



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the strategy

The purpose of this policy is to create an inclusive educational environment at Shymkent University, where equal opportunities for all students and staff, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status, gender, or other personal characteristics, are guaranteed and supported. The policy aims to improve access to educational and professional opportunities for all groups of the population, including people with disabilities, immigrants, and others who face barriers to participation in academic life.

1.2 Scope of the Policy

This policy covers all aspects of University operations, including student recruitment, hiring, professional development, participation in academic life, and the provision of services for staff and students with special needs. It applies to all members of the university—students, faculty, staff, visitors, and vendors. This policy covers the following key protected characteristics:

- Age;
- Gender;
- Disability;
- Race;
- Religious and other beliefs;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marital status (marriage and civil partnership);
- Refugees and asylum seekers;
- Inclusion;
- Discrimination
- Pregnancy and motherhood.

1.3 Definitions

Equality is ensuring the same rights and opportunities for everyone, regardless of personal characteristics.

Diversity is recognizing and respecting differences among people, including their cultural, social, and individual characteristics.

Inclusion is the creation of an environment in which all people have the opportunity to participate in educational and professional activities and receive support to reach their full potential.

Discrimination is any action that limits or excludes participation in university life based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability, or other characteristics.

Age is a category that defines a person's lifespan, including people of different age groups, from infants to the elderly.

Disability is a physical or mental limitation that affects a person's ability to perform common activities of daily living. Policies should accommodate students and staff with disabilities, creating conditions for equal participation in academic, social, and professional life.

Race is a socially constructed characteristic that differentiates people based on physical characteristics, such as skin color or facial shape. Protecting rights

based on race aims to eliminate discrimination and create an inclusive environment.

Religion or belief is a system of beliefs and worldviews held by a person, including the freedom to choose one's religion and beliefs. All university members have the right to freedom of religious practice or the absence of religious beliefs.

Sexual orientation is a person's emotional, romantic, or sexual attachment to others, regardless of gender. Policies should ensure equality for all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Marriage and civil partnership are the official recognition of the relationship between two people, conferring legal and social rights and obligations. Policy should ensure equal opportunities for married people, including in matters of social protection.

Refugees and asylum seekers are people forced to flee their country due to persecution, war, or violence and seeking a safe place to live. The university must provide these individuals with access to educational and professional opportunities without discrimination.

Pregnancy and motherhood are the process of bearing and giving birth to a child, as well as the associated social role of the mother. Policies should ensure conditions for women and families, providing support during pregnancy and motherhood, including flexibility in education and work, as well as childcare options.

1.4 Normative context

The policy was developed in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Labor Code, the Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities, the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, as well as international norms and standards, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international obligations to which Kazakhstan has acceded.

It is also based on the internal regulatory documents of Shymkent University, aimed at creating fair and sustainable conditions for employees, students, and other participants in the educational process.

The policy is focused on sustainable development, respect for rights and ensuring equal opportunities for all, including environmental protection and social responsibility.

№	Regulatory document	Description
1.	Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan	The Constitution is the fundamental law that guarantees the rights and freedoms of all citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Specifically, it enshrines the right to equality and non-discrimination.
2.	Labor Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan	The Labor Code regulates workers' rights, including protection from discrimination based on age, gender, race, disability, and other grounds.

3.	Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan"	The law regulates the rights of people with disabilities, ensuring them equal opportunities in society, including in the field of education.
4.	Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men"	This law establishes equal rights for women and men in various areas of life, including work, education, and others.
5.	Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens"	This law regulates the rights and freedoms of foreign citizens in the Republic of Kazakhstan, including access to educational services.
6.	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Kazakhstan is a party to this international convention, which guarantees the rights of people with disabilities, including access to education.
7.	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	This international convention defines measures against discrimination based on race, colour, national or ethnic origin.
8.	Declaration of Human Rights	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN, guarantees the rights and freedoms of every person without distinction as to race, sex, age, disability, or other characteristics.
9.	Internal regulatory documents of the SHU	The university's internal policies and guidelines ensure fair and equal conditions for staff, students, and other participants in the educational process. These documents support the university's commitment to inclusivity and equal opportunity.
10.	Sustainable Development Policy	A document outlining strategic goals and principles in the area of sustainable development, including environmental protection, social responsibility, and efficient use of resources to ensure long-term economic and environmental stability.

1.5 Principles

Equal Opportunity: Everyone has the right to equal opportunities in education and professional development, regardless of personal characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability, and other factors.

Diversity and Inclusion: The University actively supports the diverse cultural, social, religious and personal backgrounds of all community members, creating a space where diversity is valued and respected.

Responsibility: Every member of the University community (students, faculty, staff) is responsible for upholding this policy and promoting an inclusive and supportive environment for all.

Fairness and Integrity: The University is committed to ensuring fair and honest treatment of all its members, regardless of their individual characteristics, creating an environment in which everyone can develop and achieve their potential.

Transparency and Openness: Maximum transparency is ensured in the decision-making and policy implementation process, with open access to information so that all community participants can understand and influence processes that

affect their interests.

Support and Development: The University strives to create conditions for the support and development of all members of the community, offering resources that promote both personal and professional growth, learning and social integration.

Collaboration and Partnership: An important aspect is establishing partnerships with external organizations and within the university community to work together for the benefit of sustainable development and an inclusive educational environment.

Sustainability and Longevity: All university initiatives are aimed at creating sustainable changes that can bring benefits not only in the current moment, but also in the long term, taking into account environmental, social and economic factors.

2. COMMITMENT

Shymkent University strives to create an equal and inclusive academic environment where every member of the community, including students, faculty and staff, will have equal access to educational and career opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, immigration status or other personal characteristics.

The University is committed to actively closing the gender pay gap, ensuring equal student enrolment, and creating supportive environments for women, people with disabilities, and other groups who require additional support. As part of this policy, SHU will continue to work to ensure inclusion and equality, as well as develop initiatives aimed at strengthening social justice and sustainability in the academic and professional spheres.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Strategic Development, – responsible for integrating inclusive principles into the academic sphere, including adapting educational programs and conditions for students with diverse needs.

The Department of Academic Quality Assurance and EP Development ensures the accessibility of educational technologies for all students and staff, including the implementation of digital solutions to improve inclusivity.

The Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations is responsible for supporting inclusive scientific research and implementing innovations aimed at ensuring equal opportunities in the scientific field.

The Department of Strategic Development and Internal Quality Assurance manages the university's strategic development, including the development of international cooperation and the attraction of international students with an inclusive approach.

Vice-Rector for Digitalization – ensures funding and the creation of infrastructure that supports an inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Vice-Rector for Social and Educational Work – oversees social support and equality among students and staff, including groups with special needs, and the development of the university's social responsibility policy.

4. MANAGEMENT

Monitoring and Publication Methods

Monitoring of policy implementation will include regular reports and surveys among students and staff aimed at assessing the level of inclusiveness and equality at the university.

In addition, seminars and trainings will be held regularly to raise awareness of equality issues inclusiveness among university community members. Monitoring

results and information on policy implementation will be

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management in the area of equality and inclusion aims to identify and mitigate threats that may arise during policy implementation. Key actions include:

Risk assessment – regular assessment of threats, such as insufficient student group engagement or legal violations.

Mitigation measures – implementation of training programs, adaptation of infrastructure, and ongoing policy updates.

Monitoring and reporting – regular monitoring of policy implementation and analysis of its impact.

6. CONCLUSION

Shymkent University is committed to the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion within its academic environment. Policies aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and creating an inclusive educational environment are an important part of the university's strategic development.

To achieve these goals, the university actively works at all levels—from management to every employee and student. All measures taken, including monitoring, training, and reporting, contribute to the effective implementation of policies and the creation of a supportive environment where everyone has equal opportunities for growth and development.

This policy not only helps ensure equality and inclusion, but also promotes social responsibility and long-term sustainability of the university by creating space for the development of all members of the university community, regardless of their differences.