

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Al Ain University



جامعة العين
AL AIN UNIVERSITY

Contents

Al Ain University's Workplace Anti-Discrimination Policy and Practices	3
Official Non-Discrimination Policy	3
PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR FACULTY	5
Faculty Student Relationship in the Classroom	6
Protected Categories Covered	7
Grievance and Reporting Mechanisms	8
Training, Awareness, and Enforcement Initiatives	10
AAU organized a lecture about (Combat Discrimination and Hatred)	12
HR Unit celebrates Women's Day with female staff.....	13

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 8

Al Ain University's Workplace Anti-Discrimination Policy and Practices

Official Non-Discrimination Policy

Al Ain University (AAU) in the UAE has a formal **Non-Discrimination Policy** that underpins a safe, inclusive workplace. This policy explicitly applies to *all* members of the university community – faculty, staff, and students – reflecting AAU's commitment to a “positive and safe workplace for all” aau.ac.ae. In line with UAE values and laws, the policy affirms that “*all individuals have the right to be treated with respect and equality*”, and that any form of harassment or unfair treatment is strictly prohibited aau.ac.ae. The AAU policy is part of the university's governance framework and supports equal opportunity in recruitment, promotion, and daily campus operations qaa.ac.uk.

1.i. Non-Discrimination

<i>Subject</i>	Governance and Management	<i>Effective From</i>	Sep - 2011
<i>Policy #</i>	1.i.	<i>Latest Revision</i>	Feb - 2025
<i>Title of The Policy</i>	Non-Discrimination	<i>Next Review</i>	Dec - 2025
<i>Responsible Entity</i>	HR, Grievance Committees	<i>Policy Pages</i>	1
Definitions	Discrimination and harassment as a form of discrimination is a negative attitude/action that is directed towards someone based on a protected element during work/education life: The following are the elements of discrimination: • Gender • Marital Status • Ethnicity/nationality • Age • Religion • Disability/Special Needs		
Purpose	The purpose of the policy is to promote fair and equal treatment during the day to day operations of university and protect our employees and stakeholders from any harmful offence arising from discrimination, This policy supports our commitment to a positive and safe workplace for all.		
Scope	The policy scope covers all the employees of AAU as well as the students.		
Statement	Al Ain University in line with UAE core values, upholds the principle that all the individual has the right to be treated with respect and equality. Any discrimination, or prejudicial treatment towards students, faculty members, admin staff, and or other stakeholders while conducting business functions (e.g. admissions, recruitment, compensation, promotion, contract renewal, access to virtual and on campus services/facilities); undermines the AAU's essential ethics which shall not be tolerated.		
Procedures	All the AAU community (Faculty, Staff and Students) is encouraged to report the cases witnessed or experienced. The incident can be reported through the set standards of grievance procedures. (for grievance procedures see policy 5.m.1 ,5.m.2, 6.Y)		
Recent Changes			

Key findings

Executive summary

Al Ain University (AAU) is licensed to operate under the auspices of the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE). AAU was established in 2004 and the first student cohort was enrolled in 2005. AAU expanded its facilities by opening a second campus in Abu Dhabi in 2008, offering programmes in Business and Law. Having begun with three colleges (Engineering; Business; Education, Humanities and Social Sciences), AAU has continued to expand its programme offerings which now include 22 undergraduate programmes across six colleges (Engineering; Pharmacy; Law; Education, Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; and Communication and Media), eight master's programmes, and one Professional Diploma in Teaching programme.

AAU's vision is to be among the leading learning institutions in the region, by achieving international quality standards in teaching, research, and community engagement.

AAU's mission is to strive to be a learning institution of excellence that responds to market needs and prepares graduates who possess the scientific and technological competencies that are needed for their careers. AAU plays an active role in the creation of knowledge through quality teaching and research. It values community engagement and nurtures partnerships with institutions and organisations through a commitment to the educational, technological, and economic development of the country and the region.

Student enrolment for the academic year 2023-24 is a total of 1,663 made up of 865 undergraduate students, 85 postgraduate and 713 Higher Diploma students. Emirati students account for 28% of enrolments, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) students 34% and international students 38%.

As of 2023, AAU had 209 full-time and 12 part-time faculty members across the two campuses and distributed amongst the six colleges.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR FACULTY

https://www.aau.ac.ae/publications/handbooks/al_ain_university_faculty_handbook_2023_2024_en.pdf

The statements here under define some areas of ethical conduct that govern faculty members' behavior towards students, colleagues, the University, and the community. These statements do not address every situation; rather, they aim at providing the faculty member with an overview of a general perspective on the code of ethics governing Al Ain University.

I. Compliance with AAU's Rules and Regulations

All faculty members at AAU shall abide by the rules and regulations applicable at AAU. If the faculty member is uncertain about any issue, s/he may refer to the HR Manager, the Department Head, the College Dean, AAU Vice President, or AAU President.

II. Harassment or Discrimination

Al Ain University upholds the principle that all individuals have the right to be treated with respect and equality. Any harassment, discrimination, or prejudicial treatment towards students, other faculty members, or administrative staff on grounds of ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, country of citizenship, age, or disability status undermines the AAU's essential ethics and shall not be tolerated.

III. Conflict of Interest

Faculty members are obliged to avoid any situation where their personal interests conflict or could be interpreted as being in conflict, with those of AAU.

IV. Intellectual Property

Al Ain University advocates the ownership of intellectual material as stipulated by copyright laws. Faculty members have the obligation to comply with AAU's Copyright Policy (see Section 5).

V. Confidentiality

Al Ain University prohibits any form of disclosure or dissemination of confidential information obtained during or after work with AAU. Faculty members shall treat as confidential any information or records conveyed to them on that basis.

VI. Neutrality

Faculty Members must refrain from any acts or practices that violate legislation, moral and ethical conduct, and the traditions and customs of the United Arab Emirates. They must also refrain from engaging/abusing the political opinions/activities or religious beliefs of others, whether in or out of the workplace. (by any means, in person or digitally)

Faculty Student Relationship in the Classroom

https://www.aau.ac.ae/publications/handbooks/al_ain_university_faculty_handbook_2023_2024_en.pdf

AAU promotes the relationship between a faculty member and a college student which is based on **mutual trust and respect**. The objective of AAU and its students is to achieve the best learning outcomes. When mutual respect is present in the classroom, the following expectations are fulfilled by both faculty members and students:

Faculty members are expected to:

- Demonstrate grip on the subject taught, attend class in prepared manner with materials and visuals designed by keeping all students needs in mind, including those with disabilities.
- Present each lecture with enthusiasm for the learning process and academic inquiry.
- Create an environment of collaborative learning, encouraging active participation rather than mere attendance.
- Foster true equity in class, respect students as individuals, considering a student's learning style, background.

- Achieve consistent communication, whether it is related to setting high performance standards and communicating how to achieve them successfully or clearly stating standards for evaluating student work when assignments are given.
- Return student work or respond to student inquiries in a timely fashion.
- Respect office hours and be approachable by students as well as respond to student inquiries in timely fashion.
- Create an emotionally safe learning space by refrain from using language, humour, or course examples that may be inappropriate or insensitive.
- Make sure that the students respect university property. Any student who damages university property should be promptly reported to the College Management or Students' Affairs Deanship.

Protected Categories Covered

AAU's policy **forbids discrimination or harassment on multiple protected grounds**. In official statements, the university "*upholds the principle*" that no person should face prejudicial treatment on the basis of attributes such as:

- **Religion or creed** (freedom from religious discrimination)aau.ac.ae
- **Ethnicity or national origin** (including country of citizenship)aau.ac.ae/education
- **Gender/Sex** (equal treatment regardless of gender)aau.ac.ae
- **Age** (no age-based bias)aau.ac.ae
- **Physical disability** (equal opportunity for persons of determination)qaa.ac.uk/education

17.2 Harassment or Discrimination

Al Ain University upholds the principle that all individuals have the right to be treated with respect and equality. Any harassment, discrimination, or prejudicial treatment towards peers, faculty members, or administrative staff on grounds of ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, age, or disability status undermines the AAU's essential ethics and shall not be tolerated.

According to AAU, any harassment or bias on these grounds "*undermines the university's essential ethics and shall not be tolerated.*" education.aau.ac.ae Notably, **sexual orientation** (or "sexuality") is **not explicitly mentioned** in the publicly available policy texts. The emphasis is on categories recognized in UAE anti-discrimination norms (religion, gender, etc.), whereas sexual orientation is not referenced, reflecting the local legal context. In practice, however, AAU's broad "*respect and equality*" mandate implies an expectation of professionalism and fairness toward all individuals aau.ac.ae.

Grievance and Reporting Mechanisms

Reporting mechanisms are in place for staff or faculty who experience discrimination. AAU's policies direct that any incident of workplace discrimination should be handled through established **grievance procedures**. The Non-Discrimination Policy itself cross-references the official grievance policy documents (e.g. policy codes *4.k.1* and *4.k.2*) for filing complaints aau.ac.ae. In practice, a faculty or staff member with a complaint is encouraged first to seek an informal resolution with their immediate supervisor, and if not resolved, to lodge a formal grievance. AAU maintains designated **Grievance Committees** and an HR framework to investigate and address such issues fairly. For example, the Staff Handbook specifies that a written report of a grievance should be submitted to the HR Manager, who will then convene an investigation committee and take action based on its recommendations (ensuring impartial review) aau.ac.ae. This process provides a clear avenue for employees to voice concerns about discrimination or harassment without fear of retaliation.

AAU also aligns with national labor protections. The university notes that UAE law (Federal Decree No. 2 of 2015 on Combating Discrimination and Hatred) criminalizes acts of discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, and similar traits aau.ac.ae. In university documentation related to Sustainable Development Goals, AAU highlights that there are **24-hour hotlines** and external channels in the UAE for workers to file discrimination complaints aau.ac.ae. Internally, however, AAU's primary recourse is through its HR department and grievance committees, ensuring that staff or faculty grievances are heard at progressively higher levels of authority (up to the Vice President or President, if necessary) aau.ac.ae.

5.m.1 Faculty Grievances

<i>Subject</i>	Faculty and Professional Staff	<i>Effective From</i>	Sep - 2011
<i>Policy #</i>	5.m.1	<i>Latest Revision</i>	Feb - 2025
<i>Title of The Policy</i>	Faculty Grievances	<i>Next Review</i>	Dec - 2025
<i>Responsible Entity</i>	Faculty Grievance Standing Committee	<i>Policy Pages</i>	1
Definitions	AAU: Al Ain University		
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to establish the right of faculty members to submit grievances against the University or its employees according to proceedings set forth by the University.		
Scope	This policy applies to faculty members who raise any concerns related to the University or its employees.		
Statement	Grievance refers to any concerns raised by a faculty member, against AAU or its employees. At the beginning of the Academic Year, the Deans Council forms a Grievance Committee whose mission is to consider grievances by a faculty member against the University or its employees.		
Procedures	Grievance by a faculty member against the University or its employees is governed by the following procedures: • A faculty member should first work informally with his immediate supervisor to resolve the matter. If the informal procedure does not resolve the grievance, the faculty member may initiate the formal grievance procedure. • The faculty member must submit a written grievance statement to the immediate supervisor of the person whose action is the basis for the grievance. • Upon receiving the grievance statement, the "faculty grievance" committee will investigate and resolve the grievance. The faculty member will receive, a written decision, within ten days. • In case the faculty member is not happy with the decision, further appeal can be made within two weeks.		
Recent Changes			

5.m.2 Staff Grievances

<i>Subject</i>	Faculty and Professional Staff	<i>Effective From</i>	Sep - 2011
<i>Policy #</i>	5.m.2	<i>Latest Revision</i>	Feb - 2025
<i>Title of The Policy</i>	Staff Grievances	<i>Next Review</i>	Dec - 2025
<i>Responsible Entity</i>	Staff Grievances Standing Committee	<i>Policy Pages</i>	1
Definitions	Informal Reporting: Verbal discussion between two parties. Formal Reporting: Reporting in writing is considered as formal reporting.		
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to establish the right of staff members to submit grievance against the University or its employees according to proceedings set forth by the University.		
Scope	This Policy shall be applied to all administrative staff.		
Statement	Grievance refers to any concerns raised by an admin member, against AAU or its employees. At the beginning of the Academic Year, the Deans Council forms a Grievance Committee whose mission is to consider grievances by an admin member against the University or its employees.		
Procedures	This section outlines the procedures by which the staff may raise any concerns related to the work. These concerns can be any of the following in nature: • Concerns related to individual work relationship in the university. • Concerns related to working conditions/situations. • Concerns related to employment terms and conditions. Grievance by an admin member against the University or its employees is governed by the following procedures: • An admin member should first work informally with his immediate supervisor to resolve the matter. If the informal procedure does not resolve the grievance, the admin member may initiate the formal grievance procedure. • The admin member must submit a written grievance statement to the immediate supervisor of the person whose action is the basis for the grievance. • Upon receiving the grievance statement, the "Staff grievance" committee will investigate and resolve the grievance. The admin member will receive, a written decision, within ten days. • In case the employee is not happy with the decision, further appeal can be made within two week.		
Recent Changes			

Training, Awareness, and Enforcement Initiatives

AAU enforces and promotes its non-discrimination ethos through training and awareness programs. The **Human Resources department** plays a key role in enforcement: HR provides guidance and training to those involved in hiring and promotions to **ensure recruitment and advancement decisions are bias-free** and in line with the Non-Discrimination Policy gaa.ac.uk. (Indeed, an external quality review confirmed that AAU follows an “*equal opportunity and non-*

discriminatory recruitment policy” for selecting candidates regardless of gender, race, religion, or disabilityqaa.ac.uk.) This means hiring committees and managers receive instructions to avoid discriminatory practices and to focus on merit and qualificationsqaa.ac.uk.

1.14 AAU has a 'Non-Discrimination Policy.' The review team heard of the guidance provided by Human Resources to those involved in the recruitment and promotion of staff to observe the policy on non-discrimination.

5.3 AAU has adopted an equal opportunity and non-discriminatory recruitment policy, which aims to select qualified candidates regardless of the applicant's gender, race, religion or physical disability. As of 2023, AAU had 209 full-time faculty members across two campuses and distributed among its six colleges. A significant proportion of faculty (more than 75%) were from, Jordan, Egypt, Canada and Pakistan. Male colleagues constituted 65% of teaching staff and the remaining 35% were women. The distribution of faculty rank was as follows: Professor (19%), Associate Professor (34%), Assistant Professor (39%) and Instructor (8%).

Beyond HR oversight, AAU has undertaken **awareness-raising activities** to foster an inclusive campus culture. In recent years, the university has organized lectures and workshops for its community on diversity, tolerance, and anti-discrimination. For example, AAU’s Deanship of Student Affairs hosted a lecture titled “**Combat Discrimination and Hatred**”, presented by a university chancellor, to educate and sensitize students and staff about combating prejudiceaau.ac.ae. Similarly, the university has participated in national initiatives like the UAE’s *Year of Tolerance*: in 2019 AAU launched a series of tolerance events and even hosted sessions of the “*Champions of Tolerance*” program in coordination with the Ministry of Tolerance, aimed at training individuals to promote coexistence on campus (an effort that underscores AAU’s commitment to diversity). More recently, AAU has focused on **inclusion for people of determination** (the UAE term for individuals with disabilities). In 2024, a training workshop entitled “*Etiquette for Dealing with People of Determination*” was conducted to improve employees’ and students’ understanding of how to interact professionally and respectfully with colleagues or students who have disabilities. *The workshop aimed to enhance awareness and understanding of how to deal correctly and professionally with people of determination*, and was well-received for its positive impact on participants’ awarenessaau.ac.ae. Such programs indicate that AAU not only has policies on paper but also actively works to educate its community and **reinforce a culture of equal opportunity and respect**.

AAU organized a lecture about (Combat Discrimination and Hatred)



The Deanship of Student Affairs at Al Ain University organized a lecture about (Combat Discrimination and Hatred), presented by Chancellor Mohammad Al Bayaa –the legal consultant at the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department and in conjunction with Dr. Mohammad Al Kharsheh from the College of Law. The lecture was attended by Dr. Hussein Al Mougy, Dean of the College of Law, Dr. Ahmed Al Jobair, the Deputy Dean, and a group of faculty members and students of the college.

The lecture started with Chancellor Mohammad Al Bayaa, who stressed on the importance of practicing the law more than using the theoretical method only by citing the example of the crime and how to deal with it in practice.

Then he talked about the new law, especially the law of the United Arab Emirates and its constitution, which is fueling the national sentiment and urges on the social justice and equality.

The lecture also focused basically on the issue of Contempt of Religions and how to deal with it, focusing on the federal penalty law of the UAE in this regards, which is set by the UAE's legislation regarding the acts that constitute the crime of Contempt of Religions with regard to discrimination and hatred.

As for the second part of the lecture, which was given by Dr. Mohammed Al Kharsheh, it was about the infringement of religions, which is one of the most dangerous methods practiced by the media, and the keenness of the UAE's legislature to protect the Islamic religion and other religions, and the penalty which is set for the crime of infringement on religions and cases of exemption from punishment, he also spoke about the freedom of belief and the freedom of expression which is guaranteed and protected by the legislator of the UAE.

At the end of the lecture, both of the presenters stressed on law number (2) which was issued by the legislator of the UAE in 2015, which is the first law of its kind issued regarding the issue of Combat Discrimination and Hatred.

It is noteworthy that the lecture had a great amount of audience, and it was concluded with the questions and discussion, which has seen significant interaction of academics and students.

HR Unit celebrates Women's Day with female staff

<https://aau.ac.ae/en/news/2019/hr-unit-celebrates-women%E2%80%99s-day-with-female-staff>



On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the Human Resources Unit at Al Ain University, organized an open day for the AAU female staff at Al Ain campus, including discussion sessions, various competitions and recreational games.

Mrs. Sidra Shaheen, HR Manager, emphasized that Al Ain University represented by the Human Resources Unit is keen to celebrate this day symbolically with the AAU female employees to honour them, appreciate their efforts and their positive and progressive role in AAU and the society. "This day is just to rethink and reenergize our self with what value as an individual we can add to our society, -The sky is the limit", She added.

In her speech, Dr. Shorouq Al Eter, from the College of Business, said that women have played a prominent role in society since ancient times. She also cited the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, may God have mercy on him, who had the greatest role in empowering and encouraging women.

Through an interesting discussion session between the female employees from the academic and administrative staffs about the challenges they faced in their lives and how they overcame them, they called on all women to challenge their selves to overcome difficulties and to strive to achieve their own aspirations and build a conscious generation for the future

At the end of the open day, the HR Manager thanked all employees and wished them success.

Finally, AAU's commitment to non-discrimination is an ongoing effort: the policy is enforced through regular HR oversight, and any violations can trigger disciplinary action per the Staff/Faculty Discipline policies. AAU's diversity statement notes that "*diversity is fundamental to academic excellence*" and that the university embraces equal opportunity as a core value aau.ac.ae. In summary, **Al Ain University does have a formal anti-discrimination policy** covering key protected categories like religion, gender and age, supported by clear reporting

channels and proactive measures (training, lectures, and HR monitoring) to uphold an equitable and inclusive workplace environment.