

AZERBAIJAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS (UNEC)

**LIFELONG LEARNING (LLL)
AND PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICY**

Lifelong Learning (LLL) and Public Education Policy

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Section 1. Introduction

The Azerbaijan State University of Economics (UNEC) recognizes the essential role of education, continuous learning, and public engagement in advancing sustainable development and fostering responsible citizenship. In alignment with global trends and Azerbaijan's national development priorities, UNEC places significant emphasis on the implementation and public education of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Lifelong Learning (LLL) and Public Education Policy outline the institution's strategic approach for promoting quality education, strengthening societal awareness, supporting sustainable operations, and cultivating partnerships that help build a more resilient future.

As a leading educational institution in the region, UNEC assumes an important social responsibility to ensure that its campus, academic programs, research projects, and community engagement initiatives actively contribute to sustainability. To fulfill this responsibility, UNEC invests in continuous public learning opportunities, facilitates open access to its facilities for community and organizational initiatives, and supports emerging ventures-particularly those related to environmental and social sustainability-through its incubation center.

The following policy sets out UNEC's commitments, operational principles, and strategic directions for implementing lifelong learning initiatives, effective public education programs, and sustainability-focused activities.

Section 2. Policy

The UNEC LLL and Public Education Policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Promote Lifelong Learning opportunities for students, professionals, and the public through formal, non-formal, and informal education pathways.
2. Increase public understanding of the SDGs, especially those related to responsible consumption, sustainability, climate awareness, biodiversity, energy efficiency, and water management.
3. Strengthen UNEC's role as a public educational hub by hosting events, workshops, exhibitions, and conferences aimed at societal development.
4. Provide open access to university facilities to support sustainability-related activities and community engagement programs.
5. Promote responsible environmental practices across the campus including sustainable energy use, reduced water consumption, environmentally friendly soil usage, conscious aquatic life management, and biodiversity protection.
6. Support innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship through the UNEC Incubation Center, promoting startups and organizations working in environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

7. Ensure UNEC’s academic and administrative activities reflect sustainability best practices, encouraging a culture of responsibility across the institution.

Section 3. Commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

UNEC is committed to promoting the SDGs as a framework for global sustainable growth. The university’s LLL and Public Education Policy integrates SDG education at multiple levels:

3.1 Embedding SDG Awareness Across Curriculum

UNEC actively incorporates SDG-related content into courses across economics, business, environmental studies, public administration, and social sciences. Student projects, capstones, assignments, and research frequently include components related to sustainability challenges and opportunities.

3.2 Public Education Initiatives

UNEC develops and disseminates educational materials, hosts open lectures, and organizes public campaigns addressing SDG themes such as:

- Clean and affordable energy
- Responsible consumption and production
- Quality education for all
- Climate action
- Sustainable cities and communities
- Life below water and life on land
- Industry, innovation, and infrastructure

These initiatives aim to enhance community awareness and mobilize action in support of the goals.

3.3 Institutional Culture of Sustainability

The university leadership encourages academic departments, student clubs, and administrative units to align their planned activities with the SDGs. Annual reporting and monitoring help ensure that SDG targets remain integrated into UNEC’s strategic planning.

Section 4. Lifelong Learning Strategy

UNEC’s LLL strategy emphasizes inclusive, accessible, and flexible learning opportunities.

4.1 Formal and Non-Formal Educational Programs

UNEC provides a variety of learning formats:

- Professional development courses

- Certificate programs
- Public lectures and seminars
- Online learning modules
- Short-term workshops

These programs address both academic and professional needs, supporting learners of all ages.

4.2 Learning for All

UNEC's lifelong learning activities target:

- Students seeking skill development
- Professionals aiming for career advancement
- Community members seeking knowledge
- Entrepreneurs and innovators
- Public sector employees
- Civil society organizations

The university ensures all stakeholders have equal opportunity to participate.

4.3 Continuous Public Events

UNEC continuously organizes public events such as conferences, sustainability weeks, open-door days, and awareness campaigns. These events help disseminate the latest knowledge, research findings, and best practices across society.

Section 5. Public Access to UNEC Facilities

As a public institution, UNEC provides **access to its facilities**-including halls, classrooms, laboratories, event spaces, and outdoor areas-for activities related to public education and sustainability promotion.

5.1 Accessibility for Public Initiatives

External organizations, NGOs, startups, and community groups can request access to university facilities for:

- Environmental education programs
- Public discussions and debates
- Sustainability-related exhibitions
- Innovation and entrepreneurship workshops
- Scientific events on ecology, climate, or biodiversity

UNEC's commitment to openness strengthens its impact beyond the academic community.

5.2 Providing Spaces for Sustainability

Facilities are also used for demonstrating sustainable practices, such as:

- Energy-efficient technologies
- Water-saving systems
- Eco-friendly waste management
- Biodiversity-friendly landscapes
- Sustainable soil treatments
- Aquatic life awareness installations

These serve as living educational demonstrations for visitors and students.

Section 6. Environmental Sustainability and Resource Responsibility

UNEC promotes environmentally responsible behavior in all its operations.

6.1 Energy Policy

UNEC's energy policy promotes:

- ✓ Efficient energy consumption
- ✓ Adoption of renewable energy practices
- ✓ Campus-wide awareness campaigns
- ✓ Long-term planning for carbon footprint reduction
- ✓ Behavior changes strategies for staff and students

The university organizes public training on energy efficiency, supports research on renewable energy economics, and integrates clean energy topics into educational programming.

6.2 Water Consumption and Conservation

UNEC focuses on:

- ❖ Reducing water waste through monitoring systems
- ❖ Installing water-efficient devices
- ❖ Introducing awareness campaigns on water protection
- ❖ Educating the public on responsible water use
- ❖ Conducting training in water economics and management

Water conservation is promoted as a critical component of environmental responsibility.

6.3 Soil Usage and Land Sustainability

The university encourages sustainable soil usage practices including:

- Minimizing chemical contamination

- Promoting organic landscaping methods
- Supporting research on soil economics and sustainability
- Holding public seminars on land preservation
- Collaborating with organizations focused on land rehabilitation

Land protection is treated as an essential public education topic.

6.4 Conscious Aquatic Life Protection

UNEC integrates education into aquatic ecosystems, focusing on:

- ✚ Pollution reduction
- ✚ Responsible consumption of marine resources
- ✚ Marine and freshwater biodiversity
- ✚ Public awareness events about aquatic sustainability
- ✚ Student-led projects on river and Caspian Sea conservation

UNEC considers conscious aquatic life management integral to SDG education.

6.5 Biodiversity Protection

The university supports programs that protect local and global biodiversity by:

- ✓ Promoting eco-friendly campus landscaping
- ✓ Conducting biodiversity awareness workshops
- ✓ Collaborating with environmental groups
- ✓ Supporting student research on conservation
- ✓ Integrating biodiversity topics into its LLL programs

Public education campaigns highlight the importance of species protection and ecosystem balance.

Section 7. Support for Startups and Sustainable Innovation

UNEC's Incubation Center plays a vital role in promoting innovation and sustainability.

7.1 UNEC Incubation Center

The center:

- ✓ Works closely with private and public organizations
- ✓ Supports early-stage startups
- ✓ Provides mentoring, training, and access to resources
- ✓ Fosters interdisciplinary collaboration
- ✓ Encourages entrepreneurship in the sustainability domain

7.2 Supporting Sustainable Startups

UNEC prioritizes projects that focus on:

- Renewable energy solutions
- Water-saving technologies
- Eco-friendly business models
- Responsible agriculture
- Waste reduction
- Climate action
- Marine and land ecosystem protection

This focus ensures that entrepreneurship contributes to long-term environmental goals.

7.3 Collaborative Projects

The university collaborates with companies, NGOs, and government bodies on projects related to:

- Sustainable development
- Green innovation
- Social entrepreneurship
- Environmental protection
- Circular economy

UNEC aims to become a national hub for sustainability-focused innovation.

Section 8. Public Engagement and Community

UNEC engages with society through formal and informal channels.

8.1 Community Outreach

The university conducts programs aimed at:

- Schools and Youth groups
- Local communities
- Municipal authorities
- Small and medium enterprises
- Local environmental organizations

These programs address awareness gaps and support societal development.

8.2 Public Campaigns

Annual public campaigns include:

- ❖ Sustainability weeks
- ❖ SDG-themed public lectures
- ❖ “Green Campus” initiatives

- ❖ Biodiversity days
- ❖ Water conservation campaigns
- ❖ Energy independence workshops

These activities bring together students, faculty, and the surrounding community.

8.3 Media and Educational Content

UNEC produces multimedia materials-videos, guides, brochures, and infographics-focused on sustainable behavior and environmental literacy.

Section 9. Implementation and Governance

UNEC ensures implementation through structured governance.

9.1 Coordination Unit

A central unit oversees policymaking, event planning, monitoring, and reporting.

9.2 Annual Plans

Departments develop yearly LLL and public education plans, aligned with sustainability priorities.

9.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance indicators include:

- ❖ Number of public events
- ❖ SDG-related learning outcomes
- ❖ Facility usage for sustainability
- ❖ Participation in lifelong learning programs
- ❖ Startup support statistics
- ❖ Energy/water consumption data

Annual reports ensure transparency and accountability.

Section 10. Legal Status and Applicability

This policy is approved by the Rector's official order and is binding for all academic, administrative, and support units of UNEC. All departments shall comply with the provisions of this policy and integrate their principles into planning, implementation, and reporting processes.

Section 11. Risk Management

UNEC recognizes potential risks that may affect implementation of this policy and commits to proactive mitigation strategies. Identified risks include:

- Insufficient financial resources
- Low participation in public programs
- Limited technological access for some stakeholders
- Coordination challenges between institutional units

Mitigation measures include diversified funding strategies, awareness campaigns, digital accessibility initiatives, and strengthened interdepartmental coordination.

Section 12. Accountability Framework

Responsibilities for policy implementation are assigned as follows:

1. Academic Departments - integrate sustainability and SDG content into curricula and research activities.
2. Administrative Units - support program organization, logistics, and monitoring.
3. Sustainability Coordination Unit - oversee implementation, evaluation, and reporting.
4. Finance Department - ensure allocation and monitoring of financial resources.
5. Public Relations Office - promote awareness campaigns and public communication.

Section 13. Monitoring Indicators and Targets

UNEC establishes measurable indicators to track policy effectiveness:

- Minimum 40 public education events annually
- At least 10,000 participants per year in lifelong learning programs
- Integration of SDG-related content into at least 25 courses
- Support for minimum 15 sustainability-focused startups annually
- Annual reduction in campus energy and water consumption

Performance results shall be reviewed annually and used to improve policy implementation.

Section 14. Policy Review Cycle

This policy shall be formally reviewed every three years or earlier if required by regulatory, strategic, or institutional changes. Reviews will be conducted through stakeholder consultation, performance analysis, and benchmarking against international best practices.

Section 15. Data Collection and Reporting Methodology

UNEC will collect implementation data through:

- Annual departmental reports
- Event participation records
- Learning outcome assessments
- Resource consumption monitoring systems
- Surveys and stakeholder feedback

Collected data will support evidence-based decision-making and institutional transparency.

Section 16. Final Provision

This policy serves as UNEC's institutional framework for lifelong learning and public education and shall guide all university initiatives related to sustainability awareness, community engagement, and inclusive learning opportunities. All university units are responsible for ensuring that the principles outlined in this policy are reflected in their activities and strategic planning.

Section 17. Conclusion

With this Lifelong Learning and Public Education Policy, UNEC reinforces its dedication to fostering an informed, engaged, and responsible society. By integrating sustainability into its academic and administrative operations, offering accessible educational programs, supporting innovation, and promoting environmental responsibility, UNEC positions itself as a leader in sustainable development education in Azerbaijan and the region.

The university remains committed to continuous improvement, long-term planning, and inclusive public engagement-ensuring that the values of sustainability and lifelong learning shape future generations.