



Seismic Safety Policy

Responsible Officer:	EVP – Chief Financial Officer
Responsible Office:	CPES – Capital Programs, Energy and Sustainability
Issuance Date:	11/12/2024
Effective Date:	11/12/2024
Scope:	All University Facilities of the University of California within California except 1) those under the regulatory authority of the California Department of Health Care Access and Information or 2) K-12 schools or community college facilities built after 2018 under the regulatory authority of the Division of the State Architect.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	POLICY SUMMARY	2
II.	DEFINITIONS	2
III.	POLICY TEXT	3
	A. Seismic Advisory Board.....	4
	B. Seismic Risk Model	4
	C. Seismic Performance Ratings for University Facilities	4
	D. Program for Abatement of Seismic Risks in University Facilities.....	5
	E. Seismic Engineering Standards.....	5
	F. Peer Review	6
	G. Standards for Acquisition by Purchase or Other Title Transfer	6
	H. Standards for New Leases	7
	I. Standards for Existing Leased Facilities	8
	J. Special Considerations	8
	K. Post-Earthquake Emergency Response	9
IV.	COMPLIANCE/RESPONSIBILITIES	9
	A. Responsible Officer	9
	B. Responsible Officials	9
V.	PROCEDURES	10
VI.	RELATED INFORMATION	10
VII.	REVISION HISTORY	10

I. POLICY SUMMARY

The purpose of this Policy is to provide an acceptable level of earthquake safety for students, employees, and the public who occupy University Facilities located in California. For structures located in other states or outside the United States, the Responsible Official must take reasonable steps to manage the seismic life safety risk, if any, and comply with the applicable building code. See the Facilities Manual for specific requirements related to acquiring or leasing facilities outside of California.

II. DEFINITIONS

CBC: California Building Code, Part 2 of the CBSC, (current edition).

CBSC: California Building Standards Code, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, (current edition).

CEBC: California Existing Building Code, Part 10 of the CBSC, (current edition).

Component Engineer of Record (CEOR): A California-licensed structural or civil engineer responsible for the design of a component or portion of a building. A University of California employee may not perform this function (except that a licensed faculty member otherwise qualified may serve in this capacity).

Consulting Geotechnical Engineer (CGE): A California-licensed geotechnical engineer with demonstrated experience in field investigation and analysis of earthquake damage, site-specific seismic forces, and evaluations of geo-hazards. A University of California employee may not perform this function (except that a licensed faculty member otherwise qualified may serve in this capacity).

Consulting Structural Engineer (CSE): A California-licensed structural engineer with demonstrated experience in field investigation and analysis of earthquake damage, site-specific seismic forces, and design of structural systems to resist seismic forces. A University of California employee may not perform this function (except that a licensed faculty member otherwise qualified may serve in this capacity).

Designated Campus Building Official (DCBO): Designated campus administrator who has the authority to ensure compliance for all campus projects by appropriate reviews and inspection in accordance with the CBSC.

Engineer of Record (EOR): A California-licensed structural or civil engineer who is responsible for the structural design of the facility. A University of California employee may not perform this function (except that a licensed faculty member otherwise qualified may serve in this capacity).

Facilities Manual: The University of California Facilities Manual contains policies, procedures, and guidelines for the University's facilities. Seismic issues are primarily addressed in [Volume 3, Chapter 5, Section 3 – Seismic Safety and Review](#) and the [Resource Directory, RD2.6 – UC Seismic Program Guidelines](#).

Independent Seismic Peer Reviewer: A California-licensed structural engineer retained by the University to provide a measure of additional assurance regarding performance and safety of new construction, and repair or renovation of existing facilities. The reviewer must not be an employee of the University (except that a licensed faculty member otherwise qualified may serve in this capacity). The Independent Seismic Peer Reviewer must not be the EOR.

Lease: An agreement in which the landlord agrees to give the tenant the exclusive right to occupy real property, usually for a specific term and, in exchange, the tenant agrees to give the landlord some sort of consideration. A lease transfers to the tenant a leasehold interest in the real property and, unless otherwise provided in the lease, a lease is transferable and irrevocable.

Leased Facility(ies): A space within buildings or other structures that is leased by the University and used for University-related purposes.

Owned Facility(ies): Buildings and other structures that are owned by the University and used for University-related purposes.

Responsible Officer: The Executive Vice President-Chief Financial Officer, Office of the President.

Responsible Official: For their respective areas of responsibility, the Chancellors, the Executive Vice President-Chief Operating Officer, the Vice President-Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Director-Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Seismic Advisory Board (SAB): A group of structural and geotechnical engineers and others with seismic expertise appointed by the Office of the President to provide seismic advice to the University in accordance with this Policy.

Seismic Hazard Zone of Required Investigation (Seismic Hazard Zone): Zones of required site investigation for possible earthquake faulting, landslides, and liquefaction delineated by the California Geological Survey to help identify where higher building standards may be necessary for safe development.

Seismic Performance Rating (SPR): Ratings prepared for University Facilities and Leased Facilities by CSE in conformance with this Policy.

Seismic Review Committee: A group of structural and geotechnical engineers and others with seismic expertise appointed by a UC campus or location to provide seismic advice to the campus or location in accordance with this Policy, under the overall guidance of the SAB.

Seismic Risk Model (Model): A tool, maintained by the Office of the President, to assess seismic risk of University Facilities.

University Facility: Owned Facilities and Leased Facilities used for University related purposes.

III. POLICY TEXT

The University must provide an acceptable level of earthquake safety for students, employees, and the public who occupy University Facilities within a reasonable time frame. The University must weigh the probability and gravity of potential injury to persons foreseeably exposed to the risk of injury from a seismic occurrence against the practicality and cost of protecting against the risk of injury from seismic occurrences.

Responsible Officials must immediately consider alternatives to undiminished continued use and occupancy of University Facilities not meeting the requirements of this Policy, including partial evacuation, temporary emergency measures, reduction in or cessation of use, demolition, retrofit, or combinations of these alternatives. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Policy, Responsible Officials shall prioritize actions to address those buildings under their jurisdiction that are non-conforming. Non-conforming buildings are those in Risk Category I-III with SPR of V, VI, or VII or Risk Category IV with an SPR of III, IV, V, VI, or VII as defined

in the Facilities Manual. Continual improvement is the University's goal, and each location shall aim to achieve a minimum average of four percent annual reduction in the non-conforming square footage of facilities. The target four percent annual reduction is a percentage of the 2022 non-conforming baselines, averaged over a three-year period. Additionally, all currently occupied SPR VI facilities, shall be given the highest priority in capital planning and allocation decisions and brought into compliance with policy no later than December 31, 2037.

This requirement applies to all University-owned and leased facilities.

A. Seismic Advisory Board

The Seismic Advisory Board (SAB) is a group of licensed structural and geotechnical engineers and others with seismic expertise appointed by the Office of the President to provide seismic advice to the University in accordance with this Policy.

The SAB provides guidance to the University on seismic design, risk, and retrofit associated with University Facilities, including assessing seismic risk, advising on seismic priorities, and providing policy revision recommendations.

The SAB also advises as to whether changes in present understanding of seismology and building vulnerabilities or the CBSC require Responsible Officials to update the survey of University Facilities in accordance with Section III.C of this Policy.

A UC campus or location may establish a Seismic Review Committee consisting of a group of structural and geotechnical engineers and others with seismic expertise to provide guidance to the campus or location consistent with the Policy on seismic design strategies, risk assessment methodologies, peer review services, and plan check services.

B. Seismic Risk Model

The Seismic Risk Model (Model) is a tool that assesses seismic risk of University Facilities. The University must maintain a Model to assist in the evaluation of seismic risk. For each University Facility, the Responsible Official must provide the Office of the President with all building data required for input to the Model (as outlined in the Facilities Manual).

C. Seismic Performance Ratings for University Facilities

Each Responsible Official must engage one or more CSEs to examine University Facilities, any facility acquired (as described in Section III.G below) or subject to a Lease (as described in Section III.H below), and any newly constructed or renovated building. The CSE must report on the adequacy of the resistance of such facilities to seismic forces, and assign a SPR, in accordance with the [Facilities Manual, UC Seismic Program Guidelines, Table 1 – Expected Seismic Performance Ratings](#). Members of a campus appointed Seismic Review Committee may perform CSE tasks. Consultation with one or more CGEs is encouraged to better understand geotechnical considerations when evaluating University Facilities and assessing anticipated seismic performance.

For newly constructed or renovated buildings, the EOR must prepare documentation at the conclusion of the project identifying an SPR for each building; such SPR must be presumptively based on the CBC or CEBC applicable when the project was submitted for permit review.

The CSE must prepare a report for each building evaluated, that includes a written technical discussion of the basis for the facility's SPR (as outlined in the Facilities Manual) with preliminary recommendations for resolving any noted seismic safety risks.

All University Facilities must have a current SPR, except certain limited facilities identified in the Facilities Manual.

D. Program for Abatement of Seismic Risks in University Facilities

Each Responsible Official must develop a Program to establish priorities for seismic retrofit projects in accordance with this Policy, to be updated and reported regularly to the Office of the President. Guidelines for retrofit prioritization are included in the Facilities Manual.

The Program must include identification and a plan for improvement of University Facilities that pose the potential for earthquake-induced failure of structural and non-structural elements, including, but not limited to, the rupture of utilities, or falling, dislodging, overturning, or sliding of interior and exterior building elements, equipment, fixtures, furnishings, and other contents. Interim measures to reduce the risks of injury, pending permanent seismic safety improvements, must be considered and implemented by the Responsible Official.

The Program must also include a funding plan and schedule for all abatement and retrofit as needed for projects for inclusion in the Capital Financial Plan. The Responsible Official must incorporate any related capital costs into the Capital Financial Plan, as applicable.

E. Seismic Engineering Standards

1. Geotechnical Standards

All campuses must seek to characterize ground motions and identify geologic hazards considered at the location of a proposed new building or existing building that is a candidate for retrofit, in accordance with one or more of the methodologies specified in the CBSC and through the California Seismic Hazards Mapping Act.

2. Standards for New Construction

The design and construction of University Facilities must, at a minimum, comply with the current seismic provisions of the CBC for new buildings and with University policies. An EOR must be responsible for the structural aspects of the entire project and must sign and stamp all final documents for which the EOR is responsible.

3. Standards for Retrofits

In conducting seismic retrofit projects, the University must seek to provide an acceptable level of earthquake safety based on the protection of life and prevention of personal injury in accordance with requirements stated herein. Standards for the retrofit of existing buildings must follow the requirements of the CBSC (including Sections 317–323 of the CEBC), as well as University policies. To provide further guidance to Campus Building Officials regarding compliance with the two options in Section 317.6 of the CEBC, a “timely manner” as referenced in (2) means the seismic retrofit must commence as soon as feasible and the facility must be given priority in campus capital planning and funding allocation decisions.

4. Renovations, Alterations, and Additions of Existing Facilities

Impact of renovations to existing University Facilities must be assessed relative to CEBC Section 317.3. Where the applicability requirements of CEBC Section 317.3 indicate that retrofit or evaluation is required, the evaluation and/or retrofit design must adhere to the requirements of this Policy per Section III.E.3 – Standards for Retrofits.

F. Peer Review

Peer review by an Independent Seismic Peer Reviewer must be conducted for all the following:

1. New construction of University Facilities;
2. Retrofits of existing construction; and
3. Renovations of University Facilities that require alterations or additions to any structural portion of the seismic lateral or gravity load-bearing structure or that affect life or safety of the occupants.

The Independent Seismic Peer Reviewer must be contracted for and paid directly by the campus. The Designated Campus Building Official must select the Independent Seismic Peer Reviewer and plan for the peer review.

See the Facilities Manual for additional requirements and options for Peer Review.

G. Standards for Acquisition by Purchase or Other Title Transfer

The following are standards for acquisition by purchase or any other form of title transfer. In support and reference of the following standards, [Compliance Requirement Tables](#) are included within the Facilities Manual.

1. Prior to acquisition of any structure or facility for University occupancy, either by purchase or any other form of title transfer, the University must retain a CSE to perform a seismic evaluation and assign a SPR in accordance with Section III.C above. In addition, any structure or facility proposed to be acquired that is located within a Seismic Hazard Zone must be investigated to determine the potential hazard and assessment of its potential effect on the structure or facility.
2. Except as provided below, each structure or facility that will become a University Facility through acquisition by purchase or any other form of title transfer to the University must be rated at least SPR II or IV (see Section III.C), depending on CBC Risk Category.
3. The University may acquire property by purchase or any other form of title transfer of a structure or facility with a SPR of V only if the structure or facility is unoccupied at the time of title transfer; except that use for University-related purposes is allowed for no more than 24 months only when the space is used for relocation from another University Facility that is undergoing seismic retrofit.
4. The University may acquire property by purchase or any other form of title transfer of a structure or facility with a SPR of VI only if the structure or facility is unoccupied at the time of title transfer. The structure or facility must remain unoccupied until it is rated at least SPR II or IV (see Section III.C), depending on CBC Risk Category.
5. The University may acquire property by purchase or any other form of title transfer of a structure or facility with an SPR of VII only if the structure or facility is unoccupied at the time of title transfer. The structure or facility must remain unoccupied, and must be brought into compliance with this Policy or demolished within 12 months of title transfer.
6. For any proposed acquisition or any other form of title transfer subject to provisions for purchase, gift, or other action subject to this Policy, approval documentation

(whether approved by the Regents or approved under delegated authority) must include an estimate of the total project cost to undertake retrofitting to achieve conformance to the requirements of Section III.E; or to demolish the structure(s) or facility(ies).

H. Standards for New Leases

The following standards apply to Leased Facilities by the University that were not previously occupied for University Operations before September 1, 2024:

1. Prior to entering into a new Lease, the University must retain a CSE to perform a seismic evaluation and assign an SPR in accordance with Section III.C above. In addition, the CSE performing the evaluation must determine whether the structure or facility proposed to be occupied through a Lease is located within a Seismic Hazard Zone; if it is, the CSE must further investigate to determine the potential hazard and assess its potential effect on the structure or facility.
2. All Leased Facilities must be rated at least SPR II or IV (see Section III.C), depending on CBC Risk Category.
3. The University may enter into a Lease for space within a facility with a SPR of V only if the structure or facility is unoccupied at the time of entering into such Lease; except that use for University-related purposes is allowed for no more than 24 months only when the space is used for relocation from another University Facility that is undergoing seismic retrofit.
4. The University may enter into a Lease for space within a facility with a SPR of VI or VII only if the structure or facility is unoccupied at the time of entering into such Lease. The structure or facility must remain unoccupied until it is rated at least SPR II or IV (see Section III.C), depending on CBC Risk Category.
5. Prior to entering into a Lease, the DCBO must evaluate a facility's compliance with this Policy and all requirements of the Facilities Manual, and report to the Responsible Official on such compliance. Prior to entering into such Lease, a CSE must perform a seismic evaluation and assign an SPR in accordance with Section III.C above and complete the applicable documentation (as outlined in the Facilities Manual).
6. If the University enters into transactions where the space occupied through a Lease of real property is ancillary to, but a necessary part of, a business transaction, (such as the purchase of a physician practice or ancillary health care services provider that, at the time of the transaction, occupies space through a Lease), the following provisions are applicable.

Notwithstanding any provision in this Section III.H to the contrary, with respect to a Leased Facility that is ancillary to a business transaction:

- a. Prior to close of the business transaction, the DCBO must follow requirements of Section III.H.1 of this Policy;
- b. If the Leased Facility is rated at SPR V, the University may use the space for no more than 24 months from the date of determination of such a SPR;
- c. If the Leased Facility is rated at SPR VI or VII, the facility must be vacated prior to close of the business transaction; and

- d. The Responsible Official must promptly report to the Office of the President any Leases assumed or entered into pursuant to this Section III.H.6.

I. Standards for Existing Leased Facilities

The following standards apply to Leased Facilities by the University for University Operations under Leases executed before September 1, 2024. In support and reference of the following standards, [Compliance Requirement Tables](#) are included within the Facilities Manual.

1. Building owners are responsible for compliance with all applicable building codes, including seismic safety requirements for all Existing Leased Facilities.
2. Lease renewals for buildings with the previous SPR of V are able to renew the lease through December 31, 2037.
3. Lease renewals for buildings without a previous seismic rating or with a seismic rating of VI or worse must prior to renewing an existing Lease for University occupancy, retain a CSE to perform a seismic evaluation and assign an SPR in accordance with Section III.C above. In addition, the CSE performing the evaluation must determine whether the structure or facility proposed to be occupied through a Lease is located within a Seismic Hazard Zone; if it is, the CSE must further investigate to determine the potential hazard and assess its potential effect on the structure or facility.
4. Responsible Officials are responsible for considering existing and newly performed seismic assessments before renewing leases and negotiating renovations with building owners before or during lease renewals.

J. Special Considerations

1. **Geotechnical Investigations:** Any geotechnical investigation conducted for a University project must be performed by, or in consultation with a CGE, and must include consideration of the potential for, and likely magnitude of, seismically induced ground failure hazards, including liquefaction, differential settlement, lateral spreading, earthquake-induced landsliding, and surface faulting.
2. **Deferred Approvals for structural building components:** If a project includes deferred submittals, or a portion of the project is designed by design-build subcontractors, the structural design for such components or portions of a facility must be under the responsible charge of a CEOR and must be signed or stamped by that individual. In order to establish responsibility for the overall design and component design, the project EOR and the CEOR must have responsibility as follows:
 - a. The EOR must establish written criteria and other requirements necessary for coordination of the components and their incorporation into the overall structural system and design before the project is released for design of the system or components by the CEOR. The EOR must review, and document such review, the design of these elements for general conformance with the established criteria prior to construction.
 - b. The CEOR design for each submittal must include calculations indicating design criteria, applicable loads, properties, and deformation analysis in accordance with

the component or system design requirements provided in the contract documents. The CEOR design information must include plans and details indicating all structural elements of the component; assemblage of elements including, as appropriate, profiles, connections, welding, bracing, and attachments to elements designed by others. The resulting construction documents (plans, calculations, and details) must bear the stamp and signature of the CEOR.

- c. The CEOR is responsible for specifying special inspection requirements specific to the deferred work, which must be prepared and submitted with the design documents for each deferred item.
3. **Ground Leases:** Where the University has entered into a ground lease, as lessee or lessor, upon which a third-party constructs a structure, the third-party must be required to design, build, and maintain the structure, as if it were a University Facility, consistent with this Policy.

K. Post-Earthquake Emergency Response

Each campus or University location must maintain an earthquake emergency response plan, within respective Emergency Operation Plans, for use in the event of a damaging earthquake.

Further information is outlined in the Facilities Manual, including references to campus or University location Emergency Management and Environmental, Health & Safety departments.

IV. COMPLIANCE/RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Responsible Officer

1. The Responsible Officer, through the Office of the President, Capital Programs, Energy and Sustainability, is responsible for overall administration of this Policy, including: interpretation or clarification of this Policy;
2. providing advice on additional seismic safety criteria, standards, and guidelines, as necessary; and
3. evaluating seismic safety programs and review of proposals for abatement of seismic hazards.

The Responsible Officer may waive policy requirements on a building by building basis upon request of a Responsible Official. Policy waiver request procedures are outlined in the Facilities Manual.

B. Responsible Officials

Responsible Officials must take reasonable steps to assure protection of persons from loss of life, injury, or property damage resulting from earthquakes in their respective jurisdictions. This responsibility may not be delegated. However, each Responsible Official may assign specific duties and authority to individuals within their respective jurisdiction to assist in the discharge of this responsibility.

V. PROCEDURES

See [Volume 3, Chapter 5, Section 3 – Seismic Safety and Review](#), and the [Resource Directory, RD2.6 – UC Seismic Program Guidelines](#) of the University of California Facilities Manual.

VI. RELATED INFORMATION

California Code of Regulations, Title 24, California Building Standards Code, including Part 2, the California Building Code, and Part 10, the California Existing Building Code Section 15001 of the California Health and Safety Code

California Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (Public Resources Code, Chapter 7.8, Section 2690-2699.6)

University of California Facilities Manual, [Volume 3, Chapter 5, Section 3 – Seismic Safety and Review](#), and the [Resource Directory, RD2.6 – UC Seismic Program Guidelines](#)

VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Not applicable

VIII. REVISION HISTORY

November 12, 2024: Significantly revised requirements for University actions for facilities owned by others by for legacy leases, and shifted to a continual improvement goal in addition to a final compliance deadline.

March 19, 2021: Significantly revised to reflect guidance from the Seismic Advisory Board; moved portions of prior Policy to the UC Facilities Manual, including Appendices A, B and C; Policy requirements are clarified, and sections of the Policy Text are re-organized into a more logical sequence; and made numerous conforming changes.

May 22, 2017: Reformatted to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

May 19, 2017: Established SAB, implemented seismic risk model in lieu of interim use plans, modified leases and acquisitions, included prioritization guidelines, and made editorial revisions throughout the Policy.

January 9, 2017: Changed policy owner contact information and the interim overall authority in the administration of the Policy. Added a definition of lease and removed applicability to licenses.

September 15, 2014: Updated Appendix B to reflect the certificate developed by the California State University and the Department of General Services. Also, transferred policy in the Official UC Template.

August 25, 2011: The Seismic Safety Policy incorporates and consolidates the three policies listed above to provide consistency with newer ratings systems for seismic safety adopted by Department of General Services (DGS) Division of the State Architect (DSA) and the California State University, and to reflect current practices with regard to engineering and process.

April 20, 2005; January 17, 1995; May 17, 1988: Minor editorial changes.

University of California – Policy

October 16, 1996: Seismic Safety Policy for Leased and Purchased Facilities (issued by Assistant Vice President Bocchicchio, and revised by President Dynes in his June 29, 2007 letter to Chancellors)

September 30, 1985: Policy for Independent Seismic Review of Capital Projects, revised on June 29, 2007.

January 16, 1975: Seismic Safety Policy reviewed and accepted by the Regents' Grounds and Buildings Committee, and formally transmitted to campuses by Vice President McCorkle on January 20, 1975.