

# James Madison University

Harrisonburg, VA • Public 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

171 ▼  
/261

▼ -68 FROM 2025

## GRADE

F

F FROM 2025

## CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

## Overview

James Madison University ranks 171 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 58 and an F speech climate grade, dropping 68 places from last year.

JMU tumbled 113 places from last year into the bottom 25 for “Self-Censorship” this year, indicating students frequently stay silent. The data shows no top 50 strengths.

JMU maintains 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. JMU should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded. Doing so will demonstrate the university’s commitment to free speech and build community trust that the administration will defend expressive rights.

[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](mailto:speechcodes@fire.org).

Visit our website, [rankings.fire.org](https://rankings.fire.org), for more information.

## HIGHLIGHTS



41% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



69% 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.

1.63 : 1

There are roughly 1.63 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+

▼ DECREASE

### SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

### POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

### SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

### STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

### DEPLATFORMINGS

O