



BAITURSYNULY
UNIVERSITY

EQUALITY,
DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION (EDI)

POLICY

NON-PROFIT LIMITED COMPANY «AKHMET BAITURSYNULY
KOSTANAY REGIONAL UNIVERSITY»

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a policy aimed at ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities for all members of the university community. It focuses on eliminating bias and discrimination related to individual characteristics.

This Policy defines the strategic directions for ensuring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at Non-Profit Limited Company “Akhmet Baitursynuly Kostanay Regional University” (hereinafter – the University).

As a leading regional scientific and educational center of Northern Kazakhstan, the University considers the principles of equality and inclusion to be the foundation for sustainable regional development and for improving the quality of higher education.

This Policy is developed in accordance with:

- the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Education»;
- the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan»;
- the Concept for the Development of Inclusive Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- the Development Strategy of Akhmet Baitursynuly Kostanay Regional University;
- the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10, 16);
- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG 2015);
- the principles of the Bologna Process.

STRATEGIC GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Strategic Goal:

To establish an inclusive, safe and competitive university environment that contributes to the sustainable development of Kostanay Region and supports integration into the European Higher Education Area.

Objectives:

- ensuring equal access to higher education for young people in Kostanay Region, including rural areas;
- developing a support system for students with special educational needs (SEN);
- forming a gender-balanced management and academic environment;
- developing inclusive digital infrastructure;
- promoting an academic culture based on respect, non-discrimination and acceptance of diversity;
- implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

REGIONAL CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION

The University takes into account the following characteristics of Kostanay Region:

- a high proportion of rural youth;
- migration processes and inflow of students from border areas;
- regional demand for teaching, agricultural, technical and medical personnel;
- the need to support socially vulnerable population groups.

In this regard, the EDI Policy is focused on ensuring educational mobility, social justice and personnel stability in the region.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- Non-discrimination and equality of rights
- Gender equality and women's leadership
- Accessibility of infrastructure (educational, physical and digital)
- University social responsibility towards the region
- Transparency of management processes
- Social partnership and stakeholder cooperation

PRIORITY AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Ensuring Equal Access to Education (SDG 4)

- quota-based and grant support for students from rural areas of the region;
- adaptation of curricula and syllabi for students with SEN;
- activities of the Centre for Inclusive Education and Psychological Support;
- implementation of assistive technologies;
- development of online courses and hybrid forms of learning.

Gender Policy (SDG 5)

- development and implementation of the University's Gender Equality Plan (GEP);
- monitoring gender balance of academic staff and management;
- support programmes for female researchers and young mothers;
- prevention of harassment and discrimination.

Social Support and Reduction of Inequality (SDG 10)

- social scholarships;
- psychological and career support;
- «Student-to-Student» and «Professor-to-Young Researcher» mentoring programmes;
- support for students from large and low-income families.

Decent Employment and Staff Development (SDG 8)

- transparent competitive procedures;
- equal pay conditions;
- support for academic mobility (Erasmus+, international grants);
- professional development of academic staff.

Institutional Governance and Culture of Trust (SDG 16)

- implementation of the Integral GPA module integrated into the Platonus information system with specification of social competence;
- regulation of various aspects of the educational process for students with SEN and students with young children through the internal local regulatory document «Academic Policy»;
 - a separate chapter «Policy (Rules) for the Implementation of Inclusive Education,» within the internal local regulatory document «Academic Policy»;
 - operation of the anti-corruption compliance service;
 - operation of the Academic Policy and Educational Activities Office;
 - functioning of a confidential reporting system: the University maintains open feedback channels on EDI issues. All complaints and suggestions are considered with respect and in accordance with the principles of fairness and confidentiality.

The University implements the Equality and Inclusion Policy through the activities of the Center for Inclusive Education and Psychological Support (CIEPS).

CIEPS operates within a framework of social partnership with internal and external stakeholders. It may apply project-office and resource-center approaches and tools and may serve as a placement base for University students. Base for University students' practical training.

Internal stakeholders include University academic staff; students with special educational needs and socially vulnerable students:

- with hearing impairments;
- with visual impairments;
- with speech impairments;
- musculoskeletal disorders;
- with emotional and volitional disorders;
- with multiple other disabilities;
- students from low-income families;
- students admitted under rural quotas;
- students from large families;
- students requiring support related to difficulties arising within the educational process.

External stakeholders include:

- 1) organizations, institutions and centers of all forms of ownership, their employees and private practitioners working in the field of inclusion and psychological support;
- 2) the academic community and civil society organizations (NGOs, political parties, trade unions, mass media) interested in the institutionalization of inclusion and the development of inclusive awareness, inclusive competence, practices in the fields of inclusion and psychological support;
- 3) other individuals and legal entities interested in the development of inclusive awareness, inclusive competence and institutionalization processes and practices in the fields of inclusion and psychological support.

6.2 The purpose of CIEPS is to ensure equal opportunities through the organization of an educational environment that provides: fair access to education (equal opportunities for admission), fair outcomes (opportunities for academic progression and successful graduation for students with SEN and socially vulnerable students), fair impact (determined by labor market outcomes depending on the field of study), as well as accessible and barrier-free architectural space, compliance with the basic principles of inclusive education and protection of confidentiality of students' health and social status data; participation in institutionalizing inclusion (forming an inclusive culture, inclusive public consciousness, inclusive competence) and psychological support at local, regional and national levels.

6.3 In its activities, the CIEPS performs the following functions:

- 1) providing psychological, pedagogical and social support for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable categories of students during their studies and assisting with employment;
- 2) providing consultations and methodological support for academic staff on inclusive education;
- 3) supporting professional development of internal and external stakeholders, conducting scientific and methodological activities (conferences, methodological seminars, training sessions, dialogue platforms and workshops, etc.) in the areas of the CIEPS activities through negotiations with third-party organizations, direct organization, and informing interested parties;
- 4) coordinating the activity of University's units to ensure effective inclusive support and social adaptation of students with disabilities and other vulnerable categories;
- 5) developing catalogues, digests and other types of informational and methodological materials reflecting the University's activities in the field of inclusive education and psychological support;
- 6) participation in grant-funded and research projects;

7) cooperation with all departments of the University units, and external organizations within the scope of CIEPS activities;

8) the CIEPS may provide commercial services to external stakeholders for the purpose of fulfilling the goals and objectives of the CIEPS. The scope of services and the procedures for their provision are governed by the regulatory documentation of Akhmet Baitursynuly Kostanay Regional University.

6.4 Tasks of the CIEPS within the framework of the development of an inclusive environment and psychological support system at the University:

1) supporting the development of a comprehensive inclusive environment, including accessible and barrier-free infrastructure for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable categories of stakeholders;

2) promoting equal and non-discriminatory access for students with disabilities and other vulnerable categories to high-quality educational services and sociocultural development opportunities, including the development and implementation of individual learning pathways; the provision of accessible learning materials (subtitles, transcription, audio description, Braille, etc.), formats (subtitles, transcription, audio description, Braille, etc.), applying the principles of universal design for learning and using modern digital and assistive technologies (university website, LMS (learning management system), social media, artificial intelligence services);

3) psychological support (diagnostics and correction, prevention of emotional burnout and stress, development of psychological resilience skills, etc.) for students with disabilities and other vulnerable categories within the conditions and boundaries of the University's educational process;

4) initiation and conducting monitoring, sociological and other types of research aimed at achieving the goals of the CIEPS at the University, monitoring the effectiveness of inclusive practices and psychological and pedagogical support for participants in the educational process at the University;

6.5 Tasks of the CIEPS related to the processes of institutionalizing inclusion and psychological support:

1) development of cooperation with external stakeholders on issues of forming inclusive awareness, inclusive competence and psychological support;

2) active participation in the processes of institutionalization and practices in the field of inclusion and psychological support, conducting and participating in research at the regional, national and international levels;

3) participation in expert and project activities, dialogue platforms, conferences, seminars and other activities at the regional, national and international levels;

4) developing professional competencies and providing scientific and methodological support to external stakeholders in relation to inclusive education and psychological support at the regional and national levels.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS UP TO 2030

- increase in graduation rates of students with SEN by at least 30%;
- achievement of gender balance (40–60%) in leadership positions;
- 100% of academic buildings equipped with barrier-free access elements;
- at least 70% of academic staff trained in inclusive pedagogy;
- annual reduction in discrimination-related complaints.

FUNDING

Funding is provided through:

- University budget;
- government programmes;
- international projects (Erasmus+, Horizon Europe);
- partnerships with the Akimat of the Kostanay Region and its subordinate state administration structures;
- partnerships with private and public organizations;
- socially responsible regional businesses.

CONCLUSION

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is an integral part of the University's sustainable development strategy. The adoption and implementation of EDI principles contribute to the development of an open, fair and productive educational and working environment in which every individual feels valued, equal and recognized.

The University recognizes its responsibility for creating conditions in which individual differences are regarded as a resource rather than a barrier.

The University believes that genuine progress, innovation and academic excellence can only be achieved through respect, engagement and fairness.

Implementation of this Policy requires constant monitoring, open dialogue and readiness for change.

The University encourages staff, students and partners to uphold these principles in everyday activities and to jointly promote a culture of respect, equality, diversity and inclusion.