

Frequently asked questions

Faculty and instructors

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Does SB 1 prohibit teaching certain topics in academic courses?

No. SB 1 does not in any way limit the subjects, topics, or materials that may be included in academic courses, nor does it limit academic freedom and responsibility as set forth in [Faculty Rule 3335-5-01](#). Instructors (including faculty, staff, and graduate students serving in instructional roles) may still teach concepts and materials that may be considered controversial or divisive, so long as these matters are relevant to the course and its learning outcomes, consistent with the academic responsibilities outlined in the above rule. [Read more on Intellectual Diversity guidance.](#)

What impact does SB 1 have on teaching, discussions relate to course material, and debate?

SB 1 requires instructors (including faculty as well as staff and graduate students serving in instructional roles) to support intellectual diversity in class and to allow students to reach their own conclusions on “controversial beliefs and policies” without “indoctrinat[ing] any social, political, or religious point of view.” SB 1 defines “intellectual diversity” as “multiple, divergent, and varied perspectives on an extensive range of public policy issues.” Likewise, SB 1 defines “controversial belief or policy” as “any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion.”

In short, while SB 1 does not limit the content that instructors may address in an academic course, instructors must ensure that students are permitted and encouraged to express a range of perspectives in discussions and to form their own conclusions about controversial issues as part of the course and its learning outcomes. This requirement aligns with the university’s motto of “education for citizenship”; preparing students for citizenship includes fostering critical thinking skills so that students can reach their own conclusions rather than teaching them to adopt any specific point of view. [Read more on Intellectual Diversity guidance.](#)

If I have a concern regarding something that occurred in a class, what do I do?

The university has a wide range of resources to address complaints and concerns, and the specific resources may depend on the individual’s role at the university and the nature of the issue. In the specific context of the class environment, numerous options are available to individuals.

Students who have concerns or questions regarding course content are encouraged to consult with their instructor or relevant administrators (including chairs and deans as may be applicable) as an initial step, and there are additional complaint and grievance options available related to specific issues.

Additionally, faculty and students may raise a specific complaint of interference with free expression rights or intellectual diversity rights under SB 1 through the complaint process for the university policy on Campus Free Speech and a forthcoming policy that will implement the requirements in R.C. 3345.0217 concerning DEI, intellectual diversity, and controversial beliefs/policies under the Advance Ohio Higher Education Act. Faculty may also raise academic freedom complaints with the University Senate’s Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility.

Faculty, staff, and students should report concerns related to protected class discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct to the Civil Rights Compliance Office, and individuals must report



matters for which they have a duty to report. Faculty, staff, and students may also raise anonymous complaints as well as questions and concerns through EthicsPoint, the university's concern-reporting system. All complaints raised through university processes are subject to review and intake procedures to determine whether a claim is credible, whether it warrants investigation, and whether any alternative approaches may be appropriate.

Intellectual Diversity

Do the SB 1 intellectual diversity provisions impact academic operations beyond teaching and curriculum?

In addition to the classroom discussion and learning outcome requirements outlined above, SB 1 requires the university to demonstrate intellectual diversity in course approval (both generally and relative to general education requirements), common reading programs, departmental strategic goals, student evaluations and annual reviews. While the general guidance outlined above applies to these areas as well, the Office of Academic Affairs will engage directly with units regarding more specialized issues that may apply in these contexts as appropriate. SB 1 will further require changes to the faculty annual review and evaluation processes, and separate guidance will be provided on those issues.

Do the SB 1 intellectual diversity requirements limit an instructor's ability to set learning objectives appropriate for the course, to assess student performance or to progress through discussion topics?

No. While instructors (including faculty as well as staff and graduate students serving in instructional roles) must support intellectual diversity in their courses, they retain the right to assess student performance according to curricular goals and to address relevant learning objectives. Further, while instructors must not prohibit students from expressing their own perspectives in discussions or reaching their own conclusions on controversial beliefs and issues, students are ultimately responsible for mastering the material for courses in which they have enrolled.

Instructors have the right and responsibility to ensure that course time is used effectively to achieve the course goals, and as such can determine when and how to advance through the topics and materials detailed in the syllabus. SB 1 also provides that instructors have the right to exercise professional judgment about how best to accomplish intellectual diversity within their discipline as long as they do not exercise that judgment so as to "constrict intellectual diversity." Further, SB 1 does not limit instructors' abilities to address classroom conflict and disruptive incidents in their courses in accordance with existing university protocols.

Faculty Annual Reviews

What impact does SB 1 have on faculty annual reviews?

The university has long required academic units to provide all compensated faculty (including tenure-track, clinical/teaching/practice, research and associated faculty) with "an annual written performance review that examines performance over the prior year and sets goals for future performance." The full requirements for such reviews are set forth in [Faculty Annual Review, Post-Tenure Review, and Reappointment policy](#). SB 1 outlines a series of minimum standards for faculty annual reviews, some of which are already outlined in this policy, and some of which are new.

Specifically, SB 1 provides that such reviews must:

- Be "comprehensive and include standardized, objective, and measurable performance metrics";
- Separately assess performance in every category of work (e.g., teaching, research, service, clinical care, etc.) where the faculty member performed at least 5% of their overall effort;
- Include the parameters "exceeds," "meets," or "does not meet" performance expectations;



- Base at least 25% of teaching assessments (where applicable) on student evaluations, which must include questions determined by the university as well as those provided by the Chancellor of Higher Education; and
- Provide faculty with the projected distribution of their work for the coming year in accordance with the university's workload policy and with college leadership approval, and use that distribution to conduct the faculty member's next annual review.
- In addition, SB 1 requires a written system of peer evaluations to support professional development. It also provides that faculty have the right to a review and appeal process for their annual reviews, including the ability to appeal to their dean, with the provost having final decision-making authority if there is disagreement between a chair and dean.

The university updated the [Faculty Annual Review, Post-Tenure Review, and Reappointment policy](#) to address each new requirement, and the Board of Trustees approved it on August 20, 2025; the new policy went into effect on August 25, 2025.

When will the updated SB 1 annual review provisions go into effect?

While SB 1 went into effect on June 27, 2025, the new annual review process will first apply to the academic year 2025-2026 annual reviews because the 2024-2025 faculty annual reviews were already substantially completed under the pre-SB 1 requirements by that date. As noted above, the university updated the [Faculty Annual Review, Post-Tenure Review, and Reappointment policy](#) to account for the new requirements, and the Office of Academic Affairs has provided [guidance on the updated process](#) and will work with units to review and update their relevant governance documents and practices to align with it over the coming year.

SB 1 requires universities to establish a post-tenure review process. What does that mean in practice, and how does it differ from existing university processes?

While units have numerous options to address faculty performance issues, including coaching and counseling, annual reviews, and similar actions, the university has long had a faculty disciplinary process in place under [Faculty Rule 3335-5-04](#), known as the "04 process." All faculty may be subject to discipline for violations established under this process, regardless of tenure status. While such complaints can include allegations of research misconduct, sexual misconduct, workplace violence, policy violations, and more, the existing 04 process also provides that faculty may be disciplined for the failure to meet their academic responsibilities under Faculty Rule 3335-5-04.1(A), up to and including termination of employment for serious violations.

SB 1 does not change these existing processes, but it does require the university to add an additional disciplinary pathway specifically for tenured faculty, known as post-tenure review. While this new pathway is similar to the existing 04 process for the failure to meet academic responsibilities, SB 1 provides that a post-tenure review must specifically occur if one of three conditions is met:

- A tenured faculty member receives a rating of "does not meet expectations" in the same area on their annual performance evaluation twice within any three-year period;
- A tenured faculty member receives a rating of "does not meet expectations" in any area on their annual performance evaluation within two years following the conclusion of a previous post-tenure review; or
- The department chair, dean or provost determines that the tenured faculty member has a documented and sustained record of significant underperformance outside of their annual review and unrelated to an allowable expression of academic freedom as defined by the university or Ohio law.

As with the existing 04 process, tenured faculty may face a range of sanctions for substantiated violations under a post-tenure review, up to and including termination of employment. However, SB 1 does not require any specific sanction to be imposed in a particular case, and permits the university to



consider a range of potential corrective actions, including steps like training and reprimands. Further, while the current 04 process has certain timing requirements, the post-tenure review process must take no longer than six months, with the President having discretion to grant a single, two-month extension if needed.

To address these requirements and in consultation with University Senate leadership, the university updated its faculty rules to add a post-tenure review pathway to the 04 process, which the Board of Trustees approved on August 20, 2025. See Faculty Rule 3335-5-04.5. As with the updated annual review requirements, the Office of Academic Affairs will be working with units to review and update their relevant governance documents and practices to align with the updated rule. Additionally, the current 04 process will remain in effect, and as noted above any faculty member may be subject to that existing process, regardless of faculty title or rank.

Workload Requirements

What impact does SB 1 have on faculty workload requirements?

The university has long been required to adopt and maintain **faculty workload requirements**. In addition to these existing standards, SB 1 requires the university to provide certain additional information, specifically:

- “An objective and numerically defined teaching workload expectation based on credit hours”;
- “A definition of all faculty workload elements in terms of credit hours”;
- “A definition of justifiable credit hour equivalents for activities other than teaching, including research, clinical care, administration, service, and other activities as determined by the state institution of higher education” (e.g., commercialization and entrepreneurship, extension programming, librarianship); and
- Disciplinary action that may be taken for the failure to meet these workload requirements.

Because these concepts can have different meanings across different substantive areas, and because units have a variety of individualized considerations related to workload, the Office of Academic Affairs is developing updated workload standards and engaging with the Chancellor of Higher Education regarding the required standards. Additional guidance is expected to be released during the autumn semester on the implementation of these standards in practice, and the Board of Trustees must approve the updated requirements once they are developed.

Tenure and Retrenchment

What impact will the SB 1 requirement to adopt a tenure and retrenchment policy have on the university?

SB 1 requires the university to have a policy on tenure and retrenchment (i.e., changes made to services or programs as a result of financial concerns) and requires the Board of Trustees to approve this policy, but does not impose any specific policy requirements regarding these terms.

These concepts are currently addressed extensively in several sections of the **faculty rules**, including:

- Faculty Rule 3335-3-37 (Alteration or abolition of units);
- Faculty Rule 3335-5-02.1 (Financial exigency);
- Faculty Rule 3335-5-02.2 (Treatment of tenured faculty members during financial exigency);
- Faculty Rule 3335-5-02.3 (Appeal procedures for tenured faculty because of termination of appointments during financial exigency);
- Faculty Rule 3335-5-03 (Appointment of faculty and staff; tenure);
- Faculty Rule 3335-5-19 (Faculty); and
- Faculty Rule 3335-6-06 (Tenure initiating unit).



In addition, [Board Bylaw 3335-1-08\(E\)](#) and the university's pre-existing [Furloughs](#) policy contain relevant provisions regarding the circumstances in which furloughs may be appropriate. The Faculty Appointments policy was revised to incorporate these pre-existing rules and processes, and the Board approved this revised policy on August 20, 2025. At this time, this is the only action anticipated for these specific requirements.

The above provisions may have differing impacts on different types of faculty depending on the circumstances. Faculty may reach out to the [Office of Faculty Affairs](#) and the [Faculty Ombudsperson](#), and both faculty and staff may contact the [Office of Human Resources](#) with specific questions.

Partnerships with China

Will student or scholar financial support through the PRC be impacted by SB 1?

Ohio State can still accept payment for instructional fees, general fees, special fees, cost of instruction, or educational expenses from Chinese citizens under SB 1.

For students/scholars who have received scholarship funds directly to their personal account they may continue to pay tuition and fees at Ohio State, and other valid academic purposes, using these funds. Ohio State is prohibited from accepting payments from the PRC and the university cannot accept and apply these to the student/scholar account balance. This includes China Scholarship Council (CSC) funding.

Can I be reimbursed for travel or other expenses incurred while performing scholarly work, attending conferences or professional service in the PRC?

Staff and faculty are permitted to travel to China for academic and scholarly purposes as part of programming supported by the PRC at an academic institution in China. Faculty and staff can continue to directly receive travel reimbursements, conference fee waivers, honorariums and other covered expenses from Chinese institutions. Faculty should update any applicable federal disclosure and support forms as necessary as well as the Ohio State Disclosure Form. If there is a contract involved with the visit, then the University employee should request pre-approval using the Outside Activity Approval Form and only proceed if the activity is approved.

All researchers are encouraged to use Ohio State's International Risk Assessment Tool to request a review of potential risk associated with foreign institutions prior to engagement. The Office of Secure Research reviews those requests and completes restricted party screenings to determine whether the foreign entity appears on any U.S. government lists of restricted or concerning entities. Secure Research will provide feedback to the Ohio State sponsor regarding potential risks and relevant regulations and policies.

Can I receive a PRC grant?

No, Ohio State is not eligible to receive grants directly from the PRC. If you were to be named as an investigator, collaborator, key personnel expert, etc., on a research grant funded by the PRC, that would not be allowable under SB 1. This includes support from the National Natural Science Foundation of China. In addition, Ohio State's Enterprise for Research, Innovation and Knowledge (ERIK) generally does not recommend approval for researchers to be listed as unfunded study team members, collaborators, or participants on PRC grants unless the researcher, in conjunction with approval from college leadership, can clearly demonstrate a direct benefit to the university and address any compliance concerns.

If a waiver to the general prohibition on unfunded PRC grants is sought, the researcher and college Dean and/or Provost/Executive Director for centers/institutes should email their explanation of



benefits to the university and compliance mitigation plan to researchintegrity@osu.edu for review by the Chief Compliance Officer and the Vice President of Research or their designees.

Will collaboration with a colleague who works at an academic institution in China without a formal agreement, MOU or funding implications be allowable under SB 1?

SB 1 does not prevent collaboration with individuals associated with an academic institution in China.

Faculty can always proactively use the international risk assessment tool for a personalized review of their activity by the Office of Secure Research and follow up guidance depending on the nature of the collaboration.

Information related to federal agency concerns can be found here: https://go.osu.edu/intl_engagement

How will SB 1 impact faculty's ability to invite Chinese visiting scholars to campus?

All visiting scholars traveling under a J-1 (exchange visitor) visa will be required to sign a uniform "Visiting Scholar Agreement," as part of the in-take process in the Office of International Affairs at Ohio State and agree to follow all applicable policies at Ohio State. Additional compliance screens may occur, and additional requirements may be announced as SB 1 implementation continues.

For other visa holders, such as H1-B, the process remains the same; the approval process conducted by Ohio State Human Resources, the Office of International Affairs and the U.S. Department of State will determine the guest's ability to visit Ohio State.

Additional Questions

Where can I find additional support regarding SB 1 compliance?

Faculty may also consult with the [Office of Faculty Affairs](#) and the [Faculty Ombudsperson](#). Graduate students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor and/or course director with specific questions about their courses, and can also contact the [Graduate School](#) for additional support. Graduate and professional students may likewise consult with the [Graduate and Professional Student Ombudsperson](#) regarding other concerns.

