

AZERBAIJAN STATE OIL AND INDUSTTRY UNIVERSITY



HOLISTIC ETHICAL POLICY





Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University

Those charged with governance

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office

Holistic Ethical Policy

October 2025

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1. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (hereinafter “ASOIU”) is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct, integrity, and responsibility in all aspects of its academic, administrative, and community activities. The Holistic Ethical Policy (hereinafter the “Policy”) establishes the ethical foundation upon which ASOIU operates, ensuring that respect, fairness, honesty, and accountability remain central to decision-making and institutional culture.

The purpose of this Policy is to promote ethical awareness, strengthen transparency, and foster a shared commitment to values-based behaviour across ASOIU. It provides a framework for preventing unethical practices, guiding conduct, and supporting ASOIU’s reputation as a responsible and trusted institution.

This Policy also aligns with ASOIU’s broader strategic goals and with international good governance principles, including the UN Global Compact, UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers, and OECD Guidelines for Integrity. Through these commitments, ASOIU reinforces its role as a leader in academic and ethical excellence.

2. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used throughout this Policy and are defined to ensure consistent interpretation across ASOIU:

- **Ethical Conduct:** Behaviour guided by honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility in accordance with ASOIU’s values.
- **Integrity:** Acting consistently with moral principles and institutional commitments in all professional and academic contexts.
- **Conflict of Interest:** A situation where personal interests could improperly influence or appear to influence decisions made on behalf of ASOIU.
- **Whistleblower:** Any individual who reports suspected unethical or unlawful conduct in good faith.
- **Protected Disclosure:** A confidential report made by a whistleblower under this Policy or related procedures.
- **Retaliation:** Any direct or indirect adverse action taken against a person for making a protected disclosure or participating in an investigation.
- **Confidentiality:** The obligation to protect information obtained through reports, investigations, or policy-related activities from unauthorized access or disclosure.
- **Third Party:** Any external individual or organization acting on behalf of or in cooperation with ASOIU.
- **Misconduct:** Any action or behaviour that violates ASOIU’s ethical principles, policies, or professional standards.

- **Good Faith:** Honest intent and reasonable belief that information provided is accurate and made without malice.
- **Ethical Breach:** A confirmed instance of unethical, dishonest, or non-compliant behaviour.
- **Ethics Training:** Structured awareness or learning activities that promote understanding of ethical principles and appropriate conduct.
- **Ethical Decision-Making:** The process of evaluating options and actions based on fairness, transparency, and alignment with ASOIU's values.
- **ASOIU Community:** All individuals working, studying, or acting on behalf of ASOIU.
- **Values Framework:** The collective principles of honesty, respect, diversity, and accountability forming ASOIU's ethical culture.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all members of the ASOIU community, including academic and administrative staff, students, contractors, suppliers, and any external individuals or organizations engaged in partnership with ASOIU. It governs all professional, academic, and research-related activities, as well as interactions with internal and external stakeholders.

The principles outlined in this Policy extend to all levels of institutional operations, including governance, teaching, research, procurement, student life, and community engagement. Third parties acting on behalf of ASOIU are also expected to adhere to the same ethical standards and conduct themselves in ways that uphold ASOIU's values and reputation.

In addition to institutional operations, this Policy informs the behaviour of individuals representing ASOIU in national and international settings, ensuring that all actions reflect ASOIU's integrity and commitment to fairness, honesty, and respect.

4. GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective implementation of this Policy relies on clear governance structures and shared accountability across all levels of ASOIU. The governance framework ensures that ethical standards are integrated into strategic, academic, and operational decision-making processes.

RECTOR

Provides overall strategic oversight for the implementation of this Policy. The Rectorate ensures adequate resources, approves major updates, and reviews annual reports on ethics compliance and integrity matters. It reinforces the institutional culture of ethical awareness and transparency.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) OFFICE

Serves as the institutional owner of this Policy and acts as the coordinating body for ethical values, awareness, and compliance across ASOIU. The EDI Office ensures alignment between ethical standards, equality commitments, and institutional culture, working closely with other administrative units. It is responsible for:

- Coordinating the implementation of this Policy and associated procedures;
- Conducting ethics and integrity awareness campaigns and training;
- Managing confidential reporting channels for ethical concerns;
- Reviewing complex or sensitive ethics cases in consultation with the Rectorate; and
- Preparing consolidated annual reports on ethics-related activities.

VICE-RECTOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Oversees the integration of ethical values within all academic and research activities, ensuring that teaching, learning, and assessment practices reflect ASOIU's principles of honesty, fairness, and respect. Collaborates with the EDI Office to embed ethical awareness into the curriculum and research culture.

VICE-RECTOR FOR GENERAL AFFAIRS

Responsible for ethical conduct across administrative, social, and operational functions of ASOIU. Ensures equitable access to facilities and promotes an environment of transparency, accountability, and respect in all institutional services and interactions.

HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS

Implement the principles of this Policy within their respective areas. Heads of Institutions are responsible for ensuring that staff, students, and associated persons understand the Policy, participate in relevant training, and apply ethical principles in academic, administrative, and research activities.

ALL STAFF, STUDENTS AND ASSOCIATED PERSONS

Every member of the ASOIU community is personally responsible for upholding ethical standards, acting with honesty and fairness, and reporting unethical behaviour when observed. Staff, students, and associated persons are expected to:

- Conduct themselves in accordance with ASOIU's values and Code of Conduct;
- Avoid conflicts of interest and disclose them promptly when they arise;
- Protect confidential information and respect privacy; and
- Cooperate with investigations and compliance reviews.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS AND THIRD PARTIES

Suppliers, contractors, and other external entities working with ASOIU are expected to comply with the ethical principles and standards set out in this Policy. Ethical compliance

clauses should be integrated into all partnership agreements, procurement contracts, and memoranda of understanding.

Through this governance model, ASOIU ensures collective ownership of ethical conduct and promotes a transparent, inclusive, and accountable institutional culture.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

This section defines the behavioural expectations and core ethical standards that guide all members of the ASOIU community. The Code of Conduct establishes principles of integrity, fairness, and accountability that apply to all academic, administrative, research, and operational contexts.

The Code serves as a practical framework for decision-making and professional conduct, ensuring that every member of ASOIU acts with honesty, respect, and responsibility. It complements other ASOIU governance documents that collectively promote integrity, accountability, and transparency.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

ASOIU promotes an ethical culture based on the following fundamental principles:

- **Integrity:** Upholding truth, consistency, and fairness in all professional, academic, and personal actions connected to ASOIU;
- **Respect:** Valuing human dignity, diversity of thought, and the right to equal treatment;
- **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for decisions, behaviours, and their impact on others and the institution;
- **Transparency:** Ensuring openness, honesty, and clarity in communication and institutional processes;
- **Confidentiality:** Safeguarding sensitive information and respecting privacy;
- **Fairness:** Promoting impartiality, objectivity, and equity in all professional relationships;
- **Sustainability:** Demonstrating environmental and social responsibility in ASOIU's operations and initiatives.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS, AND ASSOCIATED PERSONS

All members of the ASOIU community are expected to uphold these principles and demonstrate ethical conduct in their day-to-day activities. Specifically, they shall:

- Perform their duties honestly, competently, and with diligence;
- Treat colleagues, students, and partners with respect, courtesy, and fairness;
- Avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, and disclose such conflicts when they arise;

- Use ASOIU resources responsibly and solely for legitimate institutional purposes;
- Protect confidential and personal information;
- Maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that could be perceived as harassment, discrimination, or abuse of authority;
- Use social media and digital platforms responsibly, avoiding actions that could harm ASOIU's reputation or violate confidentiality; and
- Report unethical, illegal, or unsafe behaviour through designated reporting channels in good faith.

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Ethical conduct in research, teaching, and learning is a core obligation of all ASOIU members. Individuals must:

- Conduct research with honesty, accuracy, and respect for intellectual property;
- Give proper credit and acknowledgment to collaborators and sources;
- Avoid plagiarism, data falsification, or misrepresentation;
- Ensure that teaching and assessment practices reflect fairness, inclusivity, and transparency; and
- Comply with ethical review procedures where required.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Members of the ASOIU community must avoid situations where personal interests could interfere with institutional responsibilities. Conflicts of interest, whether financial, personal, or academic, should be disclosed promptly to supervisors or designated authorities. The EDI Office provides guidance and oversight to ensure appropriate management of such situations.

GIFTS, HOSPITALITY, AND EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS

ASOIU maintains zero tolerance for any form of bribery or undue influence. Members should refrain from accepting or offering gifts, favours, or hospitality that could compromise professional judgment or create a perception of bias. Modest, symbolic gifts may be accepted only in accordance with ASOIU's Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Policy.

USE OF ASOIU RESOURCES

All ASOIU property, funds, and digital systems must be used responsibly and only for legitimate academic or administrative purposes. Unauthorized personal use, misuse, or negligent handling of institutional resources is prohibited.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

All members of the ASOIU community must protect sensitive information obtained through their professional role. This includes personnel data, student records, research information, and internal communications. Breaches of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action in accordance with ASOIU's internal regulations.

REPORTING UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

ASOIU encourages all members to raise ethical concerns or report potential breaches of this Code through established channels. Reports made in good faith will be treated confidentially, and individuals will be protected from retaliation in line with Section 6 of this Policy.

APPLICATION AND ENFORCEMENT

The Code of Conduct applies to all ASOIU staff, students, and associated persons. Violations may result in disciplinary actions consistent with ASOIU's internal regulations and national legislation. Repeated or serious breaches may be referred to the Rectorate for review and appropriate measures.

Through adherence to this Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards, ASOIU promotes a community founded on trust, mutual respect, and integrity, ensuring that all members contribute to an ethical and responsible institutional environment.

6. REPORTING, INVESTIGATION AND COMPLAINT MECHANISMS

ASOIU is committed to maintaining transparent, fair, and accessible mechanisms for reporting and addressing ethical concerns. All members of the ASOIU community have a responsibility to report suspected violations of this Policy or other unethical behaviour. Reports made in good faith will be treated with confidentiality and respect, and individuals will be protected from retaliation.

REPORTING CHANNELS

Ethical concerns or potential breaches may be reported through any of the following channels:

- Directly to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Office, which acts as the primary contact point for all ethical matters;
- Through the confidential reporting system available on ASOIU's internal platform; or
- Via written communication addressed to the Rectorate, where the concern involves senior leadership or institutional-level issues.

Anonymous reports will be accepted when sufficient detail is provided to allow appropriate follow-up. The EDI Office maintains a secure record of all reports and ensures confidentiality in handling all submissions.

REPORTING PRINCIPLES

- Reports must be made in good faith, with honest intent and reasonable belief that a breach has occurred;

- The identity of individuals submitting reports will remain confidential, except where disclosure is required by law;
- ASOIU prohibits retaliation against any person who reports an ethical concern, participates in an investigation, or provides relevant information; and
- All reports will be acknowledged and handled promptly, fairly, and consistently with the principles of natural justice.

ASSESSMENT AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

Upon receiving a report, the EDI Office will:

1. Register and acknowledge receipt of the report;
2. Conduct a preliminary assessment to determine scope, relevance, and urgency;
3. If warranted, initiate a formal investigation in consultation with the Rectorate or relevant Vice-Rector;
4. Ensure that investigations are conducted objectively, with impartial evaluation of evidence; and
5. Communicate findings and recommended actions to appropriate authorities for decision and follow-up.

Outcomes of investigations may include recommendations for disciplinary measures, mediation, or corrective action. The EDI Office maintains detailed records of all cases for monitoring and reporting purposes.

INFORMATION HANDLING AND PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

All information and materials collected in the course of reporting and investigation are handled in strict confidence. Access is limited to authorized individuals directly involved in the process. Case-related data are stored securely in accordance with ASOIU's internal data protection standards and relevant legislation.

PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION

ASOIU prohibits any form of retaliation against persons who raise concerns, report misconduct, or assist in investigations. Allegations of retaliation will be treated as separate policy violations and investigated with the same level of seriousness as the original complaint.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The EDI Office consolidates case statistics and trends into an Annual Ethics and Integrity Report submitted to the Rectorate. This report identifies key issues, lessons learned, and opportunities for institutional improvement. A public summary is published on ASOIU's website to demonstrate transparency and accountability.

7. REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This Policy is a living document that evolves with ASOIU's institutional development and ethical maturity. Continuous review ensures that the Policy remains effective, relevant, and aligned with both internal priorities and international best practices.

The Policy shall be reviewed at least once every two years by the EDI Office in coordination with the Rectorate. The review process includes:

- Evaluating feedback received from staff, students, and other stakeholders;
- Analysing data from ethical reporting, investigations, and training programmes; and
- Identifying areas for improvement in governance, awareness, and compliance mechanisms.

Revised versions of this Policy will be submitted to the Rectorate for approval. Once approved, updates will be communicated to all members of the ASOIU community and published on official platforms.

Through periodic evaluation and feedback-driven improvement, ASOIU reaffirms its commitment to maintaining a culture of integrity, responsibility, and transparency across all institutional levels.