

East Carolina University

Greenville, NC • 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

14 
/257

 -1 FROM 2024

GRADE

C-

 C FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

East Carolina University ranks 14 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 72, earning a C- speech climate grade. The university keeps its “green light” Spotlight rating and has both the Chicago Statement and institutional neutrality through its University of North Carolina System-wide adoption, giving it a strong policy foundation even though student perceptions slipped slightly from last year.

Despite solid policies, students report serious concerns. ECU is in the bottom 25 nationwide on “Self-Censorship” and in the bottom 50 for “Openness,” indicating many students stay silent on controversial issues and a limited willingness to engage across differences. No areas land in the top 50, suggesting the campus culture lags its policies.

ECU could close this policy-culture gap by weaving robust free-expression training into first-year orientation and faculty workshops.

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



50% 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.



44% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.5:1

There are roughly 1.50 conservative students for every one liberal student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

D+

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O