

Duke University

Durham, NC • 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

50 ▼
/261

▼ -13 FROM 2025

GRADE

D+

D+ FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

1

1 FROM 2026

Overview

Duke University ranks 50 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 67 and a D+ speech climate grade. It was penalized for administrators' brief suspension of a student group this year over a social media post promoting an upcoming event.

Duke ranks in the top 50 for "Political Tolerance," showing greater student willingness to host controversial speakers. It fell 116 places from last year into the bottom 50 for "Comfort Expressing Ideas," meaning students feel uncomfortable sharing views on controversial topics. Its "Disruptive Conduct" rank dropped 127 places, signaling student acceptance of non-peaceful protest.

Duke earns a "green light" Spotlight rating. It should adopt the pro-free speech Chicago Statement and an official commitment to institutional neutrality. The university should clearly and forcefully defend free expression whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

[View the Full Spotlight Rating](#)

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@fire.org.

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

HIGHLIGHTS



55% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



72% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



30% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

4.45 : 1

There are roughly 4.45 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

— NO CHANGE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

0