



# FU-BEST Program

## Academic Regulations and Code of Conduct

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### I. Academic Regulations

**1. Admission prerequisites:** Applicants to the FU-BEST program should be at least 18 years old, have reached the equivalent of second-semester sophomore status in college or university, have a very good command of English in order to complete a rigorous academic program in that language, be committed to participation in our intensive German language component, and have a GPA of at least 3.0. Students whose GPA is below 3.0 are welcome to apply, but cannot be guaranteed admission to the program until their overall qualifications are more closely reviewed. The FU-BEST program is intended for students at the second-semester sophomore level or beyond at 4-year universities and colleges who are in the process of completing their B.A./B.S. degree. Students whose native language is not English should note that the program is aimed primarily at students with fluency or at least a high level of proficiency in English. Non-native-speakers should plan to submit English test scores along with their application. For TOEFL, the score should be minimally 100. In the case of IELTS, the overall score must be at least 6,5 and the scores on individual parts must be no lower than 6,0.

**2. Course enrollment:** Enrollment in courses, based on the preference-ranking marked on the application form, is carried out on a "rolling basis," that is, based on chronological receipt of the application. This chronological sequence is also considered when attempting to add a course with limited open spaces after the semester has begun. The program features two types of courses: German language and content (or subject) courses.

**3. Language of instruction:** Unless specifically set up otherwise, FU-BEST content courses are taught in English. Students with sufficient German language proficiency, as determined by FU-BEST teaching staff, may opt to do some readings or other course work such as papers or exams in German; the issue should be raised early during the semester.

**4. Grading system:** FU-BEST uses the German/FU grading system, featuring numerical grades. Please see the table below for comparison with the U.S. equivalents as far as grades are concerned. The program itself does not award Pass/Fail grades; students interested in this type of grade should make appropriate arrangements with their own home institutions. FU-BEST transcripts (produced in English) contain only German/FU grades. Participants have a right to proper feedback regarding any grade received on an assignment or test. In view of the overseas nature of the program, a grade of "incomplete," with course work to be handed in later, will only rarely be feasible and is therefore in principle not available.

## GRADING TABLE

Please note: the grades of 1,1, 1,2, 1,4, 1,5, 1,6, 1,8, 1,9, 2,1, 2,2 etc. are not given.

U.S. Grade	FU Grade	Points on 100-Scale
A	1,0 or 1,3	95-100
A-	1,7	90-94
B+	2,0	85-89
B	2,3	80-84
B-	2,7	75-79
C+	3,0	70-74
C	3,3	65-69
C-	3,7	60-64
D	4,0	50-59
F	> 4,0	< 50

**5. Drop/Add and Withdrawal:** Drop/Add requests may (only) be submitted on publicly posted course lists during the first week of classes, following procedures announced at the start of the semester. Adding a course is only possible if space in the desired course is available. Results of drop/add requests are announced by public posting of revised course lists at the start of the second week of classes. Until the Wednesday evening of the second week of classes, a course may be dropped without any notice on the final transcript, but only by sending the request to drop by e-mail to the Academic Director. Late requests to add a course, based on legitimate considerations, may be made after publication of the course lists at the start of the second week of classes. Such requests will be considered only if submitted by e-mail to the Academic Director no later than the Wednesday evening of the second week of classes. After the second week of classes, a student may still withdraw from a course but will receive a W on the transcript. After the final exam has been taken, withdrawal is no longer possible and an actual course grade will be recorded on the transcript.

**6. Attendance:** Attendance in class and at any officially scheduled course-related activity is mandatory, both in German language courses and in content courses. Punctuality is expected, also out of respect to both teachers and fellow students. Absence due to illness or another legitimate reason must be reported to the FU-BEST office and to the teacher in question by phone or e-mail. Personal travel and visits by relatives or friends are not accepted as reasons for absence. Content courses are governed by the following basic rule: one unexcused absence leads to a formal reminder, two such absences lead to a formal warning, and three or more such absences will likely result in dismissal from the course and an F on the transcript. Frequent, unexcused absence from German language class will likewise result in warnings and the possibility of dismissal (plus F on the transcript). The program reserves the right to request documentation by a participant concerning a particular absence (e.g. doctor's notice, etc.).

**7. Course requirements:** Completion of all established and announced course requirements is needed for a grade, unless unusual circumstances lead to a rare exception to this rule. Each content course features a midterm and final exam and a paper assignment; all three must be completed in order to receive a course grade at all. The same applies to the 2 independent project reports due in each content course. Weighting of the different course requirements/components is the prerogative of each teacher. Study questions may be distributed by teachers prior to an exam, but they are not an obligatory element in FU-BEST instruction. FU-BEST teachers discuss course requirements and grading standards at the start of the semester and note them in their course syllabus; requests for clarification should be made at that time.

**8. Extensions:** Late papers are not accepted, unless a specific extension has been explicitly granted by the teacher. Each day of lateness with a paper results in a reduction of one full grade-point off the grade. Papers that end up at an F as a result of this must nonetheless be turned in in order to receive a course grade at all.

**9. Academic dishonesty:** Instances of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) result in at least an F for the assignment/test in question and possibly an F for the entire course. Gross misconduct will lead to dismissal from the program.

**10. Field-trips, excursions, and independent course projects:** Receipt of FU-BEST credit for content courses requires completion of projects and attendance at field-trips and excursion components, as reflected in the program's "extended classroom" concept, in order to accumulate the mandatory 45 hours for 3 semester credits per course. Attendance at Friday field-trips is recorded; acceptable absence must be reported to the Student Assistant(s) leading the field-trip by e-mail or phone; one unexcused absence results in a reduction by one fraction in the participation/attendance portion of a student's grade in all content courses in which he/she is enrolled; two unexcused absences result in a loss of a full grade point in the participation/attendance portion of a student's grade in all content courses in which he/she is enrolled; three or more unexcused absences result in an F for the participation/attendance portion of a student's grade in all content courses in which he/she is enrolled. After an excused absence, the student in question must see the program's Director in order to arrange a later visit to the site or an equivalent make-up activity on an individual basis.

**11. Classroom etiquette:** The use of laptop computers during class sessions is not permitted, unless explicitly sanctioned by a course's teacher. Eating is not acceptable during class at any time, but non-alcoholic beverages are permitted. Trash is to be disposed of in the available trash cans. Mugs/cups and other personal items must be removed after a class session ends (unless a student has an additional course immediately following). Classroom equipment may not be used by program participants without supervision by teaching staff. Students and teachers are committed to treating one another with courtesy and respect. When problems arise, students and teachers should seek the assistance of the program's Director.

The FU-BEST Program is owned and operated by the Freie Universität Berlin, and managed on its behalf by the ERG Universitätsservice GmbH, and as such subject to (academic) regulations as set forth above, posted on the FU-BEST website, and otherwise promulgated by the FU. Any incompatibility with regulations of a participant's home institution is discussed and cleared in direct communication between the FU-BEST Director and relevant officials of the home institution, whereby FU-BEST and FU regulations will generally take precedence.

## II. Code of Conduct

Students violating the following code will be subject to appropriate review and sanctions, up to and including expulsion from the program. Information regarding students who violate FU-BEST policies will be provided to the students' home institutions and may be provided to their parents.

This student code of conduct applies in conjunction with any other (home) university/college rules of conduct that may be applicable as well as with German criminal law.

The following behavior and/or actions are illegal in Germany and will be prosecuted under German law:

- Theft and robbery
- Violence against others
- Vandalism
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Possession and abuse of illegal drugs
- Possession of illegal substances and explosive materials
- Possession of weapons without proper permission

(Please note that this represents only a partial list.)

In addition, intolerant, disrespectful, disruptive or otherwise irresponsible behavior as well as actions detrimental to the safety and well-being of students, instructors, and staff and/or the reputation of the program and Freie Universität Berlin are prohibited. Such actions include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse of faculty, staff, students, and/or FU-BEST representatives
- Behavior that is noticeably disturbing or distressing to students, staff, or faculty
- Sexual harassment, disorderly, lewd, indecent or obscene gestures or actions
- Harassment of any person
- Stalking of any person
- Disturbance of classes and/or other FU-BEST activities

- Damage to the property of Freie Universität Berlin, FU-BEST, host-families, apartments or facilities used/visited during field-trips and excursions
- Violations of residential guidelines and/or rules, including, but not limited to, unauthorized overnight guests, excessive noise, rowdy conduct, and public drunkenness
- Permanent or temporary diversion of academic materials needed by other students, including unauthorized removal of library materials, audio-visual materials, technical equipment or other program supplies
- Self-endangerment, including involvement in activities or behavior that could result in personal harm
- Excessive alcohol abuse

(Please note that this represents only a partial list.)

If a student appears to have violated this code, he or she will be notified that there has been a charge filed against him or her. He or she will also be notified when and where the review of the charge will take place. Depending on the gravity of the violation, a formal warning may be issued first or an actual violation review session may be immediately scheduled.

The Academic Director, one additional FU-BEST staff member, and one FU-BEST faculty member will conduct the review. At the review hearing the student will be presented with all details of the charge filed against him or her and be asked to present his or her case. The student may present other pertinent information, including written statements from witnesses.

If the student admits to the charge, the circumstances of the violation will be discussed and an appropriate sanction will be determined.

If the student denies any wrongdoing, the review committee will consider all existing information, gather more data if necessary, and make a decision. The student will be notified within two working days of this final decision.

Sanctions for violation of this code of conduct include (but are not limited to) the following: warning, grade penalty, notification of the home university/college, suspension, dismissal from the program, or any combination of the above.

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