

Boston University

Boston, MA • 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

140 ▼

/261

▼ -29 FROM 2025

GRADE

D -

D- FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

1

1 FROM 2026

Overview

Boston University ranks 140 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 60 and a D- speech climate grade. BU received a penalty after administrators removed pride flags from professors' office windows, raising concerns about discriminatory policy enforcement.

BU's board has affirmed the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, but the university retains a "yellow light" Spotlight rating. BU lands in the bottom 50 for "Administrative Support," meaning students doubt the administration will defend free speech during controversies. The data shows no counterbalancing top 50 strengths.

BU should revise its student policies to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating and adopt an official commitment to institutional neutrality. Given its weak showing on "Administrative Support," BU should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

[View the Full Spotlight Rating](#)

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.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow



FIRE's Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

HIGHLIGHTS



40% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



76% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



34% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

8.48 : 1

There are roughly 8.48 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

1

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0