

The Ohio State University

Columbus, OH • 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

124 ▲

/257

▲ 50 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

0 FROM 2025

Overview

The Ohio State University ranks 124 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 58, an F speech climate grade. The school still earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

Student perceptions place OSU in the bottom 25 nationwide for “Openness,” signaling persistent reluctance to engage across controversial subjects. No area lands in the top 50, and perceptions of “Administrative Support” remain weak. While the university receives a 3-point boost for adopting the Chicago Statement, that commitment has not translated into stronger student sentiment. OSU is penalized one point for censorship of an art event in 2023.

OSU could make meaningful gains by revising its speech codes to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and by adopting a clearer official commitment to institutional neutrality.

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



43% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



76% 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.

2.56:1

There are roughly 2.56 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

C+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

1