

Advance Ohio Higher Education Act (Senate Bill 1) Complaint Investigation, Hearing, and Resolution Process

Complaints

The Advance Ohio Higher Education Act (Senate Bill 1) enacted in 2025 describes three instances in which the university must respond to complaints alleging violations of the law:

- 1) When a student, student group, or faculty member of the university, as defined in the university's [Campus Free Speech policy](#), submits a complaint about an alleged violation of the prohibitions and requirements in the university's [DEI, Intellectual Diversity, and Controversial Beliefs Under the Advance Ohio Higher Education Act policy](#) adopted under [Ohio Revised Code \(ORC\) 3345.0217](#);
- 2) When a complaint is received regarding any administrator, faculty member, staff, or student who interferes with the intellectual diversity rights, prescribed under [ORC 3345.0217](#), of another; and
- 3) When a student, student group, or faculty member of the university, as defined in the university's [Campus Free Speech policy](#), submits a complaint about an alleged violation of the prohibitions and requirements under [ORC 3345.88](#) by an employee of the university.

Allegations of violations of Senate Bill 1 will be considered only if they reflect one of these three categories. The university handles complaints alleging such violations in the same manner as complaints alleging violations of the university's [Campus Free Speech policy](#), as required by Senate Bill 1.

Complaints must be submitted to the Office of University Compliance and Integrity (OUCI) at: compliance-integrity@osu.edu or by using [EthicsPoint](#), which allows for anonymous reporting.

Intake and Investigation

After receiving a complaint that alleges a violation of Senate Bill 1, OUCI will acknowledge it in writing. When a complaint is filed and to determine whether potential evidence of a violation may be identified, OUCI will initiate a preliminary assessment to determine if the complaint fits within one of these categories, is sufficiently credible, and states specific facts to support it.

If OUCI determines that a complaint does not allege a violation that can be addressed under this process, OUCI must give the complainant the opportunity to clarify the nature of the complaint. OUCI may dismiss such a complaint if it cannot be addressed under this process. This determination does not prohibit referral of the complaint to another applicable university process or office if appropriate.

If OUCI determines that the complaint should proceed, then OUCI will initiate an investigation. An investigator may interview parties and witnesses and request additional information.

The investigator will draft a summary of evidence and include documentation as deemed relevant by the investigator. The investigator will share the summary of evidence with the complainant and respondent.

The complainant and respondent may submit a response to the summary of evidence to the investigator within five business days.

All parties are to direct inquiries about the investigation process, timeline, and status to the investigator. Informal resolution will be considered when requested by all parties, if applicable, and approved by the investigator. The parties may request informal resolution after a complaint has been approved for investigation, but prior to the start of a hearing. Informal resolution is intended for parties who prefer to resolve complaints without an investigative/hearing process. Informal resolution is a voluntary process

designed to eliminate prohibited conduct, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Participation in informal resolution does not require a finding of responsibility for any policy or legal violation. Informal resolution focuses on restoring access to education/employment and educating parties on the impact of reported behavior to decrease the risk of reoccurrence.

Hearing

Once the investigation is complete, a hearing officer will be appointed based on the respondent's employment or student status.

The executive vice president and provost or their designee will serve as the hearing officer for matters involving faculty respondents; the senior vice president for talent, culture and human resources or their designee will serve as the hearing officer for all other employee respondents; and the senior vice president for student life or their designee will serve as the hearing officer for matters involving student respondents.

The hearing officer will conduct a fair and impartial hearing via video conference or in-person and will adjudicate the case within 60 days of OUCI receiving a complaint, absent extenuating circumstances.

Prior to the hearing, the hearing officer will review the summary of evidence and any responses. During the hearing, the hearing officer will summarize the evidence, and the complainant and respondent will be provided an opportunity to provide a statement. The complainant and respondent may be accompanied by an advisor, who may only provide counsel or support for the party but may not actively participate in the process.

The hearing officer will provide a final determination in writing to the complainant and respondent. A respondent will only be found in violation if a preponderance of evidence supports the allegations in the complaint. Determinations may not be appealed.

Resolutions and Sanctions

If the hearing officer determines a violation occurred, the hearing officer will facilitate a resolution to address the violation and prevent any further violation in accordance with applicable rules, policies, or collective bargaining agreements.

The hearing officer will determine if a violation may merit any disciplinary sanctions or other appropriate measures. Violations by a faculty member, as defined under Faculty Rule 3335-5-19(A) and (B), will be adjudicated through the process governed by Faculty Rule 3335-5-04.1. All other individuals acting in a faculty capacity, including staff and students teaching courses, will be sanctioned by the executive vice president and provost or their designee in accordance with university policy. Any other university employee will be sanctioned by the senior vice president for talent, culture and human resources or their designee in accordance with university policy or collective bargaining agreements. Any university student (not acting in a faculty capacity or student employee capacity) will be sanctioned by the senior vice president for student life or their designee in accordance with university policy and the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Retaliation

University policy, as well as federal and state law, prohibit retaliation against any person in connection with an investigation. More information about the university's prohibition against retaliation is available in the university's [Whistleblower policy](#). Concerns or questions about retaliation can be submitted to OUCI at: compliance-integrity@osu.edu or by using [EthicsPoint](#), which allows for anonymous reporting.