

Wheaton College

Norton, MA • Private 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

110 ▲

/257

▲ 48 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Wheaton College (Massachusetts) ranks 110 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. Its composite score sits at 58, leaving the school with an F speech climate grade, but the college did climb 48 places from last year's listing. Wheaton continues to hold a "yellow light" Spotlight rating even after adopting the Chicago Statement, which helps but has not yet translated into a higher overall grade.

Student perceptions place Wheaton in the top 25 for "Self-Censorship," suggesting fewer students feel compelled to stay silent compared to other schools. That bright spot is offset by serious concerns: the school lands in the bottom 25 for "Political Tolerance" toward controversial speakers and in the bottom 50 for "Comfort Expressing Ideas."

Wheaton could start closing these gaps by revising its restrictive speech policies to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating and by adopting 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



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



69% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



32% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

10.3:1

There are roughly 10.30 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+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O