

Northeastern University

Boston, 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

253 ▼
/257

▼ -75 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

— 1 FROM 2025

Overview

Northeastern University ranks 253 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. It earns a score of 47 and an F speech climate grade. The university slid 75 places from last year, a drop that coincided with a deplatforming penalty after administrators revoked a planned lecture by Israeli historian Raz Segal.

Student perceptions place Northeastern in the top 50 for “Openness” to discussing controversial issues. Yet the school ranks in the bottom 25 on “Disruptive Conduct” and in the bottom 50 for both “Political Tolerance” and perceived “Administrative Support.” These low marks point to widespread acceptance of shout-downs and limited confidence in the administration’s commitment to free expression.

Northeastern could improve by revising its written speech policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating, adopting a free speech statement based on the Chicago Statement, and adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Spotlight Rating

Red



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



46% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



82% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



40% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

5.69:1

There are roughly 5.69 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C+

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

1