

# **AIOU ANTI-POVERTY POLICY**



**Allama Iqbal Open University  
Islamabad, Pakistan.**

## **1. PREAMBLE:**

Higher education is a cornerstone for sustainable development. It creates new knowledge, teaches specific skills, and promotes core values like freedom, tolerance, and dignity. AIOU aims to provide higher education to all Pakistani and non-Pakistani students without distinction between race, nationality, religion, or sect, and in a spirit of faith open to all human civilizations.

Many young people cannot afford higher education due to its higher costs. In the absence of policies and programs to support qualified students from disadvantaged backgrounds, efforts to expand higher education systems risk widening these gaps. To make higher education a catalyst for the creation of sustainable, innovative, and equitable societies, governments and universities have to develop policies to make colleges and universities both affordable and inclusive.

The higher education spectrum is very diverse at AIOU. While distance and blended programs are still dominant, there is now an increasing number of face-to-face programs at AIOU. In addition to wide-ranging traditional degree and advanced degree programs, there are short courses with a career, vocational or technical focus. Furthermore, the AIOU has been extensively working to expand its academic services to under-developed and under-represented regions of Pakistan for the capacity building of the youth of these areas at par with international standards thus proving its commitment to quality education for all and reducing inequalities across all regions of Pakistan.

## **2. THE POLICY:**

The purpose of this policy document is to demonstrate how the AIOU provides opportunities for quality education to poor and underprivileged students.

More specifically, this policy aims:

- a. To provide financial support to academically talented and less privileged students to empower them to acquire quality education at the Higher Education level.
- b. To elevate the students' socio-economic status by enabling them to get modern education and career opportunities for a brighter future.
- c. To provide mentorship, training, and financial help to the local community for their start-ups
- d. To take part in policy-making at local, regional, national, and/or global levels to end poverty
- e. To ensure that access to all anti-poverty activities is accessible to all, regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability immigration status, or gender.

AIOU is pleased to formulate the following guidelines as part of its Anti-Poverty Policy.

### **3. ANTI-POVERTY MEASURES:**

AIOU shall take the following measures to address poverty:

#### **A. Student Antipoverty Programs:**

AIOU shall have the following targets/programs to facilitate the students from backgrounds of poverty, and ensure that these students have the support necessary to complete their studies:

1. To admit students who fall into the bottom 20% of the household income group.
2. Graduation/completion targets for students who fall into the bottom 20% of the household income group in the country.
3. To provide free/subsidized support (e.g. food, housing, transportation, legal services) for students from low-income families to enable them to complete university.
4. To undertake programs/ initiatives to assist students who fall into the bottom 20% of household income group in the country to complete their studies.
5. To provide subsidized rates for hostel accommodation
6. To provide subsidized rates for the conveyance to all AIOU students from their place of residence to the university and vice versa.

#### **B. Community Antipoverty Programs:**

AIOU shall introduce the following community anti-poverty programs to relieve poverty by providing assistance and financial support:

1. To assist the local community by supporting the start-up of financially and socially sustainable businesses through free mentorship programs, training workshops, or access to university facilities.
2. To provide financial assistance to the local community supporting the start-up of financially and socially sustainable businesses.
3. To organize training or programs to improve access to basic services for all.
4. To participate in policy-making at local, regional, national, and/or global levels to implement programs and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.
5. To arrange short courses and vocational training at university that are open to the general public.
6. To undertake educational outreach activities in local schools, and the community.
7. To provide subsidized rates for hostel accommodation

8. To provide subsidized rates for the conveyance to all AIOU employees and their family members from their place of residence to the university and vice versa.
9. To provide access to educational resources for those not studying at the university, e.g. computers, library, online courses, access to lectures, etc

**C. Schemes for International Students from Low or Lower-Middle-Income Countries:**

AIOU not only facilitates local students but also encourages the provision of educational facilities to international students and especially from low or lower-middle-income countries.

For this following scheme can be utilized:

- i) Financial Support (SSF - 101)
- ii) Merit Scholarship (SSF - 103)
- iii) Fee Installment (SSF - 108)

**4. SCHOLARSHIPS**

AIOU aims to be a need-blind university, affording education to all those who make it to the university on merit. In this respect, AIOU looks after the financial needs of students from underprivileged and underrepresented groups from all across the country by offering different scholarships. The Directorate of Student Advisory & Counselling Services is responsible to undertake all these activities. Following is the detail of Financial Support provided to AIOU students under various Scholarships / Financial Support Schemes:

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Scholarship Scheme</b>
1.	Financial Support (SSF - 101)
2.	Earn to Learn (SSF - 102)
3.	Merit Scholarship (SSF - 103)
4.	Outreach Scholarship (SSF - 104)
5.	Final Year Project Grant (SSF - 105)
6.	Scholarship for Communities (SSF - 106)
7.	Scholarship for Women (SSF - 107)
8.	Fee Installment (SSF - 108)
9.	FATA/Balochistan (Matric Free Education)