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Academic
Freedom
Policy- 2021-
Draft

The University of Azad
Jammu and Kashmir

UNIVERSITY OF AZAD JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- 503 -

(DRAFT) Policy of Academic Freedom at The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

1.0 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to clarify the

- 1.1 Rights to academic freedom of people especially the scholars, i.e. teachers and students; and
- 1.2 Relevant responsibilities therein while using the academic freedom.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies across the University.

3.0 Salient Features

This policy is made under the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Act 1980.

- 3.1 Version: 1 (Draft)
- 3.2 Approved on: Yet to be approved
- 3.3 Policy Steward: Registrar
- 3.4 Effective date: Yet to be approved
- 3.5 Review due by: May be three years after approval
- 3.6 Approved by: Academic Council/ Syndicate of the University
- 3.7 Status: Draft/ Approved/ Published

4.0 Policy

The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir perceives the Academic Freedom in the following way:

4.1 Introduction to Academic Freedom

Academic freedom may be defined as "the freedom of teachers and students to teach, study, and pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations, or public pressure" (Encyclopedia Britannica-online). This intellectual liberty from all worldly fears and controls while always remaining answerable to ALLAH SWT helps the teachers/ students to inquire the truth and results in the meaningful advancement in knowledge. And the progression of knowledge is the ultimate objective of any higher educational institution in a society. The same principle applies to other administrative staff members who are to facilitate this educational process.

This academic independence may be assessed by Academic Freedom Index (AFI) (Academic Freedom Index 2020 | UPSC | IASbhai; 23-05-2021; 11:00 am) through its five main pillars, namely:

- 4.1.1 Freedom to research and teach
- 4.1.2 Freedom of academic exchange and dissemination
- 4.1.3 Institutional autonomy
- 4.1.4 Campus integrity
- 4.1.5 Freedom of academic and cultural expression

4.2 Right to Academic Freedom

4.2.1 UAJK is dedicated to preserve, defend and promote all above mentioned pillars of academic freedom in the conduct of its affairs, so that all scholastic teaching/ learning activities at the University are carried out without fear or favour.

4.2.2 Similarly, the University supports the right of all scholars at the University to search for truth through such a research methodology which is not in contradiction with the generally accepted legal/ moral/ ethical norms.

4.2.3 The right of scholars to research in any field is well protected by the university and is detailed in the "Research Policy of The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir".

4.2.4 In the same way, the students are also granted maximum liberty to exercise their rights but in a disciplined manner that reflects the admirable prestige of an institution of UAJK's Academic Freedom Policy

higher education. For that matter, a separate "Code of Conduct for Students of The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir" is available.

4.2.5 Likewise, governance free of all prejudices and pressures is another hallmark which is being protected by the University. All the employees of the university are at the liberty to work under the rules and regulations of the university, GOAJK and GoP, as the case may be.

4.2.6 Transparency of the processes and access to the information is another distinguishing feature of the university. The relevant stakeholders within the university or from the outside have the rights to ask the questions about their doubts regarding the workings of different sections of the university.

4.2.7 The people are at a liberty to follow their cultures while remaining in moral boundaries. Equally speaking, the liberty to expression freely extends to making statements on political matters, including policies affecting higher education, and also to criticism of the decisions of the University.

4.3 Responsibilities of Scholars in Exercising Academic Freedom

As a general diction, "Rights come with the Responsibilities" -- the right to academic freedom of expression carries responsibilities too. People may exercise their own academic freedom, even outside their expertise, but it should be in a reasonable and logical manner.

4.3.1 All the people at the university have to follow the general norms of the religion, ethics and morality.

4.3.2 The employees and the students are required to abide by the rules and the regulations of the university, GoAJK and GoP, as the case may be, which are enforced from time to time.

4.3.3 If they have to speak in public on topics outside their expertise, they must consider if context of the topic favours their affiliation with the university. Academic freedom of expression is seen in the following guidelines:

4.3.3.1 The debate must be in good faith; in a rational and good manner;

4.3.3.2 The debate has to be academic. It needs to be reason based so that counter narrative may also be brought to the light to draw the conclusions.

4.4 Saving Clauses of Academic Freedom (What not covered?)

The university authorities have a very clear understanding that Academic Freedom is supposed to be read with following provisions:

4.4.1 There will be a zero tolerance on all types of harassments, or forceful imposing of one's personal views on others.

4.4.2 It does not protect an ineffectual teacher from losing his or her job on the basis of bad performance.

4.4.3 It does not protect faculty from disciplinary action, but it does require that they receive fair treatment and due process.

4.4.4 Academic freedom does not protect a faculty member from investigations into allegations of scientific misconduct or violations of sound university policies, nor from appropriate penalties should such charges be sustained in a hearing of record before an elected faculty body.

4.4.5 General Law, if broken will have to take its own course for non-university penalties.