

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI • 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

105 ▲

/257

▲ 81 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

3

0 FROM 2025

Overview

University of Michigan–Ann Arbor ranks 105 out of 257 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The school’s score rose to 59, up 5 points, lifting it 80 places from last year, though it has an F speech climate grade. The jump coincides with the university’s decision to adopt institutional neutrality, which added an institutional-neutrality bonus, but its speech policies remain stuck at a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

Student perceptions remain troubling. Michigan places in the bottom 25 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and the bottom 50 for “Administrative Support,” suggesting many feel uneasy sharing opinions and doubt the administration’s resolve when controversies arise.

Michigan could make headway by revising restrictive policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and by pairing its new neutrality stance with clear, student education on when expression crosses into unprotected conduct.

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



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



69% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



33% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

4.88:1

There are roughly 4.88 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+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D+

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

NEUTRAL

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

3