



The American University of Kurdistan Student Rights Policy

Policy Number: AS012

Effective Date: 4 October 2020

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I. INTRODUCTION

- a. **Authority:** The Board of Trustees (herein referred to as “Board”) at The American University of Kurdistan (herein referred to as “AUK” or “University”) is authorized to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs.
- b. **Purpose:** The purpose is to set forth policy to support and uphold the basic freedoms and citizenship rights of all students within the context of the entire educational setting, including experiences both inside and outside the classroom.
- c. **Scope:** This policy applies to all enrolled students and programs.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **Responsible Executive:** Provost
- b. **Responsible Administrator:** Office of Student Affairs; Student Government
- c. **Responsible Office:** Office of Provost
- d. **Policy Contact:** Office of Provost

III. STUDENT RIGHTS POLICY STATEMENT

AUK promotes an environment that protects the freedom of its students to learn to their greatest potential. The University is committed to the principle that students have a duty to respect each other and to promote a professional environment in which the educational mission of the AUK can be freely pursued to the greatest degree possible. Academic integrity is essential in any educational endeavor. The students should continually strive to improve their knowledge, skills, understandings, and perspectives through lifelong learning. Honesty, integrity and respect in all interactions with colleagues, staff, and instructors are essential academic attributes necessary to promote success at AUK. Therefore, a student commits to the AUK’s ideals, ethics, and standards of conduct.

The Student Government is the official liaison between the student body and the University administration and serves as the mechanism for student input in institutional decision making. The Student Government is comprised of representatives and officers elected by the student body. It is the responsibility of Student Government to represent the entire student body and consider concerns. These concerns should be presented to the appropriate University Administrator and if necessary, to the University's President's Cabinet for consideration. Decisions affecting the entire student body should be communicated promptly.

All students have the following rights:

- a. **Rights in the Pursuit of Education:** The classrooms, laboratories, libraries, studios, and other spaces are the essential learning environments of the AUK, and the freedom to learn in these environments should be promoted and encouraged by the AUK's faculty and staff. The following statements have been developed in support of students' rights in all learning environments within the college. Students shall have the right to:
 1. have reasonable access to faculty and staff, academic technology, classrooms, libraries, presentations, and other resources necessary for the learning process;
 2. have access to academic advising and clear expectations for degree and graduation requirements;
 3. have decisions related to the pursuit of their education made in a clear manner;
 4. learn in an environment that supports the freedom of self-expression and association;
 5. participate in an exchange of ideas, pursuant with their constitutional rights and the preamble of this code, free of conduct that impedes either a faculty member's ability to teach or the student's ability to learn;
 6. expect that faculty and staff members will be sensitive to students' religious beliefs and observances, including an expectation that instructors will make reasonable arrangements, upon appropriate prior notice, when a student must miss an exam or other academic exercise resulting from the observance of a religious holiday; and
 7. study, work, and interact in an environment of professionalism, mutual trust and respect that is free of amorous or sexual advances by other enrolled students, faculty or staff members at AUK. All amorous or sexual relationships between, faculty/staff members and students are actively discouraged when the faculty or staff member has any professional responsibility for the student, even when both parties have consented or appear to have consented to the relationship. Such professional responsibility encompasses both instructional and non-instructional contexts.
- b. **Right to Freedom from Discrimination**
 1. It is the policy of AUK to comply with all authorities requiring nondiscrimination, including, but not limited to the Law of Protecting Components in Kurdistan (2015), Article 1, Article 3 and Article 6, the Kurdistan Region Law (5) of 2015.
 2. The University is fully committed to policies of equal employment and nondiscrimination and works to prevent any form of exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of, or subject any individual to discrimination, harassment,

or prejudicial treatment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, religion, expression of political or personal beliefs outside of the workplace, or any other status protected under applicable law.

c. Right to Freedom from Harassment

1. The AUK is committed to maintaining the campus community as a place of work and study free from abuse, intimidation and harassment, where everyone is treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. Conduct which disrupts, interferes with the safety of others, adversely affects, or otherwise interferes with the lawful functions of the University, or the rights of an individual to pursue an education at the AUK may be subject to AUK discipline.
2. AUK complies with all government laws, rules and regulations, along with the appropriate local jurisdictions, the Board of Trustees and the President's Cabinet.
3. Refer to AUK Policy: Student Code of Conduct and Grievance Policy

d. Right to Access Records

1. AUK maintains an educational record for each student who is or has been enrolled at AUK.
2. The right to inspect and review information contained in the student's educational records.
3. The right to challenge the contents of the student's educational records.
4. The right to a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory.
5. The right to submit an explanatory statement for inclusion in the educational record if the outcome of the hearing is unsatisfactory.
6. The right to prevent disclosure, with certain exceptions, of personally identifiable information.
7. The right to secure a copy of the institutional policy.
8. The right to be free from involuntary disclosure of private information that professors or administrators acquire in the course of their work as advisors, examples include information regarding their gender identity, sexual orientation, health information, personal views, beliefs and political associations.
9. The right to have the University maintain and protect the private status of all educational records except as directed by appropriate legal authority.
10. The right to file complaints follow the due process. Refer to AUK Policy: Grievance and Appeal Process Policy

e. Right to Know

1. AUK prospective and current students have the right to know the persistence and graduation rates of full-time students.

f. Right to Freedom of Association, Expression, Advocacy, and Publication

1. Students are free to form, join, and participate in groups or organizations that promote student interests, including but not limited to, groups or organizations that are organized for intellectual, religious, social, economic, political, recreational, or cultural purposes.
2. In accordance with constitutions and laws and AUK policy, the University recognizes the rights of all students to engage in discussion, to express thoughts and opinions, and to assemble, speak, write, publish, or invite speakers on any subject without University interference or fear of AUK disciplinary action.
3. Students may engage in peaceful and orderly protests, demonstrations, and picketing in traditional public forums, specifically, outdoor areas of the campus that do not substantially disrupt functions of the University. Such protests, demonstrations, and picketing are subject to appropriate regulation concerning time, place, and manner so long as the restrictions:
 - are narrowly tailored to serve a significant institutional interest;
 - are based on published regulations specified by the Law of Kurdistan Region of Iraq;
 - leave alternative channels for communication;
 - do not restrict spontaneous and contemporaneous assembling in outdoor areas of the University campus; or
 - do not restrict a person from freely engaging in lawful, noncommercial expressive activity in outdoor areas of the campus.
4. Demonstrations are a legitimate mode of expression, whether politically motivated or directed against the AUK administration, and will not be prohibited.
5. Demonstrators, however, have no right to deprive others of the opportunity to speak or be heard, take hostages, physically obstruct the movement of others, or otherwise disrupt educational or institutional processes in a way that interferes with the safety or freedom of others.
6. Students may be subject to disciplinary action when their actions cause, or are likely to cause, disruption or interference with the regular and essential operation of the University.
7. Students who have questions about protests, demonstrations, or any other form of expression, should contact the Office of Student Affairs for more information.
8. Students who publish student publications under college auspices have the right to be free of AUK censorship. Student editors and managers may be suspended or removed from their positions only for proper cause and by appropriate proceedings conducted by the organization responsible for the appointment of such editors and managers.
9. AUK requires a student group or organization to register and be approved by the Office of Student Affairs. Student groups and organizations must comply with all laws, rules and regulation, as well as AUK policies.

10. A student, student group, or organization may be authorized to use AUK facilities for extracurricular activities, subject to the procedures established by the University.
11. As constituents of the academic community, AUK students shall be free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and procedures which shall include the examination and discussion of issues of interest to them and expression of opinions both publicly and privately. They shall be free to invite and to hear persons of their choosing and to support causes by orderly means that do not substantially disrupt the regular and essential operations of the college.

g. Right to Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities

1. AUK staff seek to ensure that all students who meet eligibility requirements, as defined by the Office of Student Affairs, receive the opportunity to learn to their fullest abilities.
2. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made to ensure access to academic programs, services, and employment.

h. Right to Participate in Institutional Policy

1. Students, through student representatives, have a right to check, participate in formulating and evaluating institutional policies. Student Government will appoint individuals from Logistics Committee, Volunteers' Committee, Academics Committee, Campus Life Committee, Culturalism Committee, Communications Committee, and Debates Committee to participate in developing and revising institutional policy.

i. Rights of Students in the Judicial Process

1. Students have the right to file a complaint if they believe any of their rights, as defined in this code, have been violated by any member of the campus community.
2. A student making a complaint under the provisions of this code should expect that the AUK will make a good faith attempt to determine the validity of the complaint.
3. Refer to AUK Policy: Grievance and Appeal Process Policy

IV. STUDENT RIGHTS POLICY PROCEDURES

- a. If students believe they have been subject to the violation of student rights, they can contact the Office of Student Affairs, file a claim form and receive an official copy of the document that allows them to document their claim record.
- b. Director of the Office of Student Affairs directs students for the proper procedures of due process. Refer to AUK Policy: Grievance and Appeal Process Policy

V. POLICY HISTORY

- a. **Approved by:** Board of Trustees
- b. **Adopted:** October 3, 2020
- c. **Amended:** October 3, 2020