

The University of Iowa

Iowa City, IA • 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

105 ▼

/261

▼ -42 FROM 2025

GRADE

D -

D- FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

Overview

The University of Iowa ranks 105 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 62 and a D- speech climate grade, dropping 42 places from last year.

UI ranks in the top 50 for “Administrative Support,” meaning students trust officials to defend speech. However, it lands in the bottom 50 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and “Self-Censorship,” indicating students feel constrained sharing views on controversial topics and frequently stay silent.

UI has adopted the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, but it earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating. It should revise student policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and adopt an official commitment to institutional neutrality. UI should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

[View the Full Spotlight Rating](#)

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@fire.org.

Visit our website, rankings.fire.org, for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS



43% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



67% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



29% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.35 : 1

There are roughly 1.35 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D -

— NO CHANGE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C +

— NO CHANGE

OPENNESS

C -

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D -

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D -

— NO CHANGE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0