Middle Tennessee State University

Murfreesboro, 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

13 ▲

/261

▲ 2 FROM 2025

GRADE

C

▲ C- FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

Overview

Middle Tennessee State University ranks 13 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 74 and a C speech climate grade. MTSU earns a "green light" Spotlight rating, has affirmed the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, and has adopted an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

MTSU ranks in the top 50 for "Political Tolerance," showing greater student willingness to host controversial speakers. It lands in the bottom 25 for "Openness," meaning many contentious topics feel off-limits to students. Its "Self-Censorship" rank fell 113 places into the bottom 50. Its "Administrative Support" rank also dropped 148 places into the bottom 50, showing students doubt officials will defend speech.

Given its weak showing on "Administrative Support," administrators should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

Spotlight Rating

Green



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



50% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



67% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



25% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

2.19 : 1

There are roughly 2.19 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

— NO CHANGE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B–

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D–

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0