2025 / ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

SDG 10 | Reduced Inequalities

Khazar University · Baku, Azerbaijan

REPORTING PERIOD JANUARY–DECEMBER 2025

Institutional Approach

Khazar University works to reduce inequality by improving access to education, supporting students with different needs and creating an inclusive learning environment. During 2025, this commitment was reflected in updated equality policies, disability-inclusive education activities, student support guidance and opportunities for international students to connect with the University community.

8
universities represented in the February DIRNA training

104
students in the April social-conditions survey

60+
countries represented by international students in May

10.1 Research on reduced inequalities

In 2025, Khazar University contributed to **seven Scopus-indexed research articles associated with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**. University-affiliated researchers explored issues relevant to economic inequality, educational development, inclusive growth, and access to opportunities. These contributions reflect the University's interdisciplinary engagement in understanding social and economic challenges that can affect different groups within society.

Economic inequality and sustainable development

An important research direction examined how environmental and economic investments can affect inequality.

Kalkavan et al. (2025), in *Strategy Recommendations for Minimizing Economic Inequalities Increased by Renewable Energy Investments Regarding Sustainable Development*, investigated how renewable energy projects may create economic disadvantages for certain communities. The study examined risks such as damage to agricultural land, environmental impacts, and rising energy costs. It proposed decision-making approaches to help identify and reduce these risks, contributing to research on making the transition to sustainable energy more socially equitable.

Educational opportunities and student development

Research also explored factors that can influence students' learning experiences and personal development.

Vazquez-Marin et al. (2025), including Khazar University-affiliated researcher Samantha Curle, examined the relationship between positive character strengths and educational competencies among 993 fifth- and sixth-grade students in Spain. Published in *Frontiers in Education*, the study investigated how qualities such as hope, gratitude, courage, and social responsibility relate to students' perceived competencies.

The researchers introduced the Positive Development and Assessment Competencies Theory (PDAC), offering a framework for understanding how personal strengths can support student development and well-being. The study contributes knowledge relevant to developing educational approaches that respond to students' broader learning and developmental needs.

Digital inclusion and equal opportunities

The relationship between technological development and inclusive growth formed another area of research.

Esen (2025), in *From Adopter to Innovator: Türkiye's Strategic AI Initiatives for National Security and Inclusive Growth*, examined Türkiye's development of artificial intelligence capabilities and their implications for economic growth, education, and national competitiveness.

The study considered the importance of human capital development, access to technological opportunities, and responsible data governance. It highlighted how policies supporting digital skills and broader participation in technological development can contribute to reducing the digital divide.

Research participation and knowledge exchange on educational inclusion

Alongside its scientific publications, Khazar University participated in activities supporting the collection of information on students' experiences and the exchange of knowledge on inclusive education.

On 7–8 April 2025, **104 Khazar University students**, including 96 undergraduate and eight graduate students, participated in a EUROSTUDENT-related survey. Conducted by the Center for Sociological Research at the request of Azerbaijan's Ministry of Science and Education, the survey gathered information on students' educational experiences, social circumstances, career expectations, and psychological well-being. The University's participation contributed student-level information to a broader initiative designed to support higher education analysis and policy discussions.

On 4–5 March 2025, Khazar University participated as a co-organiser in the First Republican Scientific Conference on Inclusive Education at Nakhchivan State University. University representatives presented research-informed perspectives on inclusive teaching, barriers faced by learners with disabilities, and international approaches to supporting their social integration.

Further knowledge exchange took place on 27 February 2025 through the Erasmus+ DIRNA project. A training session on inclusive education within institutional repository networks brought together representatives of eight Azerbaijani universities. Participants explored digital tools and accessible educational resources that can support more inclusive learning environments.

Together, these research publications and institutional activities demonstrate Khazar University's engagement in understanding economic inequalities, educational inclusion, and unequal access to opportunities. Through interdisciplinary research, international collaboration, and participation in educational initiatives, the University contributes knowledge relevant to reducing inequalities and supporting more inclusive development.

Selected Research Publications (2025)

1. **Kalkavan, H., Yüksel, S., Eti, S., Dinçer, H., Mikhaylov, A., & Pinter, G. (2025).** *Strategy recommendations for minimizing economic inequalities increased by renewable energy investments regarding sustainable development*. Sustainable Energy Technologies and Assessments, 75, 104225. DOI
2. **Vazquez-Marin, P., Curle, S., Gil Ortega, M. C., Medina-Gual, L., & Sandoval-Hernández, A. (2025).** *Harnessing virtues for educational success: introducing the Positive Development and Assessment Competencies Theory (PDAC)*. Frontiers in Education, 10, 1501130. DOI
3. **Esen, F. S. (2025).** *From Adopter to Innovator: Türkiye's Strategic AI Initiatives for National Security and Inclusive Growth*. Insight Turkey, 27(2), 173–198. DOI

10.2 First-generation students

Khazar University's Equal Opportunity Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy affirm non-discriminatory access to admission and learning opportunities. Its financial-aid framework offers support across several eligibility categories. In November 2025, an Education Student Loan Fund information session also explained study-financing options to first- and second-year students, helping them better understand available routes to financial support.

10.3 International students from developing countries

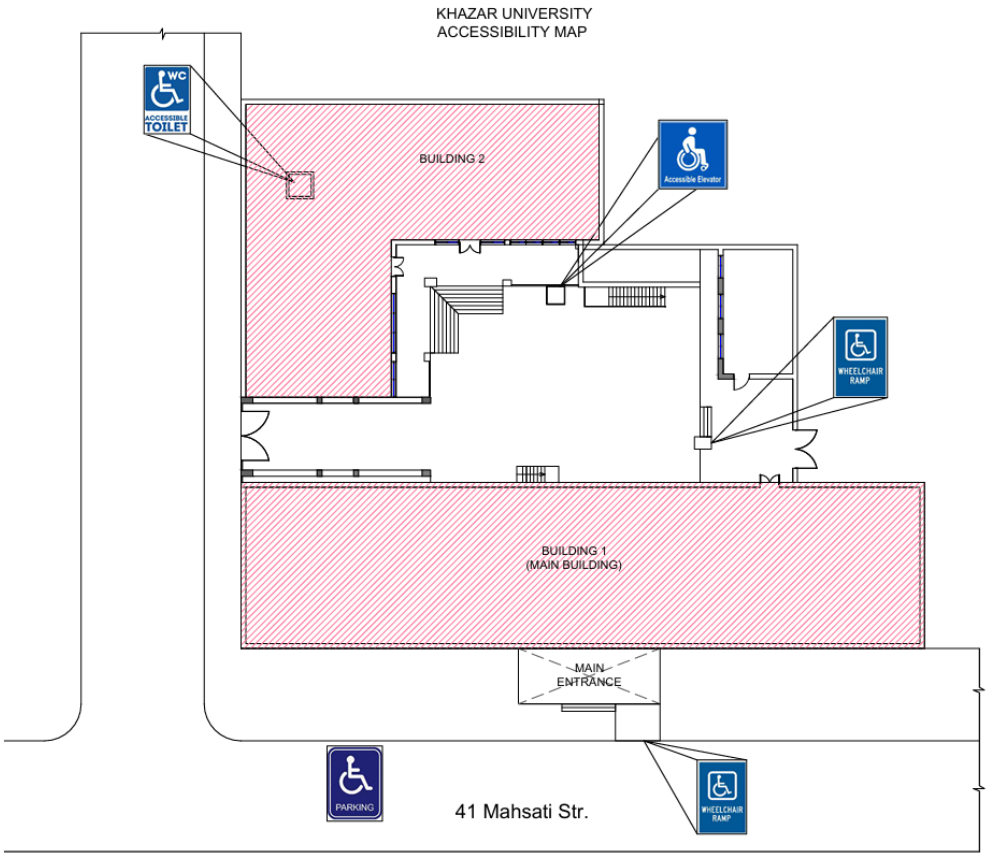
Khazar University participated as an eligible institution in Azerbaijan's 2025/26 Heydar Aliyev International Education Grant and Intergovernmental Scholarship Programmes. These were national selection programmes involving multiple universities. At Khazar, international students also received practical support through orientation sessions in October and a cultural integration visit to Guba in December. The University's 2025 Cultural Diversity Day highlighted a student community representing more than 60 countries.





10.4 Proportion of students with disabilities

Khazar University's Center for Students with Disabilities provides a structure for academic guidance, assistive support and individual adjustments. The Accommodation Policy for People with Disabilities and the published campus accessibility map describe the University's approach to accessible facilities and learning conditions. During 2025, students developed inclusive furniture concepts through the Supportive Design project, while DIRNA training introduced accessibility tools and inclusive teaching practices.



10.5 Proportion of employees with disabilities

Equal opportunity at Khazar University also applies to employment. The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy covers fair recruitment and staff participation, while its Accommodation Policy provides a framework for adjustments for academic and administrative employees with disabilities. These policies form part of the University's broader commitment to an accessible working environment.

10.6 Measures against discrimination

In January 2025, Khazar University revised its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy. These set out fair-treatment expectations and procedures for addressing concerns. The Ethics Committee is another institutional channel for reviewing ethical matters, while support services for underrepresented groups describe guidance, counselling and inclusion measures.

In 2025, this work was complemented by the Human Rights in Education seminar in May and an international DIRNA seminar on inclusive education in October. The latter brought Finnish partner expertise into discussions of student support, individual accommodations and the role of technology in accessible learning.

Selected Activities in 2025

2025	ACTIVITY
27 Feb	DIRNA training on inclusive education with eight Azerbaijani universities
4–5 Mar	National conference on inclusive education in Nakhchivan

7–8 Apr	EUROSTUDENT social-conditions survey with 104 Khazar students
10 Apr	Supportive Design accessible-furniture concepts presented
26 May	Cultural Diversity Day featuring international students
1 Oct	Orientation Day for new international students
27 Oct	DIRNA seminar on inclusive education and support systems
27 Nov	Student Loan Fund information session
7 Dec	Cultural integration visit for first-year international students

2025 Overview

Throughout 2025, Khazar University supported a more inclusive academic environment through policy updates, student guidance, accessibility-focused learning and intercultural events. Its efforts combined ongoing institutional support with dated training, public discussions and student participation activities.