

Eastern Kentucky University

Richmond, KY • 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

9 ▲

/257

▲ -5 FROM 2024

GRADE

C

▲ C- FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Eastern Kentucky University ranks 9 of 257 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings, earning a score of 73, a C speech climate grade. The school formally embraced institutional neutrality, a move that added a three-point policy boost while earning a “green light” Spotlight rating.

Student perceptions place EKU in the top 25 for both “Administrative Support” and “Political Tolerance,” signaling greater trust in the administration’s protection of free speech and a greater willingness to host viewpoints across the political spectrum. At the same time, EKU ranks in the bottom 50 for “Openness” to discussing specific controversial issues, suggesting many students are avoiding difficult conversations.

EKU could improve by adopting a free speech statement based on the Chicago Statement and adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Spotlight Rating

Green



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



43% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



64% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



25% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.34:1

There are roughly 1.34 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

B-

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D+

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0