Oberlin College

Oberlin, OH • Private School

College Free Speech RANKINGS

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
194 ▲
/261
▲ 11 FROM 2025

GRADE
F
F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
0
0 FROM 2026

Overview

Oberlin College ranks 194 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 57 and an F speech climate grade.

Oberlin ranks in the top 50 for "Self-Censorship," indicating less hesitancy to speak. It lands in the bottom 25 for "Disruptive Conduct" and "Political Tolerance," showing that students are more accepting of non-peaceful forms of protest and more opposed to hosting controversial speakers. It ranks in the bottom 50 for "Administrative Support," showing little trust that officials will defend speech.

Oberlin has a "yellow light" Spotlight rating. It should revise student policies to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating, adopt the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, and adopt an official commitment to institutional neutrality. Given its weak showing on "Administrative Support," administrators should clearly and forcefully defend free expression 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



32% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



75% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



35% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

11 : 1

There are roughly 11 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

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D+

— NO CHANGE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0