

# George Mason University

Fairfax, VA • 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

26 ▼  
/257

▼ -10 FROM 2024

## GRADE

C-

— C- FROM 2024

## SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

— 1 FROM 2025

## Overview

George Mason University ranks 26 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The university earned a score of 70 and a C- speech climate grade. A modest penalty followed administrators' decision to refer a graduate student's satirical essay on political violence to law enforcement, an investigation that raised free speech concerns.

Students offer a split verdict. GMU places in the top 50 for "Political Tolerance," signaling comparatively greater readiness to hear from speakers across the political spectrum, yet ranks it in the bottom 25 for "Disruptive Conduct," indicating a high acceptance of shout-downs and similar tactics. The school earns a "green light" Spotlight rating and has adopted the Chicago Statement, but gaps between strong written policies and uneven campus norms remain apparent.

GMU could make further progress by adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality and by educating students on when expression crosses into unprotected conduct.

If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to [speechcodes@thefire.org](mailto:speechcodes@thefire.org).

Visit our website: <https://rankings.thefire.org/> for more information.

## Spotlight Rating

Green



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

## HIGHLIGHTS



39% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



75% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



38% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

2.42:1

There are roughly 2.42 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

▼ DECREASE

### OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASE

### SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▲ INCREASE

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

### POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

### SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

1

### STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

### DEPLATFORMINGS

0