

The University of Chicago

Chicago, IL • Private 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

3
/257

▲ 40 FROM 2024

GRADE

C

▲ C- FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

3

0 FROM 2025

Overview

The University of Chicago ranks 3 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. As historical speech controversy penalties diminished, UChicago's score rose 5 points to 76, a C speech climate grade. UChicago is the model for commitments to free speech and institutional neutrality with its Chicago Statement and the Kalven Report. It also earns a "green light" Spotlight rating.

UChicago scores highly on the survey areas, placing first nationwide on "Administrative Support," and ranking in the top 25 for both "Comfort Expressing Ideas" and "Self-Censorship." It also edged into the top 50 on "Political Tolerance."

These results reflect the strength of UChicago's historical commitment to free expression. However, progress could be made on the "Disruptive Conduct" score, where the university ranks 119. By clarifying when conduct infringes on the rights of others or disrupts protected speech, UChicago can better align its student culture with its long-standing leadership in campus 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.

Spotlight Rating

Green



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

HIGHLIGHTS



40% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



74% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



36% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

9.55:1

There are roughly 9.55 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D+

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D+

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

2