

University of California, Merced

Merced, CA • 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.



Overview

University of California, Merced ranks 147 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 57 and an F speech climate grade. The campus's Spotlight rating is still a "yellow light." The school has yet to adopt the Chicago Statement.

Students surveyed poorly on protest norms, placing UC Merced in the bottom 50 for "Disruptive Conduct," indicating support for shout-downs and similar tactics, while UC Merced's rankings for other areas were middling.

UC Merced could improve by revising speech codes to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating, 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



34% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



70% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



40% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

4.21 : 1

There are roughly 4.21 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

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D -

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0