

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Birmingham, AL • Public School



The most comprehensive guide to free speech on campus — anywhere

Because a true university education requires freedom of expression.

The College Free Speech Rankings are based on student surveys, campus policies, and recent speech-related controversies.

OVERALL RANK

54 ▼
/257

▼ -14 FROM 2024

GRADE

D

— D FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

The University of Alabama at Birmingham ranks 54 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 63 and a D speech climate grade. The University of Alabama System officially adopted a statement on institutional neutrality this year, which applies to UAB and gives it a neutrality bonus.

Last year, UAB placed in the top 25 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” — this year it remains in the top 50, and it again ranks in the top 50 for “Administrative Support” for speech. The sharper movement came on “Self-Censorship”: after ranking 14 last year, it plunged into the bottom 50.

To build on its neutrality commitment, UAB should revise its policies to move from a “yellow light” Spotlight rating to “green light” status and make its new neutrality principles clear in student and faculty training.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow



FIRE’s Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to speechcodes@thefire.org.

Visit our website: <https://rankings.thefire.org/> for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS



41% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



67% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



35% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

5.58:1

There are roughly 5.58 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

D+

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D-

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O