

Brandeis University

Waltham, MA • 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

149 ▲

/257

▲ 82 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

0 FROM 2025

Overview

Brandeis University ranks 149 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 57, climbing 82 places from last year but earning an F speech climate grade. The university earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating and has not adopted institutional neutrality, limiting further gains.

Student perceptions place Brandeis in the top 50 on “Openness,” suggesting a greater willingness to discuss controversial ideas. Yet serious challenges remain: the school ranks in the bottom 50 for “Self-Censorship,” “Political Tolerance,” and “Administrative Support,” suggesting widespread hesitation to speak freely and little confidence in the administration’s commitment to free expression.

Brandeis could improve by revising its speech policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating, formally adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality, and better communicating a willingness to defend expressive rights on campus.

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



61% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



64% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



30% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

12.72:1

There are roughly 12.72 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B-

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C+

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

0