

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

98 ▲

/261

▲ 89 FROM 2025

GRADE

D

▲ F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

1

1 FROM 2026

Overview

Brown University ranks 98 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 63 and a D speech climate grade. It was penalized after the student government denied recognition to a student group, raising concerns about viewpoint discrimination.

Brown ranks in the top 25 for “Openness,” meaning fewer contentious topics feel off-limits to students. It jumped 106 places into the top 50 for “Self-Censorship,” meaning fewer students hesitate to speak. It rose 102 places from last year’s bottom 25 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas,” meaning students feel more comfortable sharing views on controversial topics.

Brown adopted institutional neutrality but retains a “yellow light” Spotlight rating. It should revise student codes to earn a “green light” rating and adopt the pro-free speech Chicago Statement. Brown should clearly and forcefully 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



33% 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.

8.79 : 1

There are roughly 8.79 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

— NO CHANGE

OPENNESS

B-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D-

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

0