

ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

Termez University of Economics and Service (TUES)

The University as a Place of Free Inquiry, Responsible Knowledge, and Academic Integrity

In the contemporary world, higher education institutions are expected not only to respond to social, economic, and technological change, but also to shape such change through education, research, and intellectual leadership. The accelerating availability of information, the growing complexity of public life, the transformation of labour markets, and the emergence of new interdisciplinary challenges require universities to remain open spaces for independent thought, critical debate, and responsible innovation. A university can fulfil this role only when academic work is protected from undue interference and when the search for knowledge is guided by intellectual merit, ethical responsibility, and institutional integrity.

Termez University of Economics and Service understands academic freedom as one of the essential conditions for genuine university life. The University therefore affirms that teaching, learning, research, publication, public engagement, and scholarly debate must be carried out in an environment where ideas may be developed, examined, questioned, and exchanged freely within the limits of professional ethics, academic standards, and the law. TUES regards academic freedom not as an abstract principle, but as a living institutional value that supports educational quality, scientific credibility, social trust, and the long-term development of the University.

Academic Freedom

At Termez University of Economics and Service, academic freedom is understood as the right and responsibility of members of the academic community to pursue knowledge, conduct inquiry, teach, learn, discuss, publish, and communicate ideas without improper political, commercial, ideological, or personal interference. This principle applies to the University's academic mission as a whole and includes the freedom to formulate research questions, select appropriate methods, interpret evidence according to scholarly standards, and express conclusions responsibly in teaching, publication, and public dialogue.

TUES recognizes that the integrity of higher education depends on the existence of an academic culture in which intellectual disagreement is not suppressed but treated as an essential part of scholarly development. For this reason, the University is committed to maintaining an environment in which staff and students may engage in critical discussion, test assumptions, compare competing ideas, and evaluate knowledge claims through reasoned argument and evidence. Academic freedom at TUES is therefore inseparable from intellectual responsibility: it does not remove the obligation to act professionally, respect established academic procedures, protect the rights of others, or uphold the ethical standards of the institution.

Within this understanding, TUES affirms that a university committed to academic freedom is one in which students, academic staff, researchers, and relevant institutional stakeholders may determine and pursue their academic work in accordance with scholarly judgment; where access to knowledge is encouraged and the exchange of ideas is supported; where teaching and research are protected from dogma and arbitrary restriction; where evidence and reasoned criticism are valued above status or hierarchy; and where institutional decisions affecting academic life are made through transparent, accountable, and academically justified procedures.

The University further affirms that science, scholarship, and education can only flourish where there is room for doubt, debate, creativity, and independent thought. It is therefore the position of TUES that academic work should be assessed according to academic criteria, professional standards, and ethical principles, and not according to external pressure unrelated to the scholarly merit of the work itself. In this sense, academic freedom constitutes one of the foundations of educational excellence, research credibility, and responsible university governance.

No to Discrimination!

Termez University of Economics and Service rejects all forms of discrimination, exclusion, and unequal treatment that undermine the dignity of individuals or the fairness of the academic environment. The University recognizes that academic freedom cannot exist in any meaningful way if members of the University community are denied equal respect, equal access, or equal opportunity on the basis of personal characteristics unrelated to merit, lawful institutional requirements, or legitimate academic standards.

TUES therefore does not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination on grounds such as language, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, social origin, disability, gender, age, family status, political views, or other legally and ethically protected characteristics. The University considers a pluralistic and respectful environment to be indispensable to the full development of scientific inquiry, teaching, and social engagement. Diversity of background, experience, and perspective strengthens rather than weakens the academic community, and the University is committed to cultivating an institutional culture in which such diversity is treated as a source of intellectual and human value.

For this reason, any conduct that humiliates, excludes, marginalizes, intimidates, or disadvantages a student, staff member, applicant, visitor, or service provider on discriminatory grounds is contrary to the values of TUES and inconsistent with its academic mission. The University is committed to ensuring that all members of its community can study, teach, work, and participate in university life in an environment characterized by equality of respect, fairness of treatment, and freedom from discriminatory behaviour.

Where concerns of discrimination arise, the University expects them to be addressed through established institutional procedures, with due regard to confidentiality, impartiality, and procedural fairness. TUES is committed to the continuous strengthening of policies, awareness, and administrative mechanisms that support inclusion and protect individuals from discriminatory conduct in academic and non-academic settings.

Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination

TUES is committed to maintaining an academic and working environment in which all persons are treated with dignity and in which harassment, intimidation, and discriminatory abuse are not tolerated. Because universities are places of intense interaction, collaboration, and exchange, they must also maintain clear standards of personal and professional conduct. The University therefore prohibits all forms of harassment and discriminatory behaviour, whether committed by students, academic staff, administrative staff, managers, consultants, visitors, contractors, or external partners interacting with the institution.

Harassment may take verbal, written, visual, digital, psychological, or physical forms. It may include degrading comments, repeated humiliation, hostile or offensive conduct, threatening language, exclusionary actions, intimidation, or any persistent behaviour that creates a hostile, unsafe, or degrading environment for another person. Similarly, discrimination-related harassment is prohibited where behaviour targets or harms a person because of one or more protected characteristics. Such conduct is fundamentally incompatible with the educational and ethical standards of the University.

TUES also recognizes that inappropriate use of hierarchy is particularly harmful in academic environments. Any relationship, behaviour, or action that creates unfair advantage, coerces participation, undermines consent, or distorts academic or employment decisions through unequal power relations is considered unacceptable. This includes the misuse of authority by supervisors, instructors, managers, or other persons in positions of responsibility.

The University likewise prohibits retaliation. No person shall be subjected to intimidation, disadvantage, pressure, or reprisal for reporting a concern in good faith, requesting advice, assisting in an investigation, or participating in institutional processes related to harassment or discrimination. Retaliatory conduct will itself be treated as a serious violation of University standards.

At the same time, TUES expects complaints and reports to be made honestly and responsibly. Deliberately false or malicious allegations that are knowingly intended to harm another person or misuse institutional procedures are also inconsistent with the principles of fairness and integrity that the University is committed to uphold. Such matters will be addressed in accordance with applicable disciplinary and institutional procedures.

No to Sexual Harassment!

Termez University of Economics and Service unequivocally prohibits sexual harassment, sexual intimidation, sexual coercion, and other forms of gender-based misconduct. The University recognizes that such behaviour is deeply harmful to individuals and destructive to the academic and social environment of the institution. It may also amount to a serious disciplinary violation and, depending on the circumstances, may have legal consequences under applicable law.

The University understands sexual harassment to include unwelcome verbal, non-verbal, written, digital, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity, creates an intimidating or humiliating environment, interferes with academic or professional participation, or places a person under inappropriate pressure. Such conduct is unacceptable regardless of whether it takes place in classrooms, offices, dormitories, events, digital communication platforms, or any context connected to university life.

TUES is committed to ensuring that any member of the University community who experiences or witnesses such conduct has access to appropriate reporting, advisory, and support mechanisms. The University will treat such matters seriously, handle them with due care and confidentiality, and ensure that those affected are not left without institutional support. Academic freedom and personal dignity are not competing values; rather, the University affirms that meaningful academic freedom can only exist in an environment where individuals are protected from coercion, abuse, humiliation, and fear.

The University also recognizes the ethical risks associated with relationships formed across unequal institutional hierarchies. Even where a relationship appears consensual, where one individual holds formal academic, managerial, or evaluative authority over another, such situations may create conflicts of interest, perceptions of unfairness, or real harm to academic and institutional integrity. Accordingly, TUES expects that any such situation be handled transparently and in accordance with relevant ethical and institutional procedures.

Academic Honesty and Ethics

Termez University of Economics and Service considers academic honesty to be one of the indispensable foundations of university life. Academic freedom does not exist separately from academic integrity; on the contrary, the freedom to teach, learn, and research carries with it the obligation to act honestly, responsibly, and in accordance with accepted scholarly norms. Without such integrity, academic freedom loses its meaning, because knowledge production and teaching can no longer be trusted as genuine, fair, or intellectually valid.

For this reason, TUES expects all students, academic staff, researchers, and administrative personnel engaged in academic processes to observe the highest standards of honesty in study, teaching, assessment, research design, authorship, publication, supervision, and data handling. The University affirms that plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, unauthorized assistance, academic sabotage, misappropriation of intellectual labour, coercive authorship practices, manipulation of

research data, or any other conduct contrary to the principles of honest academic work are unacceptable.

The University further recognizes that academic honesty is not only a disciplinary issue but also a cultural one. A strong academic culture is built on fairness, mutual respect, transparency, recognition of intellectual contribution, and the willingness to evaluate work according to scholarly merit. TUES therefore promotes academic integrity not only through sanctions and regulations, but also through awareness, guidance, mentoring, ethical review, and support for good academic practice. Students and staff who are uncertain about the proper academic or ethical handling of their work should be encouraged to seek advice and clarification before problems arise.

The University's commitment to academic honesty extends across the full academic cycle, including the selection of research topics, the design of methods, the collection and interpretation of data, the writing of assignments and theses, authorship decisions, publication ethics, supervision relationships, and peer review processes. In all such matters, TUES affirms that intellectual honesty is indispensable to educational quality, research credibility, and the public trust placed in the University.

Institutional Commitment

Termez University of Economics and Service declares its firm commitment to protecting academic freedom, promoting equality, preventing harassment and discrimination, prohibiting sexual misconduct, and safeguarding academic honesty across all areas of university activity. The University understands these commitments as mutually reinforcing elements of one coherent academic and ethical environment. A university that seeks excellence in education and research must also ensure justice in treatment, openness in inquiry, integrity in scholarship, and dignity in human relations.

TUES therefore undertakes to develop and maintain policies, procedures, structures, and practices that protect these principles in institutional life. It will continue to strengthen awareness, internal accountability, reporting mechanisms, leadership responsibility, and support systems so that members of the University community can study and work in an environment that is free, fair, professional, and respectful.

The University also affirms that these principles are not merely declarative. They are expected to guide daily behaviour, academic practice, administrative decision-making, and institutional development. Through this commitment, TUES seeks to ensure that it remains a place where knowledge can be pursued responsibly, where individuals are treated with dignity, and where academic life is shaped by freedom, merit, fairness, and integrity.

Rector



A. Absamatov