

AZERBAIJAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS (UNEC)

**ANTI-POVERTY SUPPORT
AND INCLUSION POLICY**

Anti-Poverty Support and Inclusion Policy

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Section 1. Purpose

Affirms UNEC's commitment to eradicating poverty through equitable access, student support, and empowerment. Highlights education as a transformative tool for society mobility and national development.

Section 2. Scope

Covers all UNEC students (domestic and international), faculty, staff, and administrative units responsible for delivering and monitoring anti-poverty measures.

Section 3. Context and Alignment

Positions UNEC's actions within Azerbaijan's 2030 Socio-Economic Development Strategy, State Program on Education Development, and the global SDG 1 agenda.

Section 4. Policy Objectives

- Ensure equitable access for students from low-income households.
- Provide diverse financial aid and support programs to remove economic barriers.
- Promote retention, academic success, and graduation.
- Support post-graduation employment or entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Build partnerships with government, NGOs, and international organizations to enhance inclusion.

Section 5. Policy Statements

5.1 SDG 1.1 – Community Engagement and Poverty Alleviation

UNEC supports local communities through workshops, entrepreneurship programs, and financial literacy initiatives targeting low-income households.

5.2 SDG 1.2 – Employment and Economic Empowerment

The University's Career Center offers internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship

programs. Entrepreneurship support includes training, seed funding, and business development guidance.

5.3 SDG 1.3 – University Anti-Poverty Programs

UNEC implements structured scholarships and support schemes for economically disadvantaged students:

1. General Stipend Program
 - Awarded annually based on academic performance and financial need.
 - Covers partial tuition and provides monthly stipends.
2. Special Grants for Orphans / Students Who Lost Parents
 - Full tuition coverage, monthly stipend, and access to housing and counseling services.
3. “Brilliant Minds” Scholarship
 - For high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds.
 - Encourages academic excellence and innovation.
4. Success Examination & Success Bursary Scheme
 - After first-year evaluations, high-performing students receive a bursary to support continued study.
5. Heydar Aliyev International Scholarship Program
 - For international students from partner countries.
 - Covers tuition, living expenses, and integration support.
6. Intergovernmental Education Grant
 - Targets students from low and lower-middle income countries.
 - Offers full tuition, monthly stipend, and mentorship.
7. Scholarships for Students with Special Needs
 - Tuition waiver, monthly stipends, and tailored support services.
8. Post-Graduation Financial Aid Scheme
 - One-time payment of 3,500 AZN to graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds who secure employment or start a business within one year.

Selection Process:

- Transparent application through UNEC’s Financial Aid Office.
- Evaluation is based on academic merit, financial need, personal circumstances, and potential social impact.
- Annual review ensures equitable distribution and alignment with institutional priorities.

5.4 SDG 1.4 – Partnerships and Outreach for Economic Inclusion

Collaboration with government bodies, NGOs, and international partners to extend access and financial support beyond national borders.

Section 6. Implementation Mechanisms

- Financial Aid Office manages scholarship allocations and disbursements.
- Student Affairs provides counseling, housing support, and monitoring.
- Academic Departments identify at-risk students for targeted assistance.

Section 7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

- KPIs: % of low-income students admitted, retention rates, graduation rates, postgraduation employment or entrepreneurship.
- Annual reports presented to Rectorate and publicly available.

Section 8. Review and Continuous Improvement

- Policy reviewed every three years, updated based on socio-economic trends and student needs.
- Stakeholder consultations ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Section 9. Alignment with National and Global Priorities

- Contributes to Azerbaijan's inclusive education agenda, social mobility targets, and global SDG 1 achievement.
- Reflects UNEC's commitment to social responsibility, equity, and sustainable development.

Section 10. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Low-income student** -a student whose household income falls below nationally defined subsistence or financial-aid thresholds.
- **Vulnerable groups** -students facing socio-economic disadvantages, including orphans, students with disabilities, displaced people, or first-generation university students.
- **Financial hardship** -a documented situation where a student cannot meet essential educational or living expenses.
- **First-generation student** -a student whose parents have not completed higher education.

Section 11. Equity and Inclusion Principles

UNEC ensures that all anti-poverty initiatives operate under principles of fairness, transparency, and non-discrimination. Support measures shall:

- prioritize students with the greatest financial need
- ensure equal access regardless of gender, nationality, disability, or social status
- promote inclusive participation in academic and extracurricular opportunities
- prevent stigmatization of aid recipients

Section 12. Risk Management and Safeguards

To ensure sustainability and effectiveness of anti-poverty initiatives, UNEC identifies and mitigates potential risks, including:

- funding instability or economic downturns
- inflation affecting scholarship value
- under-identification of eligible students
- unequal access to information about support programs

Mitigation strategies include periodic budget review, needs reassessment, and communication campaigns.

Section 13. Student Appeal and Feedback

Students have the right to request reconsideration of financial aid decisions.

- Appeals must be submitted within a defined period after notification.
- Cases will be reviewed by an independent institutional committee.
- Decisions will be communicated transparently within a specified timeframe.

Feedback collected from students will inform policy refinement and service improvements.

Section 14. Digital Access and Transparency

UNEC supports digital accessibility in all anti-poverty services through:

- online application systems
- real-time status tracking for financial aid requests
- centralized information portals
- automated eligibility assessment where feasible

Digital tools ensure efficiency, accountability, and equal access to support.

Section 15. Lifecycle Student Support Approach

UNEC adopts a holistic support model addressing student needs across the full academic journey:

1. **Admission Stage** -outreach and access support
2. **Study Stage** -financial aid, mentoring, and academic support
3. **Graduation Stage** -career readiness and employment assistance
4. **Early Career Stage** -transition grants and entrepreneurship support

Section 16. Sustainable Funding Framework

To ensure long-term continuity of anti-poverty programs, UNEC will diversify funding sources, including:

- institutional budget allocations
- government programs
- international grants
- private sector partnerships
- alumni and philanthropic contributions

Section 17. Social Impact Measurement

UNEC evaluates the effectiveness of anti-poverty measures using impact indicators such as:

- graduate employment rates
- income mobility outcomes

- first-generation graduate numbers
- reduction in student dropout due to financial reasons

Findings will guide strategic planning and policy updates.

Section 18. External Partnerships and Collaboration

The University encourages cooperation with external stakeholders to strengthen poverty-reduction initiatives, including:

- governmental agencies
- civil society organizations
- international development institutions
- private sector partners

Such collaborations enhance program reach and effectiveness.

Section 19. Final Provision

This policy should serve as a guiding institutional framework ensuring that financial disadvantage does not prevent any qualified student from accessing and completing higher education at UNEC.

Detailed UNEC Scholarship Programs

Scholarship / Grant	Eligibility	Coverage Benefits	Purpose / Impact
General Stipend	All students meet academic + financial need criteria	Partial tuition + monthly stipend	Reduce financial barriers, encourage performance
Special Grants for Orphans or students	Orphans or students	Full tuition	Ensure vulnerable
Orphans / Students Who Lost Parents	Students with parental loss	Monthly stipend, housing, counseling	Students can complete studies

Brilliant Minds	High-achieving low-income students	Tuition reduction + stipend	Reward excellence, promote innovation
Success Examination Bursary	Students passing successful exams	Merit-based bursary	Encourage academic retention and performance
Heydar Aliyev International Scholarship	Outstanding international students from partner countries	Full tuition + living stipend	Enhance global access and internationalization
Intergovernmental Education Grant	Students from low-income countries	Full tuition + monthly stipend + mentorship	Expand global inclusion and capacity building
Special Scholarships	Students with disabilities or special needs	Tuition waiver + stipend + support services	Ensure equitable access and academic success
Post-Graduation Financial Aid	Graduates from low-income backgrounds employed/self-employed within 1 year	One-time 3,500 AZN grant	Support transition to economic independence

