

James Madison University

Harrisonburg, 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

103 ▼

/257

▼ -66 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

▼ D- FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

James Madison University ranks 103 out of 257 institutions in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. JMU earned a score of 59, with an F speech climate grade. The university continues to earn a “yellow light” Spotlight rating, and no new speech-related incidents were recorded during the survey period.

Student perceptions place JMU in the top 50 for “Political Tolerance” and “Administrative Support,” showing that the campus has some promising foundations.

JMU could raise its standing by revising restrictive policies to secure a “green light” Spotlight rating and by formally adopting the Chicago Statement and an 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.

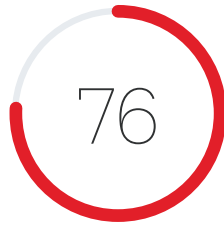
If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to speechcodes@thefire.org.

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

HIGHLIGHTS



41% 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.

1.33:1

There are roughly 1.33 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C-

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D-

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O