The University of Memphis

Memphis, TN • Public 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
168
/261
▼ -40 FROM 2025

GRADE
F
F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
1
0 FROM 2026

Overview

The University of Memphis ranks 168 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 58 and an F speech climate grade.

Memphis ranks in the top 50 for "Comfort Expressing Ideas," showing that students feel comfortable sharing views. However, it tumbled 122 places from last year into the bottom 50 for "Political Tolerance" and fell 102 places in "Self-Censorship," showing reduced student willingness to host controversial speakers and greater hesitancy to speak.

Memphis retains 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. Memphis should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

Spotlight Rating
Yellow

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

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.

HIGHLIGHTS



37% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



64% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



31% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

3.74 : 1

There are roughly 3.74 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+

— NO CHANGE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D+

— NO CHANGE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D–

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

1