

President Trump Executive Orders (EOs) and Executive Actions Impacting Higher Education

Note: This is not an exhaustive list but rather the EOs and executive actions that impact higher education. The list will be updated regularly.

EOs and Executive Actions Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (01/21/25)

The EO directs all federal agencies to end DEI preferences, mandates, policies, programs, and activities. It revokes EO 11246, which has required federal contractors to have affirmative action plans since 1965. The EO directs the Attorney General and Secretary of Education to issue guidance to state and local educational agencies and institutions of higher education that receive federal funds or participate in the Title IV federal student loan assistance program on “the measures and practices required to comply with Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College.” The EO also mandates investigations of institutions with endowments of at least \$1 billion.

Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing (01/20/25)

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), assisted by the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), must end all discriminatory programs, including DEI and “diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility” (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities in the federal government, under whatever name they appear (including in relation to “environmental justice”).

Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions (01/20/25)

This broad EO rescinds 78 EOs from the Biden administration, including those aimed at increasing equity and economic opportunity for underrepresented students, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. The EO also pulls back EO 14124 (2024), which established a White House initiative to increase educational access through HSIs. That initiative supported HSIs in building educational capacity, improving student economic mobility, and enhancing federal recruitment efforts on their campuses. *Note: This EO is also referenced below in other categories.*

U.S. Department of Education Letter to Institutions of Higher Education re: DEI and SFFA decision (02/14/25)

The letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to colleges and universities to “clarify and reaffirm nondiscrimination obligations of schools and other entities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education” (ED). The letter states that the Supreme Court decision regarding Students for Fair Admission (SFFA) has clarified that “Federal law thus prohibits covered entities from using race in decisions pertaining to admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, discipline, housing, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life.” It also encourages the public to file complaints with OCR if they believe a “covered entity” has unlawfully discriminated.

EOs on Higher Education and Antisemitism/Title VI

Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism (01/29/25)

This EO directs the federal government to combat antisemitism vigorously, “using all available and appropriate legal tools, to prosecute, remove, or otherwise hold to account the perpetrators of unlawful anti-Semitic

harassment and violence.” Within 60 days, agency heads must report on civil and criminal actions related to campus antisemitism, including pending complaints and legal cases. The Attorney General is encouraged to pursue civil rights enforcement, and ED must review all Title VI complaints related to antisemitism in K-12 and higher education. Additionally, the secretaries of State, Education, and Homeland Security must develop recommendations for monitoring and reporting alien students and staff who may be inadmissible under U.S. immigration laws. This EO builds on the Trump administration first term, [Executive Order 13899](#), which required federal agencies to use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and its examples when enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Justice Department Announces Formation of Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism **U.S. Department of Education Probes Cases of Antisemitism at Five Universities** **HHS’ Civil Rights Office Acts Swiftly to Combat Anti-Semitism (02/03/25)**

Following the January 29 EO, the Department of Justice announced the formation of a new multiagency taskforce “to root out anti-Semitic harassment in schools and on college campuses.” In addition, ED announced on the same day it was launching five investigations at institutions of higher education “where widespread antisemitic harassment has been reported” and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would investigate four medical schools over “protests taking place during their 2024 commencement ceremonies.”

EOs Impacting Higher Education and Immigration

Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats (01/20/25)

This EO authorizes increased vetting and screening of individuals seeking admission and already present in the United States. The EO also directs agencies to enhance vetting for those coming from countries with identified security risks, as well as, identifying admitted aliens and aliens otherwise already present in the United States “do not bear hostile attitudes toward its citizens, culture, government, institutions, or founding principles, and do not advocate for, aid, or support designated foreign terrorists and other threats to our national security.”

America First Policy Directive to the Secretary of State (01/20/25)

This EO directs the Secretary of State to “issue guidance bringing the Department of State’s policies, programs, personnel, and operations in line with an America First foreign policy, which puts America and its interests first.” It could impact programs that are funded by the State Department.

Protecting the American People Against Invasion (01/20/25)

This EO directs executive departments and agencies to enforce final deportation orders and directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to ensure the efficient and expedited removal of individuals who have not been admitted or paroled into the United States and do not qualify for asylum. The EO establishes Federal Homeland Security Task Forces, limits sanctuary jurisdictions' funding, and restricts public benefits for undocumented individuals.

EOs Impacting Title IX

Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government (01/20/25)

This EO recognizes two sexes, male and female, and directs agencies to use "sex" instead of "gender" in federal policies and documents. The order also directs the U.S. Education Department to rescind several pieces of guidance, including a 2021 memo that said discriminating against gay or transgender individuals would violate Title IX, which bars sex discrimination in federally funded education programs.

Keep Men Out of Women’s Sports (02/05/25)

This EO mandates federally funded educational institutions to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 by prohibiting male participation in women’s sports. The order directs the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General to enforce policies that preserve all-female sports and locker rooms, rescind

funding from non-compliant programs, and prioritize legal actions against institutions allowing male participation in women's categories. It also rescinds U.S. participation in people-to-people sports exchanges or other sports programs that classify female sports based on identity rather than biological sex. Additionally, it promotes international policies to protect sex-based sports categories, restricts U.S. entry for male athletes attempting to compete in women's sports, and urges the International Olympic Committee to ensure eligibility for women's sports is based solely on biological sex.

EOs Impacting Sustainability

Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions (01/20/25)

This EO revokes the following Biden-era EOs related to higher education's effort to combat climate change. The order ceases the White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy within the Executive Office of the President. It would also end the Justice40 Initiatives and other HBCU- and MSI-related environmental justice programs.

EOs and Executive Actions Impacting University Endowments

America First Investment Policy (02/21/2025)

The memorandum instructs the federal government to use all necessary legal instruments, including the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), to restrict People's Republic of China-affiliated investments in critical sectors such as technology, critical infrastructure, healthcare, agriculture, energy, raw materials, or other strategic sectors. It directs agencies to establish a fast-track process for investments from allied partners while ensuring these investors do not collaborate with foreign adversaries in corresponding areas. Investments exceeding \$1 billion will undergo expedited environmental reviews, and mitigation agreements must include concrete, time-bound actions. Restrictions on foreign investors' access to U.S. assets will be eased based on their independence from PRC-aligned predatory investment practices, while passive investments without governance influence will still be encouraged.

The administration will consider new or expanded restrictions on outbound U.S. investments in critical sectors such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing. The review will also consider restrictions on investment types—including private equity, venture capital, corporate expansions, and public securities—funded by pension funds, university endowments, and other limited-partner investors, to prevent U.S. financial resources from supporting China's Military-Civil Fusion strategy. The memorandum specifically states that “it is past time for American universities to stop supporting foreign adversaries” and “stop granting university access to supporters of terrorism.”

EOs and Executive Actions Impacting Government Operations

Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid (01/20/25)

This EO orders a 90-day pause on all U.S. foreign development assistance, in order to perform an “assessment of programmatic efficiencies and constituency with U.S. foreign policy.” Within 90 days, the heads of the agencies, along with the OMB Director, will determine whether or not these programs will continue. This EO led to the initial stop-work orders at USAID, the restructuring of the agency, and efforts to embed a greatly reduced foreign development assistance program [into the U.S. Department of State](#).

Office of Management and Budget Memo on “Temporary Pause of Agency Grant, Loan, and Other Financial Assistance Programs” (01/29/25)

This memo to the heads of federal agencies, instructs those agencies to pause all and review all external funding and programs to ensure they are “consistent with the President's policies and requirements” including the EOs issued on DEI, gender, sustainability and foreign policy. This memo was rescinded the same day after a court ruling blocked its implementation. Additional court orders have been issued as the administration has continued to stop, delay, or pull down programs not aligned with the executive orders.

Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation (01/31/25)

This EO mandates that for each new federal regulation issued, at least 10 prior regulations be identified for elimination. The heads of all agencies are directed to ensure that the total incremental cost of all new regulations, including repealed regulations being finalized in the fiscal year 2025, shall be significantly less than zero. The order also rescinds the Biden administration's update to the document known as OMB Circular A-4, which provides guidance to all executive branch agencies about how to assess the desirability of proposed regulations, particularly in how to measure costs and benefits.

Supplemental Guidance to the 2024 NIH Grants Policy Statement: Indirect Cost Rates (02/07/25)

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued an update to grant policy imposing an across-the-board 15 percent cap on indirect costs for NIH funded research. This went against previously negotiated rates at institutions of higher education, where the rates were often over 50 percent. This action was quickly challenged in the courts, including in a suit brought against the action [by ACE along with AAU and APLU](#). As of February 10th, the courts [issued a Temporary Restraining Order \(TRO\)](#) against this cap on indirect costs.

Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative (02/11/25)

This EO mandates the OMB director to submit a plan in reducing federal workforce, requiring agencies to hire only one employee for every four departures. Agency heads must follow the federal hiring plan outlined in the EO on [Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service](#). Agency heads must develop a data-driven plan on new highest-need appointment hires and consult with the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to implement reductions-in-force targeting non-essential functions and DEI programs. The Office of Personnel Management will initiate a rulemaking process within 30 days to revise federal hiring suitability criteria and agency heads must submit reorganization plans to OMB. The DOGE Service administrator must submit a report within 240 days to the president on the implementation of this order.

Keeping Education Accessible and Ending COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates in Schools (02/15/25)

This EO states that discretionary federal funds (such as grants) cannot be used to directly or indirectly support or subsidize "an educational service agency, State educational agency, local educational agency, elementary school, secondary school, or institution of higher education that requires students to have received a COVID-19 vaccination to attend any in-person education program."

Radical Transparency about Wasteful Spending (02/18/25)

This memorandum directs the heads of executive departments and agencies to disclose all details of every terminated program, cancelled contract, terminated grant, and any other discontinued obligation of Federal funds "to the maximum extent permitted by law."

Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Deregulatory Initiative (02/19/2025)

This order directs agency heads, in coordination with their DOGE team lead and the OMB director, to review and rescind all agency regulations that are deemed unconstitutional, unlawful, lack clear statutory authority, impose excessive costs, or hinder economic and technological development. Within 60 days, agency heads must provide the administrator of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) a list of all regulations identified for modification or rescission. OIRA will consult with agency heads to develop a unified regulatory agenda to rescind or modify identified rules. For new regulations, agency heads must adhere to the procedures outlined in EO 12866 and consult with their DOGE team leads and the OIRA administrators to ensure alignment with the principles of this order.