

University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, PA • 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

231 ▲

/257

▲ 17 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

4

0 FROM 2025

Overview

The University of Pennsylvania ranks 231 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. Its overall score ticked up 7 points to 52 after the university adopted institutional neutrality, yet the school still earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating. Additionally, Penn was penalized 6 points for four speech controversies.

Students paint a stark picture of campus discourse. Penn places second to last for “Comfort Expressing Ideas,” in the bottom 50 for “Self-Censorship,” and the bottom 20 for perceived “Administrative Support” for free expression. No survey area places in the top 50, leaving the university without a clear area of strength.

Penn could begin improving by revising its written speech policies to secure a “green light” Spotlight rating and by adopting the Chicago Statement to make an unequivocal commitment to open inquiry.

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



52% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



72% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



27% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

4.16:1

There are roughly 4.16 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

F

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

3