Policy originally adopted in 2018
Most recently reviewed and updated in March 2026
Next review in March 2027
The policy is reviewed annually.

REGULATION

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

at Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature

Document control	
Document number	TSUULL/AF-01 (version 2026)
Status	Current
Scope	All faculties, departments, research centres and units of TSUULL; all academic staff, researchers, doctoral candidates, students and invited speakers
First adopted	2018
Previous review	2025
Previous version (in force in 2025)	Academic Freedom and Scholarly Independence Policy, document number TSUULL/AF-01/2025, approved by the University Council; reviewed and updated in 2025. This version replaces it.
This version	Adopted by the Academic Council (Ilmiy kengash) in March 2026; enacted by Rector's Order No. 01-322 of 13 March 2026
Policy owners	First Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs (teaching freedom); Vice-Rector for Research, Innovation and International Cooperation
Responsible body	Academic Freedom and Ethics Commission of the Academic Council
Review cycle	Every year; next review by March 2027
Languages	Uzbek (authoritative), English, Russian
Public location	https://tsuull.uz/en/content/academic-freedom-policy
Summary of changes	Separate protections for senior and junior academics in research and in teaching; procedures for complaints, events and external speakers, research contracts and digital expression; alignment with current national legislation.

1. Purpose

TSUULL exists to advance knowledge of the Uzbek language and literature, linguistics, literary studies, translation, education and the digital humanities, and to share that knowledge with society. This work depends on academics and students being able to choose what they study, follow the evidence, teach it and speak about it publicly without fear of losing their position or opportunities.

This policy states the rights that TSUULL guarantees, the limits set by law and professional ethics, and the procedures by which the University protects those rights in practice.

2. Scope and definitions

The policy applies to every person who teaches, researches or studies at TSUULL, whatever their contract type, and to invited lecturers and speakers while they take part in University activities.

Term	Meaning in this policy
Academic freedom	The freedom of academics, individually and collectively, to choose areas of research, to conduct and publish research, to teach, and to speak publicly about their field and about the University, within the law and the ethics of their discipline.
Research freedom	The freedom to choose research topics, questions, methods, sources and collaborators; to reach conclusions from evidence; and to publish and present results.
Teaching freedom	The freedom, within an approved programme and its learning outcomes, to choose content emphasis, materials, examples, interpretations, teaching methods and forms of assessment, and to discuss any scholarly view relevant to the subject.
Extramural expression	Public statements by academics in their field or as citizens, in publications, the media, social media, public events and advice to public bodies.
Senior academic	Professor, docent (associate professor), holder of a Doctor of Science (DSc) degree or of a PhD with academic rank, head of a department, laboratory or research centre.
Junior academic	Assistant teacher, senior teacher (katta o‘qituvchi) without an academic degree or rank, researcher within seven years of first academic appointment or of the doctoral degree, basic doctoral (PhD) and DSc candidate, independent researcher (mustaqil izlanuvchi) attached to TSUULL, postdoctoral researcher, and teaching or research assistant.

Where this policy refers to “academics”, it means both senior and junior academics, and every right applies to both equally unless a provision says otherwise.

3. Legal and national basis

This policy implements, within the University’s mandate, the following instruments. The Legal and Compliance Division confirms their current editions and article numbers at each annual review.

National legislation and policy

- **Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan** (2023 edition): freedom of thought, speech and belief, and the freedom of scientific, technical and creative activity.
- **Law “On Education”** (2020): academic independence of higher education institutions and the rights of teaching staff.
- **Law “On Science and Scientific Activity”** (2019): the rights of researchers and the organisation of scientific work.
- **Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030** (2019) and the presidential acts on the academic and organisational-management independence of state higher education institutions.
- **Development Strategy “Uzbekistan – 2030”** (2023).
- **Labour Code** (2022 edition, in force since 2023): non-discrimination and protection from unlawful dismissal or disciplinary action.
- **Law “On Copyright and Related Rights”**, **Law “On Personal Data”** (2019), **Law “On Combating Corruption”** (2017), and the legislation on state secrets and on mass media, which set the lawful limits in Section 11.
- Regulations of the Higher Attestation Commission on doctoral research, and the University’s own Charter.

International standards

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19 (freedom of expression).
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 15 (freedom indispensable for scientific research).
- UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997).
- Magna Charta Universitatum (2020).

4. Principles

1. Academic freedom belongs equally to senior and junior academics. Rank, age, contract type and degree status do not reduce it.
2. The University widens debate rather than narrowing it. Decisions about research, teaching, events and speakers start from the protection of free expression.
3. Disagreement is answered by argument and evidence, not by sanction.
4. Academic freedom carries duties: honesty, rigour, respect for others, and compliance with the law and research ethics.
5. Limits on expression are only those set out in Section 11; they are applied narrowly and with written reasons.
6. Peaceful protest is a form of expression, but it may not be used to stop others from speaking, teaching or studying.

5. Research freedom

5.1 Research freedom for senior academics

Senior academics have the right to:

1. choose their research topics, questions, sources and methods, including topics that are sensitive, unpopular or critical of prevailing views, of University practice or of public policy;
2. choose their collaborators in Uzbekistan and abroad, subject to the University's procedures for formal agreements;
3. reach conclusions from their evidence and publish or present them in journals, books, conferences, repositories and other outlets of their choice, without prior approval of content by the University;
4. apply for internal and external research funding on equal terms;
5. decline to undertake or continue research on grounds of academic conscience, without penalty.

5.2 Research freedom for junior academics

Junior academics have the same rights as senior academics in 5.1. In addition, the University guarantees that:

1. a junior academic may pursue research of their own choosing alongside any work they do in a supervisor's or team's project;
2. a doctoral candidate's topic is agreed with the supervisor and approved under Higher Attestation Commission rules, but may not be imposed against the candidate's will, and the candidate may request a change of topic or supervisor without penalty;
3. no senior colleague, supervisor or head of department may require a junior academic to obtain their approval to publish the junior academic's own research, or to add, remove or reorder authors other than according to actual contribution;
4. supervision and mentoring support the junior academic's work and do not control its conclusions;

5. junior academics have equal access to research funds, libraries, archives, corpora and equipment, and are eligible for dedicated early-career calls.

6. Teaching freedom

6.1 Teaching freedom for senior academics

Within the approved programme, state educational standards and the learning outcomes of the course, senior academics have the right to:

1. decide the emphasis of content, select texts, sources and examples, and present competing scholarly interpretations, including those they disagree with;
2. introduce material from their own and current research;
3. choose teaching methods and forms of assessment within the University's assessment regulations;
4. treat complex, challenging or discomforting material where it serves the learning outcomes;
5. propose changes to courses and programmes through the faculty and Academic Council procedures.

6.2 Teaching freedom for junior academics

Junior academics teaching a course have the same rights as senior academics in 6.1. In addition, the University guarantees that:

1. a junior academic is not required to teach only from a senior colleague's materials, except for shared assessment needed to ensure consistent standards across groups of the same course;
2. lesson observation and peer review assess teaching quality and support development, and are not used to control the scholarly views expressed;
3. a junior academic may present scholarly interpretations that differ from those of the head of department or course leader;
4. junior academics may propose new courses and electives and take part in curriculum committees.

Senior and junior academics have equal research and teaching freedom

	Research freedom	**Teaching freedom**
Senior academics professors, docents, DSc, department heads	**Section 5.1** Choose topics, methods and partners; publish without prior approval; decline research on conscience	**Section 6.1** Choose emphasis, texts, methods and assessment within the programme; teach contested scholarly views
Junior academics assistants, PhD/DSc candidates, new staff	**Section 5.2** Same rights as senior academics; no supervisor veto on publishing; topic not imposed; equal funding	**Section 6.2** Same rights as senior academics; observation checks quality, not views; may differ from the course leader

Every right applies regardless of rank, age, contract type or degree status.

7. Freedom to speak publicly

1. Academics may speak and write publicly about their field of research and teaching, including in the media, at public events, on social media and in advice to public bodies, without prior approval of content.
2. When speaking on matters outside their expertise or as private citizens, academics should make clear that they do not speak for the University.
3. Only the Rector or persons authorised by the Rector issue official statements on behalf of TSUULL. The press service may help academics with media requests but does not edit their views.
4. Academics may criticise University policies and decisions through internal bodies and publicly, without retaliation.

8. Students' academic freedom

Students may question and challenge ideas in class, choose and argue positions in their written work within the assessment criteria, form and join academic societies, and invite speakers under Section 9. Assessment is based on the quality of argument and evidence, not on agreement with the teacher's views.

9. Events and external speakers

1. Staff, students and the students' union may organise academic events and invite external speakers. The University does not refuse permission or premises because of the views of the speaker or organisers.
2. Organisers notify the University's events office at least 10 working days in advance, giving the topic, speakers and expected audience.
3. Permission may be refused or made conditional only on the grounds in Section 11 or for genuine safety, capacity or scheduling reasons. Refusal is given in writing with reasons within 5 working days, and the organiser may appeal to the Commission, which decides within 5 working days.
4. Organisers are responsible for chairing and stewarding; where a topic is contested, the University encourages a format that allows questions or an opposing view.
5. Organised disruption intended to prevent a lawful event from taking place is a breach of this policy.

10. Digital and social media

The rights in this policy apply equally online, including in the University's learning platforms and on personal social-media accounts. The University does not monitor academics' personal accounts for their views. Section 11 applies online as it does offline.

11. Responsibilities and lawful limits

Academic freedom carries the duties to:

1. follow research ethics, obtain ethical approval for research with human participants, and protect participants' personal data;
2. respect academic integrity: no plagiarism, fabrication, falsification or misattribution of authorship;
3. treat students and colleagues with respect and without discrimination or harassment;

4. keep confidential information confidential and respect intellectual property and copyright;
5. distinguish personal opinion from scholarly findings when teaching.

Academic freedom does not protect: incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination; harassment; defamation; disclosure of state secrets or other information protected by law; or knowingly false claims presented as research findings. Any restriction on these grounds must be based on law, decided by the Commission or a court, and explained in writing.

12. Research partnerships, funding and publication

1. Agreements for research funding, commissioned work and partnerships, including with ministries, companies, international organisations and foreign universities, must protect the researchers' right to publish. Annex A sets out the standard clause.
2. A partner may review a manuscript before publication only to identify confidential information or protectable intellectual property, for no longer than 60 days. It may not require changes to findings or conclusions.
3. The Legal and Compliance Division checks each research agreement for clauses that would restrict topics, methods, conclusions or publication, and refers any such clause to the Commission.
4. Donations and sponsorships do not give the donor any influence over research topics, findings, teaching content or appointments.

13. Protection from retaliation

1. No academic or student may be dismissed, disciplined, denied a contract renewal, promotion, academic rank, workload, funding, travel or other opportunity, or otherwise disadvantaged because of the lawful content of their research, teaching or expression.
2. Attestation and competition (tanlov) committees assess academic work by its quality and output, not by the views it expresses. A candidate who believes this principle was breached may complain under Section 14.
3. Anyone who raises a concern in good faith, or helps an inquiry, is protected from retaliation. Retaliation is itself a breach of this policy.

14. Raising a concern: procedure

1. **Informal resolution (optional).** The person may first raise the matter with the head of department or dean, who tries to resolve it within 10 working days. This step may be skipped, for example where the head of department is involved.
2. **Formal complaint.** A written complaint is sent to the Secretary of the Academic Freedom and Ethics Commission by e-mail, in person or through the confidential online form. The Secretary's contact details are published on the page where this policy is published. Anonymous complaints are accepted and examined as far as the information allows.
3. **Admissibility.** Within 5 working days, the Commission confirms receipt and decides whether the matter falls under this policy. Where needed, it may recommend interim protection, for example suspending a decision that is under complaint.
4. **Review.** Within 30 working days, the Commission hears the complainant and the person or unit concerned, examines documents, and prepares written findings and recommended remedies. Members with a conflict of interest withdraw.
5. **Decision.** The Rector decides on the recommendations within 10 working days. Remedies may include withdrawing a restriction, reinstating an opportunity, correcting authorship, amending a contract clause, or disciplinary action for retaliation.

6. **Appeal and follow-up.** Either party may appeal to the Academic Council within 10 working days. Nothing in this procedure limits the right to apply to state bodies or the courts. The Commission checks that remedies have been carried out and reports the case, without names, in its annual report.

15. Governance and responsibilities

Body or role	Responsibility
Academic Council (Ilmiy kengash)	Adopts the policy and its revisions; hears appeals; receives the annual report.
Rector	Enacts the policy by order; decides on Commission recommendations; ensures no retaliation.
Policy owners (Vice-Rectors)	Integrate the policy into academic and research regulations, contracts and partnership agreements.
Academic Freedom and Ethics Commission	A standing commission of the Academic Council: a chair elected from professors, two senior and two junior academics elected by their peers, one representative of the students' union and one of the trade union, and a non-voting lawyer. Two-year terms. Handles complaints and event appeals, advises on sensitive research, monitors implementation, publishes an annual report.
Deans and heads of department	Apply the policy in daily work; protect junior colleagues; attempt informal resolution.
Legal and Compliance Division	Reviews contracts for restrictive clauses; advises on lawful limits.
Human Resources	Includes the policy in employment contracts and induction; ensures attestation and competitions respect Section 13.
Every academic and student	Uphold the rights of others and the duties in Section 11.

16. Communication, training and monitoring

1. The policy is published on the University website in Uzbek, English and Russian, referred to in every employment contract and doctoral agreement, and presented at induction for new staff and doctoral candidates.
2. Heads of department and members of attestation and competition committees receive training on the policy each year.
3. The Commission reports each year on: complaints received, upheld and resolved within deadline; event refusals and appeals; contract clauses amended; and results of three questions on academic freedom in the annual staff survey (Annex B), reported separately for senior and junior academics.
4. The Academic Council reviews the policy every year in the light of the report and changes in legislation, and records the review in the document control table, including when no change is made.

Annex A. Standard academic-freedom clause for research agreements

> ***Academic freedom and publication.*** *The Parties recognise the academic freedom of TSUULL researchers. TSUULL researchers shall be free to publish and present the results of the work under this Agreement. Before submission for publication, TSUULL will provide the [Partner] with a copy of the manuscript. Within 60 days the [Partner] may identify (a) its confidential information, which shall be removed, or (b) patentable or otherwise protectable intellectual property, in which case publication may be postponed by no more than 90 further days to allow protection. The [Partner] shall not require any change to the methods, findings, interpretation or conclusions of the work, and shall have no right to prevent publication on any other ground.*

Annex B. Staff survey questions on academic freedom

Answered on a five-point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree):

1. I am free to choose the topics and methods of my research.
2. I am free to decide how I teach my courses, within the approved programme.
3. I can express my professional views publicly, and criticise University decisions, without fear of negative consequences.

Respondents indicate whether they are senior or junior academics, so that results can be compared between the two groups.