective, honest, and complete feedback on their work, and considering their perspectives and goals.
- **Responsibility** – All members of the academic community – students, teachers, staff, and administration – share mutual responsibility for maintaining the academic integrity of the University. Responsible behavior includes objecting to wrongdoing, resisting negative influences, and setting a positive example.
- **Courage** – Refers to the ability of each member of the academic community to act according to socially accepted ethical principles and values without avoiding difficulties.

The Policy is implemented based on the following general principles:

- **Conscientiousness** – All participants in the teaching process perform their duties fully and honestly;
- **Protection of copyright** – Proper presentation of others' ideas in assessed work, citing sources, and protecting works with authorship rights;
- **Transparency and accountability** – Ensuring open information exchange and mutual trust between students and instructors;
- **Respect for rights and freedoms** – The right of every member of the academic staff to freely express opinions and positions;
- **Equality** – All members of the University community are equally responsible for complying with the rules of this Policy and for any violations committed;
- **Academic freedom and responsibility** – The right to conduct research freely, along with the obligation to comply with ethical standards and principles of academic integrity.

III. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

3.1. Main purposes of the Policy:

- To instill in the University staff the necessity of complying with the Academic Integrity and Ethics Policy;
- To form and ensure the practice of a culture of academic integrity among the University staff.

3.2. Main objectives of the Policy:

- To regulate the quality assurance of academic activities related to specialist training at the University, including teaching and research work;
- To create conditions for ensuring academic integrity and ethics at all levels of the University's activities;
- To prevent cases of violation of academic integrity and ethics.

IV. TOOLS FOR ENSURING THE ACADEMIC ETHICS POLICY

In addition to monitoring research, this Policy also covers issues related to academic unethical behavior such as plagiarism or data falsification. The Policy provides a platform for resolving ethical disagreements and offers guidance to researchers on how to act in complex situations.

The Ethics Policy of Azerbaijan University fosters a culture of responsibility, trust, and transparency through its activities, thereby contributing to the socially responsible and ethical development of knowledge.

The implementation of the academic ethics policy at the University is carried out by the Department of Science, a structural unit of the University.

The main responsibilities of the Department of Science include:

- Evaluating and approving research proposals in accordance with the Policy;
- Ensuring compliance with ethical standards;
- Providing advice to teachers and students regarding research and academic activities.

4.1. Ethics Training and Seminars

To further raise awareness about ethical behavior, the Department organizes seminars on research ethics. The main purpose of these seminars is to guide participants on frequently encountered ethical issues during research, such as data integrity, plagiarism, and the protection of participant confidentiality. At the same time, the seminars aim to create an ethical research and practice culture across the University.

4.2. Advisory Services

The Department provides advisory services for teachers and students who encounter ethical dilemmas during research. These consultations help clarify best approaches and decision-making processes in situations such as handling sensitive data, managing conflicts of interest, and making decisions regarding unforeseen risks.

4.3. Ensuring Coordination

The Department ensures coordination and communication in the academic field with other University units. This helps respond to new and emerging ethical challenges and provides researchers with the guidance they need.

4.4. Use of Artificial Intelligence

Students and staff at the University may use artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, Copilot, DeepSeek, and other similar systems), but such use must comply with the principles of academic integrity.

The use of AI is strictly prohibited in the following cases and constitutes a violation of academic rules:

- Presenting text generated by AI as the author's own work;
- Appropriating authorship rights of scientific work prepared using AI;
- Concealing the fact of AI use (when required).

AI tools may be used for the following purposes, but must always be combined with the author's own contribution:

- Language editing;
- Improving structure;
- Use as an aid for idea development.

Any use of AI must be noted in the work when required.

V. CONCEPTS OF ACADEMIC FRAUD AND PLAGIARISM

Academic fraud includes the following cases:

- Plagiarism;
- Self-plagiarism;
- Falsification or fabrication of data;
- Violation of copyright;
- Use of unauthorized assistance;
- Falsification of academic documents.

5.1. Plagiarism refers to the partial or complete appropriation of ideas, text, results, or data of other authors without proper citation.

5.2. Self-plagiarism is considered the resubmission of previously published scientific work without proper citation.

5.3. WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

- Partial or complete appropriation of materials from other sources without acknowledging authorship and/or citing the source;
- Quoting a source without using appropriate punctuation (quotation marks) and/or without indicating the source;
- Providing a translation of a source without citing the source;
- Using ideas or arguments of others without referencing the author;
- Claiming as one's own a written work fully or partially created by someone else;
- Submitting any work or thesis obtained from the Internet;
- Presenting any completed work as a new assignment for others.

VI. METHODS AND TOOLS FOR COMBATING PLAGIARISM

During the preparation of all types of academic research, books, textbooks, teaching materials, and master's theses at the University, authors are required to accept and strictly adhere to the principles of international scientific ethics and academic integrity.

For the purpose of ensuring academic integrity and ethics, since 2019, plagiarism checks have been carried out using the **StrikePlagiarism.com** platform, owned by Strike Plagiarism, a company cooperating with the University.

For submitting their works for departmental discussion, authors are required to include in the list of documents a report obtained by the Department of Science from the **StrikePlagiarism.com** platform.

The requirements for maintaining academic integrity for the completed works are determined as follows:

- **For Master's Theses:**
Similarity Index 1 (SI1) – 15%; Similarity Index 2 (SI2) – 5%
- **For Monographs:**
SI1 – 10%; SI2 – 5%
- **For Textbooks and Teaching Materials:**
SI1 – 15%; SI2 – 7%
- **For Scientific Articles:**
SI1 – 10%; SI2 – 5%
- **For Abstracts/Theses:**
SI1 – 10%; SI2 – 5%

VII. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IN CASE OF DETECTED PLAGIARISM

7.1. To explain the requirements of the Policy to the author or reviewer and/or to issue a warning regarding the removal of the unethical behavior;

7.2. To send a notice to the author, scientific advisor, and the author's institutional supervisor regarding serious administrative measures that will be taken if the necessary corrections or actions are not performed;

7.3. To suspend the publication process for the relevant article or author in the University's official resources and to impose a temporary or indefinite ban on the author.

VIII. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE PARTIES

8.1. Rights and Duties of Students

The rights and duties of a student are as follows:

8.1.1. Rights:

- The right to freely express their opinions during the educational process and to access and share scientific and educational information and ideas;
- The right to legal protection against unfounded accusations regarding violations of this Policy.

8.1.2. Duties:

- To adhere to the principles of academic integrity when completing academic assignments and scientific research work;
- To use reliable sources of information;
- To prepare high-quality written scientific work based on their own ideas while correctly citing the ideas of other authors;
- To independently perform all work subject to evaluation;
- To comply with internal regulations.

8.2. Rights and Duties of Faculty Members

The rights and duties of faculty members are as follows:

8.2.1. Rights:

- To require all participants in the educational process to adhere to the fundamental principles of academic integrity;
- To freely express their opinions and positions during teaching and research activities, and to access and disseminate scientific information and ideas;
- To review and objectively evaluate students' academic and research work based on academic integrity criteria.

8.2.2. Duties:

- To adhere to the principles of academic integrity;
- To develop students' research skills and foster creativity and interest in scientific inquiry;
- To provide methodological support to students in selecting and using reliable sources;
- To teach proper citation practices and the correct preparation of bibliographies;
- To strictly follow the assessment criteria established by the University and ensure academic supervision;
- To comply with internal regulations.

8.3. Rights and Duties of Administrative Staff

The rights and duties of administrative staff are as follows:

8.3.1. Rights:

- To present acts and documents that must be implemented by all participants in research and teaching processes to ensure adherence to academic integrity within their authority;
- To participate in the activities of any structural unit of the University for the discussion and resolution of matters within their competence;
- To submit proposals for the development of the principles of this Policy to the University's Academic Council for discussion.

8.3.2. Duties:

- To adhere to the principles of academic integrity;
- To promptly inform participants in research and teaching processes about amendments to the Policy provisions and any identified violations;
- To prepare and execute the University's existing documents efficiently and on time;
- To demonstrate objectivity and fairness in relations with University staff and students;
- To ensure the resolution of conflicts arising from cases of academic integrity violations;
- To prevent any breaches of this Policy's provisions and ensure its proper implementation;
- To maintain a systematic and accurate record of cases of violations of the principles outlined in this Policy, as monitored by the Academic Department.

IX. PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1. Procedures:

- Individuals participating in research and educational processes bear both moral and disciplinary responsibility for violations of academic integrity principles.
- In case of a violation of academic integrity principles, the person identifying the violation submits an application to the University Rector along with supporting evidence.
- The application regarding a breach of academic integrity must be prepared within 24 hours and, after registration at the General Department, an extraordinary meeting of the Academic Council shall be convened by order of the Rector. The decision must be made within five working days from the date of submission.
- A decision regarding an appeal must be made no later than three working days.

- The University administration is responsible for ensuring objective review of materials submitted in the appeal.

9.2. Responsibilities:

9.2.1. Violation of academic integrity principles entails disciplinary responsibility.

9.2.2. The following measures may be applied for violations:

- Warning;
- Reworking of the academic work;
- Cancellation of the grade;
- Prohibition from defending the scientific work;
- Relevant disciplinary measures.

9.2.3. Repeated or serious violations may result in stricter disciplinary measures in accordance with applicable legislation.

X. CONCLUSION

10.1. Academic integrity and ethics are fundamental academic values that not only require responsible and honest conduct in all forms of academic activity but also ensure and regulate the quality of education and scientific research.

10.2. At the University, academic integrity and ethics are recognized as a set of values and principles applicable to every participant in the academic process, promoting personal honesty in teaching and assessment.

10.3. Academic integrity and ethics are considered an integral part of the University's overall culture at all levels of education and apply to all University members, including students (at all stages of education), faculty, and administrative staff.

10.4. Any form of dishonesty is systematically prevented, as it contradicts the University's value system.

FINAL PROVISIONS

This Policy comes into effect from the date it is approved by the University's Academic Council. Amendments and additions to the Policy shall be carried out in accordance with the established procedures.