

The University of Texas at Austin

Austin, TX • 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

167 ▲

/257

▲ 77 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

3

1 FROM 2025

Overview

The University of Texas at Austin ranks 167 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. Its score is 56, an F speech climate grade. The University of Texas System adopted institutional neutrality — applying to the Austin campus. Although the adoption added a bonus, administrators drew another penalty after the university system barred drag performances on campus. The university earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

Students voice serious concerns. UT Austin places in the bottom 25 for both “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and perceived “Administrative Support,” and in the bottom 50 for “Openness” to controversial conversations and for “Disruptive Conduct.”

UT Austin could make further headway by revising its remaining speech codes to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating, reaffirming viewpoint neutrality in event approvals, and applying protest guidelines consistently to all student groups.

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.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow



FIRE’s Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

HIGHLIGHTS



50% 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.



42% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

3.69:1

There are roughly 3.69 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

F

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

D+

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

3

DEPLATFORMINGS

0