



**Khazar University**

**Academic Freedom Policy**

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## **1. Purpose and Scope**

1.1 Academic freedom and research independence are fundamental values of Khazar University and constitute essential conditions for high-quality education, credible research, and the advancement of knowledge. Academic freedom enables the free pursuit, development, and dissemination of ideas through teaching, research, and scholarly communication, based on professional competence, evidence, and ethical responsibility.

1.2 This Policy establishes the principles, rights, and responsibilities governing academic freedom and research independence at Khazar University. It applies to all members of the University's academic and research community, including full-time and part-time academic staff, researchers, adjunct faculty, postdoctoral fellows, research assistants, and master's and doctoral students, as well as individuals and teams conducting research under the University's auspices.

1.3 Khazar University guarantees that research activities are conducted freely, ethically, and responsibly, in compliance with national legislation, international academic standards, and the University's mission. Researchers have the right to independently determine research topics, methodologies, and interpretations, and to disseminate research results without undue interference, subject only to lawful, ethical, and proportionate limitations.

1.4 Participation in national or international collaborations, including externally funded projects, shall not compromise academic freedom or research independence. All research agreements must safeguard the right to publish results and clearly define roles, responsibilities, and intellectual contributions.

## **2. Definitions**

### **2.1. Academic Freedom**

The right of academic staff and researchers to pursue, develop, communicate, and critically examine knowledge and ideas through research, teaching, and publication, without censorship, intimidation, or retaliation, within the limits of professional standards, ethics, and the law.

## 2.2. Research Independence

The autonomy to design, conduct, analyse, and report research based on scientific evidence, disciplinary standards, and ethical principles, free from inappropriate internal or external influence.

## 2.3. Undue Interference

Any direct or indirect pressure intended to influence research topics, methods, findings, interpretation, or dissemination in a manner inconsistent with scholarly integrity.

# 3. Core Principles

## 3.1. Institutional Commitment

Khazar University is committed to protecting academic freedom and research independence as core institutional values and to maintaining governance structures that prevent undue influence on scholarly work.

## 3.2. Integrity and Responsibility

Academic freedom is exercised with professional responsibility, respect for evidence, and adherence to ethical, legal, and institutional requirements.

## 3.3. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Academic freedom and research independence apply equally to all members of the research community, regardless of academic rank, discipline, employment status, gender, nationality, or other personal characteristics.

## 3.4. Transparency and Accountability

The University ensures transparent procedures for research ethics review, conflict of interest management, dissemination of research results, and handling of complaints related to academic freedom.

#### **4. Rights of the Academic Staff and Researchers**

Academic staff and researchers at Khazar University have the right to:

- Select research topics, questions, and methodologies within their area of competence;
- Engage in national and international academic collaboration;
- Present, publish, and disseminate research results based on scholarly merit;
- Express and critically discuss academic views and interpretations within their field;
- Participate in public and scholarly debate as experts, without institutional censorship.

These rights shall not be restricted by administrative, financial, political, or sponsor-related considerations, except where lawful and ethically justified.

#### **5. Responsibilities of the University**

Khazar University shall:

##### **5.1. Protect Academic Freedom**

Safeguard academic staff, researchers, and students from undue interference, coercion, or retaliation that may compromise academic freedom or research integrity.

##### **5.2. Ensure Ethical Oversight**

Maintain an Ethics Committee responsible for reviewing research proposals, particularly those involving human participants, sensitive data, environmental

impact, or other ethical considerations, and for monitoring compliance with ethical standards.

### 5.3. Support Research Integrity

Provide institutional support through training, guidance, and capacity-building activities on research ethics, academic integrity, responsible authorship, data management, plagiarism prevention, and the responsible use of digital and AI-based tools.

### 5.4. Maintain Fair Procedures

Ensure that clear, accessible, and impartial procedures exist for:

- ethics review;
- declaration and management of conflicts of interest;
- handling allegations of research misconduct;
- addressing complaints related to violations of academic freedom.

## 6. Responsibilities of Researchers

Researchers at Khazar University are required to:

- Conduct research honestly, transparently, and in accordance with disciplinary standards;
- Comply with ethical approvals and decisions of the University Ethics Committee;
- Declare and appropriately manage any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest;
- Respect intellectual property rights and ensure fair and accurate attribution of authorship and contributions;
- Manage research data responsibly, ensuring confidentiality and data protection where applicable;
- Report any cases of undue interference, ethical violations, or restrictions on academic freedom.

## **7. Dissemination of Research and Open Access**

7.1. Khazar University upholds the right of researchers to publish and disseminate research findings without suppression or censorship.

7.2. Restrictions on dissemination may apply only when required by law, ethical obligations, or clearly defined and proportionate confidentiality provisions (e.g. protection of personal data, safety concerns, or time-limited intellectual property considerations).

7.3. Where legally and ethically permissible, academic staff and graduate students are expected to deposit their scholarly outputs in the Khazar University Institutional Repository ([www.dspace.khazar.org](http://www.dspace.khazar.org)) to enhance visibility, accessibility, and societal impact of research.

## **8. Protection of Student Researchers**

Khazar University ensures that:

- Students participate in research activities only with informed and voluntary consent;
- Student authorship and intellectual contributions are fully recognised and protected;
- Supervisors provide a respectful, inclusive, and supportive research environment;
- Graduate students' academic freedom and research independence are respected at all stages of the research process.

## **9. Reporting, Complaints, and Protection from Retaliation**

9.1. Any member of the University community may report concerns regarding violations of academic freedom, research independence, or ethical standards.

9.2. The University prohibits retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith.

9.3. Reports shall be reviewed through established institutional procedures, ensuring confidentiality, impartiality, and due process.