

Brown University

Providence, RI • 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

187 ▲

/257

▲ 42 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

3

1 FROM 2025

Overview

Brown University ranks 187 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 55, an F speech climate grade. Brown's recent decision to adopt institutional neutrality was offset by a trio of speech controversy penalties.

Student perceptions remain bleak. Brown places in the bottom 25 nationwide for "Comfort Expressing Ideas," and no survey area lands in the top 50. The university also keeps a "yellow light" Spotlight rating, indicating vague written policies.

Brown could make meaningful progress by revising its speech codes to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating and adopting the Chicago Statement to affirm its commitment to free expression.

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



47% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



78% 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.

5.88:1

There are roughly 5.88 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D-

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

2