

CULTURAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

Version 1.0



Superior University RAK Campus

Introduction:

At Superior University, Ras Al Khaimah, we are committed to fostering an academic environment that embraces cultural diversity, mutual respect, and inclusivity, while ensuring alignment with the values, traditions, and cultural expectations of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

This Cultural Consideration Policy serves as a guiding framework for students, faculty, and staff to develop awareness and understanding of UAE cultural norms, ensuring that all academic and extracurricular activities respect the nation's heritage, social values, and legal framework.

By implementing this policy, we aim to cultivate a harmonious university community that upholds cultural sensitivity, national identity, and social responsibility, reinforcing our commitment to excellence in higher education within the UAE.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide guidance to Superior University, Ras Al Khaimah Campus, on culturally appropriate topics and practices within the UAE to foster awareness and understanding among students, faculty, and staff.
- Ensure compliance with UAE legislation by defining institutional expectations that align with national identity, traditions, and legal frameworks.
- Align teaching, learning, and research resources with UAE cultural sensibilities, ensuring that all academic materials and activities respect the country's social values.
- Create an inclusive and culturally respectful university environment, where diversity is celebrated while honoring Emirati culture, heritage, and traditions.
- Promote mutual respect, ethical communication, and responsible engagement within the university community, ensuring interactions reflect cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Prevent cultural insensitivity, discrimination, or bias, reinforcing a commitment to maintaining a professional and respectful academic atmosphere.

This policy serves as a framework to ensure that all Superior University Ras Al Khaimah members uphold cultural considerations in their academic, professional, and social engagements.

Scope:

This policy applies to all members of the Superior University Ras Al Khaimah community, including students, faculty, administrative staff, researchers, visitors, contractors, and external partners.

It extends to all academic and non-academic activities, including:

- Classroom interactions (lectures, discussions, presentations, and research activities).
- Extracurricular programs (student clubs, cultural events, and university-led initiatives).
- Official university communications (emails, newsletters, social media, and promotional materials).
- Campus-wide events and gatherings, including international collaborations and student exchange programs.
- Engagements with external organizations through internships, industry partnerships, and guest lectures.

All individuals affiliated with the university are expected to uphold UAE cultural values and national identity in alignment with this policy, ensuring a respectful and inclusive academic environment.

Definitions:

Cultural Consideration	Knowledge, awareness, and understanding of appropriate topics and practices of a culture.
Culture	The set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001).
Indoctrination	Biased teaching to further a doctrine, principle, religion, or ideology.
Legislation	The set of legal documents (laws, bylaws, regulations, policies, directives, standards, rules, etc.) that govern and regulate practices in a specific area of jurisdiction.
Malicious Intent	Having a predetermined purpose to disregard cultural consideration and consequently cause cultural offense.
National Identity	A system of social and moral values associated with the lifestyle of the people in the past, present, and future (Ministry of Culture and Youth, as cited in Official Portal of the UAE Government, n.d.).
School Community	Staff, students, parents/families, alumni, and others, who share responsibility for one another, provide an environment for intellectual learning, and create a healthy social atmosphere where all the members of the community are supported.
Teaching and Learning Resources	Any written, audio-visual, and/or e-learning/technological document, material, object, event, person, etc. that supports and enhances teaching and learning, directly or indirectly.

Policy: Adherence to UAE Legislation

1.1 Compliance with UAE Laws and Regulations

Superior University Ras Al Khaimah shall ensure that all members of the university community—including students, faculty, staff, and visitors—understand, respect, and adhere to the requirements outlined in this policy and all applicable UAE legislation, including but not limited to:

- The Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education (MoE, 2022).
- MoE Circular No. 1 of 2022 regarding compliance with national identity requirements in educational institutions.
- MoE Circular No. 1 of 2023 regarding the promotion of a safe and culturally respectful university environment.
- Other federal and local UAE regulations that govern higher education and cultural considerations.

1.2 Institutional Responsibility for Cultural Compliance

The University Administration and Academic Leadership shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- All academic programs, research activities, and learning resources are aligned with UAE cultural and national identity requirements.
- Teaching methodologies and course materials respect Islamic and Arab values, public morals, and the traditions of the UAE.
- Extracurricular activities, student events, and campus initiatives are conducted in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner.
- Regular cultural awareness training is provided to faculty, students, and staff.

1.3 Key Legal Provisions for Cultural Consideration

All members of Superior University Ras Al Khaimah are expected to comply with the following legal provisions:

1. Respect for the UAE Constitution and Public Order

“Respecting the constitution, laws, and orders issued by public authorities in implementation thereof, observance of public order and respect for public morals is a duty of all residents of the union.” (*Article 44, Constitution of the UAE*)

2. Preservation of Islamic and Arab Values

“Preserving the Islamic and Arab principles and values, public morals, and the values, traditions, and systems of the state.” (*Clause 11, Article 11, Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 on Private Education and its amendments*)

3. Respect for National Identity and Sovereignty

“Respect for national identity and sovereignty.” (*Clause 12, Article 11, Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 on Private Education and its amendments*)

4. Penalties for Violations of Public Morals

“Penalties are applied for manufacturing, importing, exporting, possessing, acquiring, or transferring with the intention of exploitation, distribution, or display to others, writings, drawings, photographs, films, or symbols, or other things if they violate public morals.” (*Article 416, Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments*)

By enforcing this policy, Superior University Ras Al Khaimah upholds its commitment to fostering a culturally aware, legally compliant, and inclusive academic environment that aligns with UAE national values.

Addressing Cultural Consideration at Superior University, Ras Al Khaimah Campus

2.1 University Requirements

Superior University, Ras Al Khaimah Campus, shall implement the following elements to ensure compliance with UAE cultural consideration policies:

Induction and Refresher Training

- The university shall conduct cultural consideration induction sessions for all new students, faculty, and staff at the beginning of each academic year.
- Annual refresher training will be provided to returning students, faculty, and staff to reinforce awareness of UAE cultural norms, traditions, and legal requirements.

Vetting of Teaching and Learning Resources

- The university shall establish a process for vetting, reviewing, and selecting all teaching materials, research content, and learning resources.

- The Academic and Cultural Compliance Committee shall ensure all educational content aligns with UAE cultural values, national identity, and ADEK guidelines.

Observation of UAE Cultural Practices

- The university shall observe and promote UAE cultural traditions, including:
 - Playing the UAE national anthem at university ceremonies and official events.
 - Observing UAE national holidays and celebrations in line with official protocols.
 - Displaying only the UAE national flag on campus premises.
 - Ensuring portraits of UAE leadership are displayed as per UAE regulations.

Monitoring of University Communications

- The university shall regularly monitor all official and unofficial communication channels, including:
 - Newsletters, university websites, and student portals.
 - Social media platforms, promotional materials, and marketing campaigns.
 - Internal and external communications (emails, posters, digital content, etc.).
- All university communications must comply with UAE cultural values and national identity regulations.

Response Mechanism for Non-Compliance

- The university shall establish a structured reporting mechanism for any breaches of cultural consideration policies.
- Any faculty, staff, or student found in violation of this policy shall be subject to:
 - Official warnings and corrective training.
 - Disciplinary action as per university regulations.
 - Legal consequences if required under UAE law.

2.2 Community Conduct

All members of the Superior University, Ras Al Khaimah Campus community shall conduct themselves in a culturally respectful manner, including:

1. Respecting the UAE's cultural and social norms, values, and traditions in all academic, social, and professional engagements.
2. Refraining from promoting stereotypes or making preconceptions about the UAE and the region, whether directly or indirectly.
3. Avoiding behaviors, content, or practices that contradict UAE cultural values, including but not limited to:
 - Drug and alcohol use, smoking, or violence.
 - Promotion of alternative gender identities or LGBTQ+ content.
 - Political or religious extremism and indoctrination.
4. Prohibition of politically or culturally insensitive symbols, colors, or imagery, including those associated with:
 - Movements or ideologies that contradict UAE values.
 - Misrepresentation of historical or cultural figures.

- Violent, sexual, or inappropriate content.
- 5. Ensuring a discrimination-free environment, avoiding any form of:
 - Racism, religious intolerance, bullying, or harassment.
 - Promotion of ideologies that conflict with UAE laws.
- 6. Strict prohibition of rallies, protests, or demonstrations within the university campus or at any university-affiliated event.
- 7. Cultural Sensitivity in Appearance and Dress Code
 - Covering of visible tattoos and body piercings for men and women.
 - Wearing appropriate clothing that aligns with UAE cultural expectations.
- 8. Ensuring university-organized events and celebrations adhere to UAE culture, including:
 - Respect for Islamic customs during Ramadan and religious observances.
 - Avoidance of themes that contradict local cultural norms.
- 9. Adhering to UAE laws and regulations in all academic, research, and extracurricular activities.

2.3 Teaching, Learning Resources, and Activities

The Superior University Resource Selection Committee shall ensure that all teaching and learning materials comply with UAE cultural values and guidelines by:

1. Vetting resources for age-appropriate and culturally acceptable content.
2. Ensuring that materials do not promote or encourage:
 - Drug and alcohol use, violence, gambling, or smoking.
 - Political activism, religious extremism, or social ideologies contrary to UAE norms.
 - Alternative gender identities, LGBTQ+ content, or inappropriate depictions of relationships.
3. Approving political content in accordance with the UAE-approved Social Studies curriculum.
4. Maintaining full documentation of the vetting process, including final approval by:
 - The Head Librarian.
 - The Resource Selection Committee.
 - The Academic Director or University Administration.

2.4 Addressing Controversial Topics in the Curriculum

Superior University shall ensure that controversial topics are handled in a culturally sensitive and compliant manner:

1. Topics Related to Biological Reproduction, Human Evolution, or Sex Education
 - Scientific explanations must be delivered with cultural sensitivity and respect for UAE values.
 - Parents (for undergraduates under 18) must be informed in advance if such topics will be covered.
2. Topics Related to Revolutions, Wars, or Violent Conflicts
 - These topics must be taught with neutrality and only in a historical or educational context.

- Obscene, violent, or offensive imagery must be avoided.
- 3. Controversial Topics in High-Stakes Examinations
 - Any required controversial topics for internationally accredited courses must receive prior approval from ADEK before inclusion in the curriculum.
- 4. Handling of Emerging Controversial Topics
 - In case of high-profile global or regional events, the university shall follow UAE government directives and adhere to relevant federal and local policies.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Superior University, Ras Al Khaimah Campus, shall ensure that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities in upholding cultural consideration and compliance with UAE regulations.

As per Article 44 of the UAE Constitution, all members of the university community must respect the constitution, laws, public order, and cultural values of the UAE.

3.1 Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty members shall ensure that all academic activities, teaching materials, and classroom discussions align with UAE cultural values and national identity as per Clause 12, Article 11, Federal Law No. (18) of 2020 on Private Education. Faculty members are responsible for:

1. Develop culturally appropriate lesson plans that comply with the university's vetting process.
2. Conducting additional screening to ensure that all teaching materials, case studies, and discussions adhere to UAE cultural norms.
3. Reviewing and vetting all online resources before classroom use to ensure that content is free from culturally insensitive material, including:
 - Inappropriate images, texts, color schemes, or terminologies that contradict UAE laws.
 - Topics related to political ideologies, religious extremism, or alternative gender identities that are not permitted under UAE law.
4. Ensuring neutrality and objectivity in discussions related to political, religious, or cultural matters, avoiding any form of indoctrination.
5. Reporting any non-compliant teaching materials or content immediately to the Academic Compliance Committee.
6. Ensuring strict adherence to this policy in all academic-related online activities, including student forums, research platforms, and social media communication.

3.2 University Leadership Responsibilities

Senior academic leaders, department heads, and program directors shall be responsible for:

1. Reviewing and approving all lesson plans and teaching materials to ensure compliance with cultural policies.
2. Ensuring that all academic content, materials, and research are age- and culturally appropriate.
3. Monitoring faculty members and students to ensure adherence to UAE laws, ADEK guidelines, and university policies.

4. Supervising the selection and implementation of educational resources to guarantee cultural and national identity compliance.
5. Reporting any cultural compliance violations to the university's Academic and Cultural Compliance Committee.

3.3 Library and Resource Management Responsibilities

The Head Librarian and the Resource Selection Committee shall:

1. Review and approve all academic resources, ensuring they align with UAE cultural and national identity standards.
2. Vet and verify the suitability of library materials, e-books, and digital content before making them available for students and faculty.
3. Maintain an updated list of acceptable and restricted materials in line with UAE regulations.
4. Monitor all digital and non-digital academic resources to ensure compliance with ADEK guidelines and university policies.
5. Report any identified non-compliant content to the university administration for immediate action.

3.4 University Administration Responsibilities

The University Administration, including the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, and Deans, shall:

1. Establish and oversee the Cultural Compliance Committee, responsible for reviewing, vetting, and approving all teaching, learning, and research materials.
2. Ensure the implementation and documentation of cultural consideration policies across all university operations.
3. Maintain a clear and well-documented approval process for teaching resources, in line with UAE law.
4. Communicate cultural compliance policies to faculty, staff, students, and external partners.
5. Organize and implement training sessions on cultural awareness and compliance, including mandatory inductions and annual refresher courses.
6. Report any cultural non-compliance cases to ADEK or relevant UAE authorities for further action.
7. Ensure external collaborations, guest lectures, and university events adhere to UAE cultural policies.

3.5 Student Responsibilities

Students enrolled at Superior University, Ras Al Khaimah Campus, shall:

1. Respect and adhere to UAE cultural values in all academic and extracurricular activities.
2. Follow guidelines on cultural sensitivity in research, projects, and social media engagement.
3. Avoid the promotion of politically sensitive, religiously controversial, or culturally inappropriate topics in assignments, presentations, and discussions.
4. Ensure personal conduct, dress code, and communication align with UAE customs and traditions.
5. Report any instances of cultural non-compliance to the university administration.

3.6 Parent and External Partner Responsibilities

For students under 18, parents and guardians shall:

1. Monitor their child's use of online learning platforms to ensure exposure to culturally appropriate content.
2. Report any culturally inappropriate material found in university resources to the administration.

External partners, including industry collaborators, guest lecturers, and researchers, shall:

1. Ensure all professional engagements align with UAE cultural values.
2. Refrain from discussing sensitive topics that contradict national identity guidelines.
3. Comply with the university's vetting and approval process before conducting training or guest lectures.

Linked Policies

- Selection of Teaching and Learning Resources
- UAE National Identity

This policy is written in conjunction with the following legislation:

- ADEK Cultural Consideration Policy (2024)
- Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General. Ministry of Education (2022)