



Applies to: Students, faculty, staff

Responsible Office

Office of Academic Affairs

POLICY

Issued: 08/17/2022 (interim)

Revised: 05/30/2023

The Ohio State University’s [Shared Values](#) include a commitment to diversity and innovation. Pursuant to these values, the university promotes a culture of welcoming differences, making connections among people and ideas, and encouraging open-minded exploration, risk-taking, and freedom of expression. As a land-grant institution, the university takes seriously its role in promoting and supporting public discourse. To that end, the university is steadfastly committed to protecting the First Amendment right to free speech and academic freedom on its campus, and to upholding the university’s academic motto— “Education for Citizenship.”

Purpose of the Policy

To affirm principles of campus free speech and communicate the process for submitting and addressing complaints alleging free speech violations in accordance with [Ohio Revised Code \(ORC\) 3345.0215](#).

Definitions

Term	Definition
Campus	All of the university’s physical campuses and in person, online, and study abroad programs and instruction.
Faculty	For purposes of this policy, any person, whether or not the person is compensated by the university, and regardless of political affiliation, who is tasked with providing scholarship, academic research, or teaching, including tenured and nontenured professors, adjunct professors, visiting professors, lecturers, graduate students, instructors, and those in comparable positions, however titled. Does not include persons whose primary responsibilities are administrative or managerial. See ORC 3345.0215.
Free speech	Speech, expression, or assemblies protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Sections 3 and 11 of the Ohio Constitution, verbal or written, including, but not limited to, all forms of peaceful assembly, protests, demonstrations, rallies, vigils, marches, public speaking, distribution of printed materials, carrying signs, displays, or circulating petitions. Does not include the promotion, sale, or distribution of any product or service. See ORC 3345.0211.
Student	Any person who is enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis at the university. See ORC 3345.0211.
Student group	An officially recognized group at the university, or a group seeking official recognition, comprised of admitted students that receive, or are seeking to receive, benefits through the university. See ORC 3345.0211.
University employees	Faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student employees who are acting or serving in their role as an employee.

Policy Details

- I. In accordance with ORC 3345.0215, the university affirms the following principles:
  - A. **Students** have a fundamental constitutional right to free speech.
  - B. The university is committed to giving students broad latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, learn, and discuss any issue, subject to Policy Details III.
  - C. The university is committed to maintaining a campus as a marketplace of ideas for all students and all **faculty** in which the free exchange of ideas is not to be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the institution's community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed.



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- D. The role of the university's individual students and faculty is to make judgments about ideas for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress free speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose.
  - E. The proper role of the university is not to attempt to shield individuals from free speech, including ideas and opinions they find offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed.
  - F. The university greatly values civility and mutual respect. Nevertheless, concerns about civility and mutual respect may never be used as a justification for closing off the discussion of ideas, however offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed those ideas may be to some students or faculty.
  - G. All students and faculty are free to state their own views about and contest the views expressed on campus, and to state their own views about and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on the campus. Nevertheless, they may not substantially obstruct or otherwise substantially interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe. To this end, the university has a responsibility to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation and protect that freedom.
  - H. The university is committed to providing an atmosphere that is most conducive to speculation, experimentation, and creation by all students and all faculty, who will always remain free to inquire, study, evaluate, and gain new understanding.
  - I. The primary responsibility of faculty is to engage an honest, courageous, and persistent effort to search out and communicate the truth that lies in the areas of their competence.
- II. Only students, **student groups**, and faculty may submit complaints about alleged violations of this policy by **university employees** to the Office of University Compliance and Integrity at [compliance-integrity@osu.edu](mailto:compliance-integrity@osu.edu) or through the university's Anonymous Reporting Line at 866-294-9350 or [ohio-state.ethicspoint.com](http://ohio-state.ethicspoint.com).
- III. Nothing in this policy will be interpreted as preventing or prohibiting the university from imposing lawful measures that do not violate the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Sections 3 and 11 of the Ohio Constitution, such as:
- A. Constitutional time, place, and manner restrictions;
  - B. Reasonable and viewpoint-neutral restrictions in nonpublic forums;
  - C. Restricting the use of university property to protect the free speech rights of students and faculty and preserve the use of the property for the advancement of the university's mission;
  - D. Prohibiting or limiting speech, expression, or assemblies that are not protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Sections 3 and 11 of the Ohio Constitution; and
  - E. Content restrictions on speech that are reasonably related to a legitimate pedagogical purpose, such as classroom rules and expectations.
- IV. Nothing in this policy will be construed to interfere with any faculty member's academic freedom under [Faculty Rule 3335-5-01](#) or will be interpreted as restricting or impairing the university's obligations under federal law including, but not limited to, Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 as addressed through the [Non-Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct policy](#).
- V. Nothing in this policy will be construed to grant students the right to disrupt previously scheduled or reserved activities occurring in a traditional public forum. See [ORC 3345.0215](#).
- VI. The university encourages all students, student groups, and faculty to file complaints about alleged violations of this policy, including any violation which results in a penalty imposed on a student's grade for an assignment or coursework that is unrelated to ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, including any legitimate



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pedagogical concerns, and is instead based on the contents of student’s free speech. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of this policy must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a policy violation. The university is committed to protecting individuals from interference with making a complaint under this policy and from retaliation for having made such a complaint.

### PROCEDURE

Issued: 08/17/2022 (interim)

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- I. The university will review and respond to all complaints alleging violations of this policy as set forth in the [Campus Free Speech Policy Complaint Investigation, Hearing, and Resolution Process](#).
- II. The university will report complaint information annually to Ohio’s chancellor of higher education in accordance with ORC 3345.0215.

### Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
University	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and respond to complaints alleging violations of this policy.</li> <li>2. Report complaint information annually in accordance with Ohio law.</li> </ol>

### Resources

University Policies, [policies.osu.edu](https://policies.osu.edu)

Non-Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct, [go.osu.edu/non-discrimination-policy](https://go.osu.edu/non-discrimination-policy)

Whistleblower, [hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy140.pdf](https://hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy140.pdf)

#### Governance Documents

Campus Free Speech, Ohio Revised Code 3345.0215, [codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-3345.0215](https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-3345.0215)

Campus Free Speech Policy Complaint Investigation, Hearing, and Resolution Process, [go.osu.edu/complaint-investigation-hearing-resolution-process](https://go.osu.edu/complaint-investigation-hearing-resolution-process)

Faculty Rule 3335-5-04, [trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/3335-5](https://trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/3335-5)

### Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Policy questions	Office of Academic Affairs	614-292-5881	<a href="https://oaa.osu.edu">oaa.osu.edu</a>
Policy violation complaints	University Compliance and Integrity	614-292-3251	<a href="mailto:Compliance-integrity@osu.edu">Compliance-integrity@osu.edu</a> <a href="https://Compliance.osu.edu">Compliance.osu.edu</a>
Legal issues	Office of Legal Affairs	614-292-0611	<a href="https://legal.osu.edu">legal.osu.edu</a>

### History

Issued: 08/17/2022 Interim policy approved by BOT, 08/17/2022, Resolution #2023-16

Revised: 05/30/2023 Approved via university policy process and by BOT, 05/18/2023, Resolution #2023-110