

10.6.9 - Does your university as a body provide access schemes for people with disabilities?

Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (ASOIU) ensures equal access to education and participation for all students, including those with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. In accordance with the “Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities” and the principles of inclusive education promoted by the Ministry of Science and Education, ASOIU implements a comprehensive Accessibility and Inclusion Policy that guarantees academic, physical, and digital accessibility across all university activities.

The university recognizes that inclusive education is not limited to physical access, but also involves targeted mentoring, personalized academic support, and social integration. Therefore, ASOIU has established an institutional Disability Support and Coordination Unit (“Əlilliyi olan tələbələrə iş üzrə şöbə”) that operates under the Department of Student Affairs and works closely with faculties, the Career Center, and the Psychological Support Office.

1. University Promotion and Awareness Period

During the University Promotion Week (held annually in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education), ASOIU’s representatives organize information sessions specifically for applicants with disabilities and their families. These sessions provide:

- Guidance on academic programs, accessible campus areas, and student accommodation.
- One-on-one meetings with the Accessibility Coordinator to discuss physical access, assistive technologies, and learning adjustments.
- Distribution of printed and digital brochures in accessible formats, including large print and high-contrast designs.

ASOIU ensures that all promotional materials and campus tours are inclusive and barrier-free.

2. Pre-Enrollment Guidance and Counseling

Before university enrollment, applicants with disabilities who have passed the State Examination Center (DİM) test are offered personal consultations through the Student Accessibility Desk. During these meetings:

- Faculties and institutes present information about curricula, internship requirements, and laboratory environments.
- Physical accessibility of classrooms, laboratories, and dormitories is evaluated.
- Candidates receive assistance in selecting suitable programs based on their medical and physical conditions.

Counseling services are delivered in coordination with ASOIU’s Department of Inclusive Education Development, ensuring that every applicant is guided in accordance with both their academic interests and accessibility needs.

3. Registration and Orientation Process

At the time of registration, a special Accessibility Registration Point operates beside the Admissions Office. Students with disabilities and their families are assisted with document verification, tuition procedures, and campus familiarization. After enrollment:

- Each newly registered student is scheduled for a personal orientation session at the Disability Support and Coordination Unit.
- Accessibility staff review the student's documentation (medical reports, disability certificates) and prepare an Individual Accessibility Plan (IAP).
- Students are paired with peer mentors (“tələbə mentorlar”) to assist them during their first semester.
- The university organizes an Inclusive Orientation Program to introduce all students to principles of respect, equality, and universal design.

4. Academic Support and Mentoring

ASOIU's mission is to ensure that every student can succeed academically regardless of disability. The Disability Support and Coordination Unit (DSCU) provides continuous academic and psychosocial assistance, including:

- Individual academic mentoring and tutorial sessions.
- Provision of lecture notes and exam materials in alternative formats (digital, Braille, or enlarged text).
- Sign language interpretation and note-taking support for students with hearing impairment.
- Assistive technology access, including screen readers, voice-to-text software, and ergonomic workstations.
- Extended examination time and alternative assessment methods, subject to documentation.
- Collaboration with the Psychological Support Center for emotional well-being and motivation.

Faculty members receive training workshops on inclusive teaching practices through the ASOIU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) to ensure equitable classroom participation.

5. Social Integration and Inclusion Activities

ASOIU actively promotes social inclusion and equal participation of students with disabilities through:

- Campus volunteer programs, where peers support students in mobility and daily academic routines.
- Regular awareness campaigns such as “Barrier-Free Campus Week” and “Inclusive Education Day”.
- Partnerships with NGOs and government bodies like the State Agency for Vocational Rehabilitation to provide internship placements.

- Organization of inclusive sports, art, and innovation competitions under the slogan “Accessible University for All”.

6. Infrastructure and Digital Accessibility

ASOIU continuously upgrades its facilities to ensure full accessibility. Recent improvements include:

- Tactile surface pathways at building entrances, staircases, and corridors.
- Braille and embossed signage on classroom and office doors.
- Audible elevators with Braille control buttons.
- Accessible restrooms and ramps in all main buildings.
- Emergency audible-visual alert systems and evacuation plans designed for persons with mobility or hearing limitations.
- Accessible computer laboratories equipped with assistive software and adjustable desks.
- Inclusive online education platforms compliant with WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement

Every semester, the Disability Support and Coordination Unit prepares an Accessibility Progress Report, summarizing:

- The number of students supported by type of disability;
- Adjustments implemented in classrooms, laboratories, and digital systems;
- Feedback from student surveys on accessibility satisfaction;
- Planned improvements for the following academic year.

This report is reviewed by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs to ensure institutional accountability and sustainable resource allocation.

Conclusion

ASOIU’s Disability Access Scheme demonstrates a strong, institutional commitment to inclusive education, guided by national legislation and international principles such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Through proactive counseling, mentoring, infrastructural accessibility, and continuous monitoring, ASOIU guarantees that every student—regardless of physical or sensory limitation—can study, research, and participate fully in university life. The university’s vision is clear: to be a barrier-free center of higher education where diversity and inclusion form the foundation of academic excellence.