

Duke University

Durham, NC • 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

37 ▲
/257

▲ -10 FROM 2024

GRADE

D+

▲ D FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

0 FROM 2025

Overview

Duke University ranks 37 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 67, a D+ speech climate grade. The school earned a “green light” Spotlight rating and logged a speech controversy penalty.

Student perceptions place Duke in the top 25 for “Openness” to discussing controversial issues and in the top 50 for rejecting disruptive protest tactics, indicating pockets of strong dialogue norms compared to other schools.

Duke could strengthen its climate by formally adopting the Chicago Statement and an official commitment to institutional neutrality to reassure the community that all viewpoints are welcome.

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



48% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



73% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



28% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

2.87:1

There are roughly 2.87 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

B-

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

B-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

1

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

0