

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Al Ain University



جامعة العين
AL AIN UNIVERSITY

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 10

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Al Ain University

DEI Offices and Committees at AAU

Al Ain University (AAU) has established dedicated structures to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. Notably, the **People of Determination Support Office** was created to support students with disabilities (“people of determination” in UAE parlance). *“This office works to integrate people of determination with the University community by creating a sustainable learning environment throughout their studies ...”* students.aau.ac.ae. Through this office, AAU ensures students with disabilities receive accommodations and an inclusive campus experience.

People of Determination Support Office

This office works to integrate people of determination with the University community by creating a sustainable learning environment throughout their studies and until their graduation from the University. It contributes to empowering this category of students and arranging their own educational controls and provisions to ensure a fair opportunity to meet all their learning requirements.

While AAU does not have a single titled “Chief Diversity Officer,” the university’s administration **formally assigns DEI responsibilities to specific units and committees**. For example, AAU’s Human Resources department is charged with upholding a university-wide **Non-Discrimination Policy**, advising those involved in hiring and promotions to observe equal-opportunity principles qaa.ac.uk. Additionally, the Deans’ Council appoints a **Grievance Committee** each academic year to address complaints – including any harassment or discrimination grievances – from students and staff. This committee provides an official channel to investigate and resolve equality or rights-related issues. The university’s **admissions policy** also reflects its commitment to inclusion: AAU admits students based on academic merit *“regardless of gender, race, color, religion, age, handicap or national origin.”* en.wikipedia.org This nondiscriminatory admissions stance is backed by policies in recruitment and student affairs that ensure fair treatment for all.

Admission [edit]

AAU admission policy is based on students’ academic achievements in the secondary school certificate or its equivalent, regardless of gender, race, color, religion, age, handicap or national origin. The student may be accepted in AAU either as a full-time student or part-time student.

- Undergraduate Admission Requirements: <https://aau.ac.ae/en/admission/undergraduate/general-admission-requirements>
- Graduate Admission Requirements: <https://aau.ac.ae/en/admission/graduate/graduate-admissions>
- Applying link: <https://apply.aau.ac.ae/en/>

Standing Committees

<https://www.aau.ac.ae/en/about-aau/committees>

- Appointment and Promotion Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- University Publications Committee
- Quality Assurance for Academic Affairs Committee
- Quality Assurance for Administrative Affairs Committee
- Ethical Considerations in Research Committee
- eLearning Committee
- Library Committee
- Community Engagement Committee
- Scholarships and Humanitarian Aid Committee
- **Student Disciplinary Committee**
- **Student Grievances Committee**
- **Student Appeals Committee**
- Faculty Members' Issues Committee
- Faculty Members' Grievances Committee
- Faculty Members' Appeals Committee
- Administrative Members Issues Committee
- Administrative Members Grievances Committee
- Administrative Members Appeals Committee
- Students of Determination Affairs Committee

Code of Conduct

https://aau.ac.ae/uploads/2019/09/al_ain_university_student_handbook_2019_2020_en.pdf

The statements hereunder define some areas of ethical conduct that govern AAU members' behaviour towards their peers, faculty members, the University, and the community. These statements do not address every situation; rather, they aim at providing the student with an overview of a general perspective on the code of ethics governing Al Ain University.

Compliance with AAU's Rules and Regulations

All students at AAU shall abide by the rules and regulations applicable at AAU. If the student 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.

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.

Conflict of Interest

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

Intellectual Property

Al Ain University advocates the ownership of intellectual material as stipulated by copyright laws. Students have the obligation to comply with AAU's Copyright Policy.

Confidentiality

Al Ain University prohibits any form of disclosure or dissemination of confidential information obtained during or after studying in AAU.

Possession of Dangerous Weapons

Possession of firearm, weapons, dangerous chemicals, illegal knives, or any dangerous device are totally forbidden on University grounds.

Possession of Controlled Substances and Alcoholic Beverages

It is an offence to possess, distribute, or consume any drugs or alcoholic beverages on University grounds.

Students' Grievance Committee

https://aau.ac.ae/uploads/2019/09/al_ain_university_student_handbook_2019_2020_en.pdf

At the beginning of each academic year the Deans Council forms a Student Grievance Committee. Its mission is to consider the complaints reported by students regarding issues not listed within the university's instructions, such as a complaint from a student against another or from the student against the university.

The Mechanism of the Student Grievance Committee:

1. The student submits the complaint to his/her dean.
2. The Dean/ Deputy Dean (AD) refers the complaint to the President/ Vice President, who in turns forwards it to the Grievance Committee for necessary action.
3. The Chairperson of the Grievance Committee calls the Committee members to meet to consider the complaint.
4. The Chairperson summons the student, the complainer, to appear before the Committee in order to make a statement as is attributed to him/ her. The written meeting minutes are signed by the student and the Chairperson.
5. The student has the right to report on what s/he pleases of information in front of the committee, including calling for witnesses to the incident as attributed to him/ her.
6. The Students' Grievance Committee has the right to ask for the testimony of any person seen to be of use to the investigation.
7. The Grievance Committee meets to discuss and decide on the complaints referred to in the light of all the documents in its possession, then a report is written and signed by all Committee members.

8. The Chairperson submits the recommendations to the President of the University, along with all documents adopted by the Commission in its recommendations.
9. The University President decides whether to approve or reject the recommendations of the Student Grievance Committee.
10. Via the Presidency Office; the President's decision is forwarded to the relevant entities for appropriate actions to be taken.
11. The Student Affairs Deanship notifies the concerned student with the final decision as well as the student's College Deanship; in order to record it in the student's file.

Students' Appeal Committee

https://aau.ac.ae/uploads/2019/09/al_ain_university_student_handbook_2019_2020_en.pdf

At the beginning of each academic year the Deans Council forms a Student Appeal Committee. Its mission is to consider the appeals done by students regarding issues not listed within the university's instructions, such as a complaint from a student against another or from the student against the university.

The Mechanism of the Student Appeal Committee:

1. The student submits the appeal to the Dean of the college
2. The Dean refers the appeal to the President, who in turns forwards it to the Appeals Committee for necessary action.
3. The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee invites the Committee members to meet to consider the appeal referenced to.
4. The Chairperson summons the student, the appellant, to appear before the Committee in order to make a statement as is attributed to him/ her. The written meeting minutes are signed by the student and the Chairperson.
5. The student has the right to report on what s/he pleases of information in front of the committee, including calling for witnesses to the incident as attributed to him/ her.
6. The Students' Appeal Committee has the right to ask for the testimony of any person seen to be of use to the investigation.
7. The Appeals Committee meets to discuss and decide on the appeal referred to in the light of all the documents in its possession, then a report is written and signed by all Committee members.
8. The committee issues its recommendation as seen appropriate through voting.
9. The Chairperson submits the recommendations to the President of the University, along with all documents adopted by the Commission in its recommendations

10. The Deans Council takes the best decision, whether to approve or reject the committee's recommendation
11. The final decision is forwarded to all AAU entity to act; accordingly, and a copy is kept in the student's file

Roles and Responsibilities

Through these offices and committees, AAU's administration oversees a range of DEI and human-rights initiatives. The People of Determination Support Office focuses on **inclusive education** – advising on campus accessibility, arranging support services (e.g. assistive technology, tutoring), and sensitizing the community to the needs and talents of students with disabilities students.aau.ac.ae. The HR department and university leadership develop and enforce **equal opportunity policies**: AAU's official Non-Discrimination Policy explicitly forbids any form of harassment or bias in employment and student life, and HR provides guidance to ensure hiring/promotion practices are fair qaa.ac.uk. The university also embeds diversity values in staff development; for instance, AAU's staff development goals require that training opportunities be allocated equitably in line with the university's "diversity and equality frameworks" (as noted in internal policy documents). Complaints or violations related to discrimination are handled through the Grievance Committee or Student Affairs, ensuring due process and remedies when needed. In summary, **policy development, compliance monitoring, and support services** for DEI are dispersed across these official bodies – all under the oversight of AAU's senior administration.

DEI and Human Rights Initiatives (2020–2025)

From 2020 onward, Al Ain University has actively organized **training sessions, workshops, and events** to foster an inclusive campus culture and awareness of human rights:

- **Inclusion Workshops & Lectures:**

AAU's Deanship of Student Affairs regularly holds awareness programs on social inclusion. For example, in October 2025 the Abu Dhabi Campus hosted an "*Inclusion of People of Determination in the UAE Society*" lecture led by a national People of Determination Council member aaau.ac.ae. This lecture promoted a message of tolerance on campus and educated students and staff on integrating individuals with disabilities into university and community life. Likewise, in January 2024, a training workshop titled "**Etiquette for Dealing with People of Determination**" was conducted to guide faculty and students on respectfully interacting with colleagues who have disabilities (covering communication best practices and accessibility etiquette). These events are part of AAU's effort to create a more understanding and supportive environment for all abilities.

An awareness lecture on integrating people with disabilities into Emirati society.



The Deanship of Student Affairs at Al Ain University – Abu Dhabi Campus organized an awareness lecture entitled: Integrating People of Determination into the UAE Society, presented by Professor Amin Al-Attas, a psychologist at the Zayed Authority for People of Determination, as part of its programs aimed at spreading community awareness and promoting a culture of inclusion among students and members of the academic and administrative staff.

The lecture addressed the concept of “People of Determination,” which was officially adopted in the UAE in 2017. This reflects a shift from a negative, incomplete perspective to a positive one that focuses on determination, achievement, and capabilities. The lecture also highlighted the most significant challenges facing this group, such as misconceptions, limited employment opportunities, and a lack of suitable infrastructure, while also reviewing supportive governmental and community initiatives.

The lecture touched on a number of these initiatives, including special legislation and laws, the People of Determination card, the efforts of the Zayed Authority for People of Determination, in addition to the role of civil society organizations in supporting and empowering this group.

The event witnessed remarkable interaction from the attendees, as the students raised a range of questions that reflected a growing awareness and genuine interest in the issues of people with disabilities and ways to support and integrate them into society.

- **Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment:**

AAU supports gender inclusion through both policy and events. The university provides equal facilities and educational opportunities to *both sexes*, and it believes in the positive impact of cultural and gender diversity in academia (as reflected in its official statements). In practice, AAU has marked **International Women’s Day** annually with activities to celebrate and empower female students and staff. In March 2021 – amid pandemic challenges – the HR Unit organized a virtual Women’s Day workshop titled “*Did COVID-19 halt your dreams? Let’s Dream Again*”, which encouraged women in the AAU community to pursue their goals despite obstacles. More recently, AAU’s College of Business launched a **Women Leadership Forum** to cultivate female leadership. In October 2025, AAU hosted the forum “**She Leads, We Collaborate**” and signed a partnership MoU with the Arab International Women’s Forum “*to advance women’s opportunities for entrepreneurship and economic inclusion in the UAE and the broader MENA region.*” aiwfonline.com. This high-profile event – attended by AAU’s President

and UAE dignitaries – underlines the university’s commitment to women’s empowerment as part of its diversity agenda. Additionally, AAU’s Human Resources and Student Affairs have run workshops on gender issues (such as work–life balance and leadership training for female staff), and organized celebrations for occasions like International Women’s Day and Mother’s Day to recognize women’s contributions on campus.

AIWF and Al Ain University sign MoU at keynote ceremony on Abu Dhabi Campus



Haifa Al Kaylani OBE, 28 October 2025 – It was a great honour to be at the Al Ain University Abu Dhabi campus to participate at the outstanding Women Leadership Forum “She Leads, We Collaborate”, hosted by the Al Ain University College of Business and the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Centre. This very special occasion marked the signing of an MoU between the Arab International Women’s Forum and Al Ain University, to advance women’s opportunities for entrepreneurship and economic inclusion in the UAE and the broader MENA region.

Our MoU partnership with Al Ain University marks a significant step forward in our shared commitment to empowering and advancing young female entrepreneurial talent in the UAE and across the wider MENA region. Together, AIWF and Al Ain University aim to create a dynamic platform that nurtures innovation, leadership, and opportunity for the next generation of women leaders.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Professor Ghaleb Awad El Refae, President of Al Ain University, Professor Amer (Mohammad Jaser) Qasem, Vice President of AAU Abu Dhabi Campus, and Dr Iffat Sabir, Deputy Dean of the College of Business, for facilitating this valued partnership between AIWF and Al Ain University. I also share my heartfelt congratulations to Al Ain University on its remarkable recent achievement of being ranked among the top 500 global institutions in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026.

In my keynote before the MoU signing, I reflected on the tremendous progress women have made across the Arab world, in education, business, and leadership, and the continuing journey towards full economic empowerment. Today, women in the MENA region are driving innovation and entrepreneurship, leading family businesses, founding tech startups, and advancing sustainability across

every sector. Here in the UAE, the progress has been nothing short of remarkable. Emirati women are role models globally, representing 66% of the public sector workforce, 30% in leadership roles, and 50% of the Federal National Council, a true reflection of the UAE's vision for gender equality and inclusion.

At AIWF, our mission for nearly 25 years has been to empower women and young leaders through education, entrepreneurship and economic inclusion and to build bridges of partnership and understanding between the Arab world and the global community. We have worked with governments, the private sector, civil society actors and importantly with universities and young people themselves to promote progress and create valuable new links and opportunities for young women leaders.

At this very special MoU signing and keynote event, it was a pleasure to meet Her Excellency Dr Amal Abdullah Al Haddabi, Chairperson of the UAE-Jordanian Businesswomen Council, and the distinguished faculty, students, and guests of Al Ain University. As we head into our 25th anniversary in 2026, the Board and Partners of AIWF look forward to deepening our collaboration with one of the UAE's foremost institutes of learning and research, supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, and championing women's leadership as a powerful engine of sustainable growth and social progress.

- **Human Rights and Community Engagement:**

Al Ain University integrates human-rights awareness into its academic and co-curricular activities. The College of Law and Humanities offers coursework on human rights and UAE law, aligning with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) aau.ac.ae. Beyond the classroom, AAU representatives have participated in national seminars on human rights; for instance, AAU faculty and students took part in a UAE National Human Rights symposium, contributing recommendations and learning about the nation's efforts to protect rights (notably aligning with UAE's "*Protecting the rights of people of determination*" initiative aau.ac.ae). On campus, AAU has observed the **UAE National Tolerance Day** with student-led events, and has supported interfaith and cultural dialogue through club activities (reflecting the UAE's Year of Tolerance ethos). These engagements show AAU's role in promoting a culture of respect, peace, and inclusion both within the university and in broader society.

Al Ain University participates in the National Council Symposium on human Rights

<https://aau.ac.ae/uploads/news/news2015al-ain-university-participates-in-the-national-council-symposiumen.pdf>

Al Ain University participated in the seminar on Human Rights in the state of UAE by recommending a number of its representatives of staff members and students from the College of Law. It was organized by the Federal National Council at the Intercontinental Hotel – DubaiFestivalCity, under the patronage of His Excellency Mohammed Ahmed Al-Murr, Chairman of the Federal National Council.

The opening of the symposium highlighted on the role and efforts of the state in consolidating human rights through the constitution, laws, development projects, and the role of the FNC in the promotion and protection of human rights in all areas.

Human Resources Unit

<https://aau.ac.ae/en/units/hru/vision-and-mission>

Vision

To serve AAU by providing, retaining and developing qualified, diverse & highly motivated staff.

Mission

The mission of the Human Resources Unit is to develop, practice and facilitate the processes which create an environment where the entire staff can make a vital contribution to achieve the AAU's mission.

Goals and Objectives

In Alignment with AAU Goals, following are HR Unit's Goals and Objectives.

- To make AAU an "Employer of Choice" through continuous image improvement by providing best HR services.
- To cultivate the culture of trust and welfare; where employees are fully engaged as efficient individuals to AAU and social community.
- To motivate existing staff by inspiring long-term commitment, career development in order to achieve and sustain higher retention rate.
- To ensure the compliance of HR policies with (MOHRE) employment laws in order to make AAU a workplace that has all the necessary support for productive relationships.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Human Resources Unit at AAU renders a wide range of services. The key services are mentioned below:

- Job identification, advertisement, screening selection and recruitment.
- Job evaluation and grading.
- Issuance of employment visas, contracts, and associated paper work.
- Employee Relations Management.
- Provision of advisory service on employment legislation/terms and condition of service.
- Management of pre and post-arrival arrangements for new staff orientation and onboarding etc.
- Designing Training and development programs according to the requirements of the organization and Units.
- Management of compensation and benefits.
- Overseeing Time and Leave management.
- Performance management and Career Development.
- Development and review of HR policies and procedures.
- Budgeting and Periodic Reporting.
- Provision of support on conflict management i.e. disciplinary and grievance advice.
- Employees Separation management

Evidence of Commitment

AAU's institutional commitment to DEI is well-documented in official publications and evaluations. University handbooks and catalogs explicitly reference **diversity and equality frameworks** guiding university policy, and affirm that all members of the AAU community have the right to be treated with respect and equality. In its recent international quality review, AAU was noted to have a formal "*Non-Discrimination Policy*," with HR oversight to ensure fair recruitment and promotion practicesqaa.ac.uk. The **student admission and recruitment policies** publicly state that no applicant or employee will face discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics (gender, race, religion, age, disability, etc.)en.wikipedia.org. Moreover, AAU's contributions to the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** – reported on its website – highlight diversity and inclusion as core values. For instance, AAU's SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities) report affirms that "*AAU strongly believes diversity to be fundamental to academic excellence*," echoing the UAE's ethos of equal opportunity and documenting initiatives like scholarships for underrepresented groups and inclusive hiring practices.

Multiple press releases and news articles from 2020 onward provide evidence of AAU's DEI activities. The establishment of the People of Determination Support Office is covered on AAU's official site, describing its mandate to ensure accessible learning for students with disabilitiesstudents.aau.ac.ae. News announcements detail events such as awareness lectures on inclusionaaui.ac.ae and women's empowerment forums, demonstrating these programs in action. Finally, AAU's recent partnership with the Arab International Women's Forum – covered in external media – stands as a testament to the university's ongoing commitment to **equity and inclusion** at the highest levelsaiwfonline.com. All of these pieces of evidence confirm that since 2020, Al Ain University has put in place **dedicated structures, policies, and programs** to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights within its community.