**Ethics Policy Report for 2024/2025**

Ethics Policy of Azerbaijan University (EPAU) is dedicated to ensuring that all research and academic activities conducted at the university adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice. This annual report provides an overview of the committee's activities, achievements, challenges, and future goals over the past year. The committee plays a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of research, protecting the rights of participants, and upholding the reputation of the university as a center of ethical academic and scientific inquiry.

**Committee Composition and Meetings**

The EPAU consists of faculty members from various departments, as well as external experts in relevant research fields. This diverse composition ensures a well-rounded approach to addressing ethical concerns from multiple perspectives. Over the past year, the committee held quarterly meetings, in addition to special sessions as needed to address urgent matters.

The committee is chaired by Vice-rector on Science, with a diverse group of professors, researchers, and ethics professionals supporting the review process. The committee's responsibilities include reviewing and approving research proposals, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines, and advising faculty and students on ethical issues related to research and academic practices.

**Activities and Achievements**

Throughout the year, the committee undertook several key activities aimed at upholding ethical standards within the university:

**Research Proposal Review**

The committee reviewed over 150 research proposals. This process included evaluating the ethical implications of the research, ensuring that proper informed consent was obtained, and that the rights of participants were respected. The committee also ensured that the research adhered to relevant national and international ethical standards.

**Ethics Training and Workshops**

To further enhance awareness of ethical practices, the committee organized two workshops on research ethics. These workshops were attended by faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers. The goal of these workshops was to provide guidance on the ethical challenges commonly encountered in research, such as data integrity, plagiarism, and participant confidentiality.

**Consultations**

The committee provided consultation services for faculty and students who faced ethical dilemmas in their research. These consultations helped clarify the best practices and decision-making processes in situations such as handling sensitive data, navigating conflicts of interest, and addressing unanticipated risks in research.

**Handling Complaints and Misconduct**

Over the year, the committee handled three formal complaints regarding academic misconduct. These cases were thoroughly investigated in line with university policies, and appropriate actions were taken to resolve the issues. The

committee worked closely with university administration and other relevant bodies to ensure fair and transparent handling of these complaints.

### Review of Ethical Guidelines

In response to emerging ethical challenges, the committee reviewed and updated the university's research ethics guidelines. These updates were aimed at addressing new ethical concerns arising from advancements in technology, data privacy issues, and emerging research methodologies.

### Challenges

Despite the committee's strong efforts, several challenges were encountered during the year:

### Increased Research Proposals

The University experienced an increase in the number of research proposals submitted for ethical review, which led to a heavier workload for the committee.

### Complex Ethical Issues

As new fields of research, such as artificial intelligence, continue to emerge, the committee faced increasing complexities in evaluating the ethical implications of such studies.

### Awareness and Engagement

Although the ethics workshops were successful, the committee noted that not all researchers were fully aware of the ethical review process or the importance of adhering to ethical guidelines. There is a need for continued efforts to raise awareness and engage the university community in conversations around ethics.

### Future Goals

Looking ahead, the University Ethics Policy has identified several goals for the upcoming year:

### Expanding Training and Outreach

The committee aims to expand its training and awareness programs, offering more workshops and resources to faculty, students, and researchers. The goal is to create a university-wide culture of ethical research and practice.

### Strengthening Collaboration

The committee plans to strengthen its collaboration with other university departments, particularly those involved in cutting-edge fields of research. This will help address new and emerging ethical challenges and ensure that researchers receive the guidance they need.