

University of North Carolina Charlotte

Charlotte, 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

20 ▼
/257

▼ -11 FROM 2024

GRADE

C- ▼

▼ C FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

— 1 FROM 2025

Overview

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte ranks 20 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 71, earning a C- speech climate grade. The campus earns a “green light” Spotlight rating, and the University of North Carolina System has adopted both the Chicago Statement and institutional neutrality, both of which apply to its Charlotte campus.

Student sentiment, however, paints a more troubled picture. The school places in the bottom 50 for both “Self-Censorship” and “Openness,” signaling that many hesitate to voice controversial views and feel limited in the range of topics they can discuss. The university also incurred a small penalty after protests led to a substantial disruption of an event featuring Israeli Defense Forces soldiers.

UNC Charlotte could bolster its free speech climate by continuing to educate students about policies surrounding expressive activities.”

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.



80% 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.

2.02:1

There are roughly 2.02 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D+

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

1