



SUMGAYIT STATE
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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OVERVIEW

2024 was a landmark year for Sumgayit State University (SSU). The university has achieved significant successes in many areas, from international cooperation to academic results.

The location of SSU in Sumgayit brings the university closer to the world of industry and business. This provides an opportunity to take advantage of industrial potential and favorable environment of the city. High-level meetings with foreign professors and guests visiting the university, organized with the support of the Sumgayit city executive authority, have increased the international reputation of SSU. The continuous support of state and private institutions in the city, the organization of internship programs for students, and the involvement of professionals from industry in teaching have made a significant contribution to the development of the university.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

The ten most outstanding of these achievements:

1. The success achieved by SSU in the international arena on the 75th anniversary of Sumgayit is a great milestone for both the city and the university. The university ranks 483rd in the QS European University Rankings among more than 5,000 universities in Europe, this result is 31st among West Asian universities and 5th in the overall ranking within Azerbaijan. The rise of SSU to the top as the first regional higher education institution to be included in this ranking is one of the most magnificent and proud moments in the history of university.

2. Cooperation of SSU with Oxford University is the second important event of the year, active participation of SSU in COP29, held in our country this year at the initiative of President Ilham Aliyev. For this purpose, SSU has implemented two important projects with Oxford University. One of them is the 'School of Climate Change', within the framework of this project professors from Oxford University came to SSU and conducted trainings for nearly 30 specialists from industry and higher education institutions. The second project was the 'Climate Change Problems' project competition, and 1,035 projects from 58 countries were submitted to this competition, the final stage of the project was held in Baku within the framework of COP29 and the winners were jointly awarded. It was gratifying and proud that within a few months, the SSU logo, together with Oxford, was featured on various social networks and in local and international media.

3. The third important event is the presentation of programs with new content. SSU has succeeded in opening sabah groups for the first time, sabah groups have been organized at 3 master's and 1 bachelor's levels. These groups are important in terms of new content and quality of teaching. These programs are already starting to be felt and that the increase in Sabah groups will encourage the admission of students with high scores to SSU. At the same time, the start of teaching in English in two specialties and the launch of 3 MBA programs for the first time.

4. The fourth important event was the support of the private sector. A new content Chemical engineering master's program was organized jointly with BP and, SSU received 340 thousand AZN financial support from bp for the construction of laboratories. The renovation of 5 laboratories has already begun. At the same time, 2 computer laboratories (45 computers purchased) have been renovated with the support of Kapital bank, and that Socar Polymer, STP, Azerkimya, and Nobel Energy Companies have supported the organization of various events at SSU.



5. There has been an expansion of relations with STP. For the first time SSU has received orders from industry to conduct training and that more than 200 new graduate employees have been trained. SSU teachers were closely acquainted with STP production lines and their technical indicators. They are currently preparing for a pilot project on 'topic-based' teaching. STP has provided financial support for various events throughout the year.
6. The sixth important event was a significant improvement in admission results. The number of those who scored more than 500 points (out of 700) and were admitted to SSU has increased 20 times, and the number of those who scored more than 400 points has increased more than 4 times, reached to 206 people. The students who scored more than 600 points also chose SSU.
7. As the seventh important event is the development of science at SSU. As a result of the promotion of science and continuous training, the number of articles published in impact factor journals during the year increased 35% more than last year. This rapid dynamics will result in more articles and strengthening of international rankings in the future.

8. As an eighth event is the international mobility of students and teachers. This year, teachers from Turkiye, mainly from the Middle East Technical University, have been coming to SSU every week during the academic year and that students have been given project-based training on innovations. Students studying in various faculties of SSU participated in 1-semester exchange programs throughout the year, and at the same time, students, especially from Turkiye and Central Asian countries, came to our university to participate in exchange programs. The guest students from 10 Russian universities have been attending short-term courses. SSU teachers and staff have been participating in conferences, exhibitions, lectures, competitions and trainings in more than 20 countries, international grant applications and scientific publications have increased, agreements have been signed with 12 foreign universities and joint projects have been implemented. There was a special emphasize on the development of relations with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

9. As a ninth event, is positive changes related to international students. The number of international students reached to 46, students from new countries have been attracted, and a scholarship program for foreign students has been announced for the first time. At the same time, teaching in English has begun.

10. The tenth important event concerns internal issues. The content renewal, curriculum optimization and structural renewal are being implemented rapidly. SSU has revealed the potential of employees and attracted new employees, increasing salaries by an average of 20%. Student-oriented activities have been increased, a student-oriented environment has been created at SSU, and the Center of Excellence, the Center for Sustainable Development and numerous student clubs are included in these activities. These achievements have created a solid foundation for the future development of SSU. Sumgayit State University will expand its activities to achieve greater successes in both scientific and educational fields. The implemented projects and established international relations strengthen leading position of SSU in the Azerbaijani education system. In order to ensure the sustainability of these successes, the university is determined to expand its cooperation with industrial partners and government agencies.

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SSU continues its cooperation with industry stakeholders in the process of developing and evaluating its educational programs. The purpose of this collaboration is to align the university's educational programs with the current demands of the labor market and to ensure that graduates acquire the knowledge and skills required by employers. When new educational programs are developed or existing ones are updated, SSU takes employers' requirements into account. Based on the feedback and recommendations received from employers, relevant changes or improvements are made to course content in accordance with identified needs

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pXk0ymFjCjRImuKrQEaykMvt_BnTJBn-1nKLu3RREMA/edit

For this purpose, SSU regularly organizes meetings with leading industry representatives from various sectors through the Career and Graduate Employment Center. During these meetings, employers provide information on the professional and soft skills required in the workplace and discuss practical shortcomings encountered in real work environments. In particular, within the framework of the "Professional Speakers Series," meetings held with students serve not only to inform them about industry realities but also to facilitate discussions on the changes employers would like to see in educational programs. Based on feedback received from the business sector, SSU implements updates to its curricula and educational programs <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2890>, <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2892>, <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2921>, <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2935>, <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2996>.

In addition, to ensure the effectiveness of educational programs, SSU organizes camps with the participation of industry stakeholders <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2823>, <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2825>, <https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/2828>). These camps are considered effective in terms of evaluating students' practical knowledge, experience, and suitability for their respective fields. The feedback shared based on these evaluations ensures the continuous updating of curricula in order to better meet the needs of the labor market.

Availability of Resource Support Plans for Student Clubs and Students' Social, Cultural, and Sports Activities

At Sumgayit State University, various student organizations operate to ensure the effective use of students' leisure time and to support their social, intellectual, and scientific development. These include the Student Trade Union Committee (STUC), the Student Youth Organization (SYO), the Student Scientific Society (SSS), as well as sports, artistic, and environmental clubs. Each of these organizations is provided with dedicated office space and the necessary material and technical resources.

The SSU Student Trade Union Committee addresses students' social needs by providing financial assistance and scholarships to students actively involved in public activities, as well as organizing excursions to enrich student life (https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/student_colleague_union).

The Student Youth Organization supports students' intellectual and social development by organizing trainings, competitions, and development programs

(<https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/syo>). Various clubs operate under the SYO, including debate, art, intellectual games, sports, book, cyber, and conversation clubs, all of which receive comprehensive support.

The Student Scientific Society encourages students' involvement in research activities and organizes scientific conferences and article competitions (https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/student_scientific_society).

An Arts Club has been operating at SSU since 2000. The club includes the "Sema" dance ensemble, the "Renaissance" student theater, a choir, as well as circles for artistic recitation, music, and decorative and applied arts. The club is fully equipped with a large assembly hall and adequate material and technical infrastructure, ensuring the effective implementation of its activities (https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/student-youth_club).

The Sports Club, operating since 2015, aims to support students' physical well-being and increase interest in various sports disciplines (https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/sport_club). The university's sports facilities include a standard sports hall, a fencing hall, a mini-football field, an outdoor chess area, volleyball and badminton courts, a tennis court, and basic gymnastics equipment.

The "Eco Club," which focuses on increasing environmental awareness and protecting the environment, was established within the Department of Ecology.

Availability of Psychological Counseling Services

Since 2018, the Psychological Service Center operating on a voluntary basis at Sumgayit State University has been providing psychological support and counseling services to staff and students. The Center is located in the Scientific Affairs Building of the university (Room No. 5) and operates five working days a week, from 10:00 to 16:00, staffed by lecturers from the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology. Information about the Center is publicly accessible (<https://sdu.edu.az/az/189>). In addition, the activities of the Center are promoted to a wider audience through various events.

The scope of activities of the Psychological Service Center is primarily student-oriented and covers a broad range of areas. One of its main objectives is to identify and develop students' intellectual potential, individual skills, interests, and personality-oriented abilities. The implementation of this objective is coordinated with teaching and learning processes and aims to support students' maximum personal and academic development.

The Center regularly organizes training sessions and seminars for students on various topics, including "Exam Stress Management" (<https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/news/2615>) and "Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem" (<https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/news/2448>).

In terms of direct psychological support services, the Center provided comprehensive psychological assistance to 5 individuals in 2018, 7 individuals in 2019, 5 individuals in 2022, 8 individuals in 2023, and 7 individuals in 2024. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center also conducted regular awareness-raising activities (<https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/news/1539>; <https://www.sdu.edu.az/az/news/1751>).

The Center carries out its activities based on pre-defined annual action plans aimed at supporting the social and psychological development of students.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives Guided by Student and Graduate Feedback

Development Dynamics of Innovations (Decisions) Implemented Based on Student and Graduate Feedback at the HEI

At SSU, feedback and suggestions submitted to the university administration through surveys and suggestion boxes are systematically reviewed and evaluated. Within feasible limits, innovations and improvements are implemented based on participants' proposals. Examples of such improvements include extending break times between classes, renovation of the cafeteria and certain sections of the third academic building, establishment of morning study groups, organizing some classes for students of the third academic building in the main academic building, initiatives to improve library conditions, enhancement of facilities for the effective use of students' leisure time (establishment of a Center of Excellence), prior briefing of exam invigilators to ensure compliance with established regulations, taking content-appropriate measures regarding instructors whose performance has raised student dissatisfaction, and incorporating student opinions into the process of determining elective courses.



Systematic Collection and Use of Student Feedback in Decision-Making Processes

Student feedback regarding academic staff, service quality, and overall satisfaction levels is mainly collected through surveys. Depending on the content, these surveys are conducted either during the semester or at the end of the examination session. In addition, a "Suggestion Box" has been installed in the university buildings to regularly collect students' feedback, comments, and proposals. Submissions to the suggestion box are monitored on a regular basis and taken into consideration.

Furthermore, for students who wish to submit their requests, suggestions, or complaints in person, "Open Door Days" are organized every Friday from 16:00 to 17:30 at the Quality Assurance and Strategy Department. Information about this initiative is communicated to students during meetings held by the department.

The results obtained are discussed at meetings of the Academic Council, where relevant decisions are made to address identified issues. At the same time, survey results are reviewed during meetings involving structural units (faculties and departments) and university management, and responsibilities for addressing identified shortcomings are assigned to relevant staff members.

Accessibility of Educational Services for Students Belonging to Socially Vulnerable Groups

At SSU, accessibility to educational services for students belonging to socially vulnerable groups is ensured in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and relevant regulatory legal acts. Over the past five years, the number of students exempted from tuition fees under various categories, based on applicable regulatory legal acts, is presented in tables by academic years.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 4, 2003, No. 1308, "On the exemption of internally displaced persons studying on a paid basis at state higher and secondary specialized educational institutions from paying tuition fees," the following category is applied:

Categories of Students Exempt from Tuition Fees and Covered Educational Expenses

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated March 18, 2014, No. 347, "On the payment of education expenses of persons whose disability was determined in connection with the protection of the territorial integrity, independence and constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the children of citizens who died, went missing in military operations, or were declared deceased by a court in connection with the defense of the freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and persons awarded the title of 'War Veteran' for participation in combat operations for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan", the following categories are applied:

Students Who Are Children of Disabled Veterans of Karabakh war

Academic Year	Number of Students
2019-2020	127
2020-2021	119
2021-2022	97
2022-2023	86
2023-2024	74

Students Who are Members of Martyr Families

Academic Year	Number of Students
2020-2021	3
2021-2022	3
2022-2023	1
2023-2024	3

Students with War Veteran Status

Academic Year	Number of Students
2020-2021	—
2021-2022	—
2022-2023	—
2023-2024	45

Students with internally displaced person (IDP) status.

Academic Year	Number of Students
2019-2020	1038
2020-2021	1113
2021-2022	1059
2022-2023	1010
2023-2024	892

Students Deprived of Parental Care

In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated June 22, 1999, No. 693-IQ, "On Social Protection of Children Who Have Lost Their Parents and Are Deprived of Parental Care", the following data apply:

Academic Year	Number of Students
2019-2020	73
2020-2021	66
2021-2022	42
2022-2023	23
2023-2024	16

Students with Disabilities (Groups I and II)

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated May 3, 2019, No. 1155, "On the payment of tuition fees of persons whose bodily functions are impaired by 61–100 percent, as well as persons whose disability was determined before the age of 18", the following applies:

Academic Year	Number of Students
2020-2021	42
2021-2022	34
2022-2023	33
2023-2024	27

Students Studying with the Support of the Educational Student Loan Fund

Based on the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated June 17, 2021, No. 1367, "On the establishment and ensuring the operation of the Educational Student Loan Fund under the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan", the number of students studying with financial support from the Educational Student Loan Fund is as follows:

Academic Year	Number of Students
2021-2022	291
2022-2023	421
2023-2024	454

Students Supported by the Youth Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 29, 2018, No. 253, "Rules for Financing the Education Expenses of Socially Vulnerable Young People Studying with Special Need for Social Protection by the Youth Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan", the following applies:

Academic Year	Number of students
2020-2021	—
2021-2022	10
2022-2023	—
2023-2024	—

Additional Institutional Support for Socially Vulnerable Students

In addition to the above-mentioned categories whose education expenses are covered or who are exempt from tuition fees based on national legislation, a significant number of students belonging to socially vulnerable groups have also been exempted from tuition fees, credit repayments, and dormitory expenses based on decisions of the Academic Council of SSU adopted at different periods (Protocols dated 27.11.2018 No. 03; 18.03.2021 No. 06; 07.07.2021 No. 10; 29.11.2023 No. 02; 14.02.2024 No. 05; 27.09.2024 No. 02). These expenses were covered at the expense of SSU.

When applying for accommodation at the university's Student House (dormitory), priority is given to members of martyr and veteran families, as well as students belonging to socially vulnerable groups. In addition, the Student Trade Union Committee provides one-time and regular financial assistance to students in these categories and supplies meal vouchers to cover food expenses at the cafeteria.

Availability of Scholarship Opportunities Provided by the HEI

At SSU, in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 5, 2016, "On the assignment and payment of scholarships to students of doctoral, higher education, secondary specialized and vocational education institutions, as well as master's level students of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences", scholarship opportunities are provided at the end of each examination session to full-time students, regardless of whether they study under state-funded, state-ordered, or fee-paying arrangements, based on academic performance by year and field of study.

By the decision of the Academic Council of SSU dated July 11, 2024 (Meeting No. 08), starting from the 2024–2025 academic year, students admitted to SSU with a score of 500 or above are awarded an individual scholarship of 200 AZN for the normative period of study. In the current academic year, 21 students have earned the right to receive this scholarship

[\(https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/3018\).](https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/3018)

Availability of Mechanisms for Tracking Graduates' Participation in the Labor Market

SSU has established mechanisms to track graduates' participation in the labor market. These mechanisms enable effective monitoring of graduates' employment, career development, and labor market engagement. Through faculty-based career specialists and regular surveys, data on graduates' employment rates, career progression, and working environments are collected and analyzed.

Regular communication with graduates is maintained through faculty-level meetings, during which graduates' feedback is collected. Several graduates have been employed as academic staff at the university and have been provided with opportunities to engage in teaching activities

[\(https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/3081; https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/3084\).](https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/3081; https://sdu.edu.az/az/news/3084)

Availability of a Sustainable Alumni Engagement System

At Sumgayit State University, the establishment of a sustainable alumni engagement system is one of the university's priorities. This system aims to support alumni career development, maintain strong institutional ties, and organize regular trainings, seminars, and alumni days.

The Career and Graduate Employment Center has established a faculty-based electronic database covering alumni information. Through this database, alumni personal details, contact information, employment status, and other key data are regularly updated. Continuous communication with alumni is maintained, and their feedback is collected through surveys and meetings to assess their views on university education, professional experiences, and future needs.

The university organizes various forums and events for alumni to encourage networking, experience sharing, and stronger engagement with the institution

[\(https://mail.sdu.edu.az/az/news/2877\).](https://mail.sdu.edu.az/az/news/2877)

To further strengthen sustainable alumni relations, promote professional networking, and increase employability, SSU has established an Alumni Association.

Compliance of the HEI's Financial Resource Sources with Its Charter

For SSU, the financial year begins on January 1 and ends on December 31. Education at SSU is provided on both state-funded and fee-paying bases. Within the framework of current legislation and in accordance with its Charter, SSU is entitled to provide various paid educational services to legal entities and individuals, as well as to receive donations and voluntary contributions.

In accordance with its Charter, SSU's financial resources are formed from the following sources:

- allocations from the state budget in accordance with legislation;
- revenues generated from paid education;
- grants, donations, and contributions provided by legal and natural persons, including foreign citizens, stateless persons, and foreign legal entities, in compliance with legislation;
- state-funded competitive research grants;
- revenues obtained from SSU's educational, scientific, production, consulting, and other services permitted by legislation;
- funds obtained from targeted programs and projects financed by state bodies;
- grants and funds obtained through international cooperation in accordance with legislation.

Level of Ongoing Control over the Use of Financial Resources for Their Intended Purpose

The use of SSU's financial resources is carried out in accordance with approved budgets and designated purposes. Payments for each expenditure item are made based on supporting documentation and relevant regulatory legal acts. Ongoing control over the execution of financial resources is systematically conducted by the Rector and the Chief Accountant. In addition, reports on the execution of revenues and expenditures are submitted to the relevant Ministry on a quarterly basis.