Direct Exchange Program – Fact Sheet Academic Year 2026/2027

Contact Information		
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	Incoming	Outgoing
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Address	Freie Universität Berlin Student Mobility Unit Iltisstrasse 4 14195 Berlin, Germany	
Homepage	Direct Exchange • Education • Freie Universität Berlin (fu-berlin.de)	
Office hours	Tuesdays: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. and Thursdays 10:00 – 12:00 a.m., and by appointment	

Important Dates	**Winter Term 2026/2027**	**Summer Term 2027**
Semester dates	October 1, 2026 –March 31, 2027	April 1, 2027 –September 30, 2027
Orientation	First week of October	First week of April
Lecture period	October 12, 2026 – February 19, 2027	April 12, 2027 – July 23, 2027
Exam period	During the last two weeks of the lecture period; may vary from department to department	
Suggested arrival	In time to attend the orientation program	
Academic calendar	Academic Calendar • Education • Freie Universität Berlin	

Application		
Deadline	**April 30, 2026**	**October 30, 2026**
Application process	All applicants must be officially nominated by their home university prior to the deadline mentioned above. This may be done either with an official nomination letter or with an email from the home university. The nomination must contain the student's full name, date of birth, gender, email address, major, and the duration of their stay. Students must complete the online application form and upload all required documents by April 30 or October 30 (as the case may be): https://fuberlin.moveon4.de/form/594980398 3fb963f532593f4/eng	
Required documents	The documents should be in German or English, and can be submitted online. - Photocopy of the student's passport (page with photograph) - Copy of the student's transcript - Copy (or copies) of the student's B. A., M. A., and any other degrees completed (if available)	
Acceptance letter	Students will receive their acceptance letter via email sometime after the beginning of June for the winter term or the beginning of December for the summer term.	

German Language Requirements / Language Courses	
German language requirements	Direct exchange students are exempt from a German language exam (for example, DSH or TestDaF), which is otherwise required for international degree-seeking students studying at a German university. However, we expect language skills equivalent to the B2 level of CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) for those wishing to study the humanities and social sciences and B1 for those wishing to study the natural sciences. A language certificate is not necessary because we expect our partner universities to ensure that students have the required language skills.
Language of instruction	**Almost all subjects at undergraduate level are taught in German**. Please note that subjects taught in English outside the Departments of English and North American Studies are very limited in number. Students must have an English language level of C1 to attend courses at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies. Availability may vary and cannot be guaranteed. An overview of courses taught in English is available in the course catalog. Please use the "advanced search option" to find courses in English.

German Language Requirements / Language Courses	
Preparatory German language courses	A six-week intensive preparatory German language course (20 x 45 min. of instruction per week) will be offered prior to the beginning of the respective term. All language levels, including for absolute beginners, are offered. If students attend the pre-semester language course, they are guaranteed a place in an appropriate level German language course during the semester (though these courses are not mandatory). The course fee is approx. € 900. Places are limited, so students should apply as soon as possible: Pre-semester courses • German as a foreign language • Language Center
Language courses during the semester	German language courses, offered during the semester, are free of charge. If students wish to participate in a German language course, they have to take a placement test first, which will be offered during the orientation period shortly before the semester starts. Without this test, exchange students are not eligible to take language classes. Further information is available here: Registration for courses held during the semester • German as a foreign language • Language Center
Courses in other languages	The Language Center (ZE Sprachenzentrum) offers a limited number of language courses. Please note that students need to take a language placement test first and that the number of places is limited. Further details are available here: Course Offer and Registration • Language Center
Visa Requirements	
Entry visa	Students who are citizens of EU or EEA countries, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland or the USA do *not* need a visa in order to enter Germany. Upon arrival in Berlin, citizens of these countries (excluding EU countries) must apply for a residence permit (see "Arrival in Berlin" below). Students who are *NOT* citizens of the countries listed above must apply for a student visa (*Visum zu Studienzwecken*) at their local German Embassy or a German General Consulate before they come to Germany. We urge these students to apply for a study visa as soon as possible since it will take at least eight weeks, sometimes even a few months, to process the visa application. The necessary documents concerning admission to our university (and, if applicable, the scholarship offer) will be sent via email to the student as soon as possible. More information is available at: Study Visa • Education • Freie Universität Berlin
Health Insurance	
Waiver	Exchange students must have comprehensive health insurance valid in Germany in order to enroll as full-time students at Freie Universität Berlin AND to obtain a residence permit. Students who EITHER have the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) OR who can provide proof of an adequate comprehensive health insurance valid in Germany (full coverage for illness and emergency medical services) may request an insurance waiver. Please note that a waiver can only be obtained from a German state-regulated health insurance company, not from the university. Since many insurance policies purchased outside Germany require substantial co-payments, have caps, or exclude many illnesses, it has become increasingly difficult for exchange students to obtain a waiver. We therefore urge all students under the age of 30 to purchase German student health insurance for about € 150 per month. German student health insurance policies are very comprehensive and are automatically accepted by the office granting residence permits. More information is available here: Health Insurance
Required Fees	
Social fees / public transportation	Exchange students are exempt from university fees, but they still need to pay the semester ticket and social fees of approx. € 310 per semester. These fees are not paid to the university, but instead go to the student union and cover the cost of a public transportation ticket for the Berlin metropolitan area for the entire semester. Students will be asked to pay the fees before arrival in Berlin as part of the enrollment process.
Pre-arrival Requirements	
Distributed Campus	Distributed Campus is an online platform for exchange students who have already received their acceptance letter. It comprises all the information mentioned above in addition to useful links, important deadlines, and insights about life in Berlin in one platform. Students will receive registration details for the platform with their acceptance letter. Registration for and use of the platform is required for participation in the exchange program.
Enrollment	Upon receipt of all necessary documents (health insurance, payment, enrollment form), students will be enrolled. After enrollment, students can immediately set up their FU-Account. Students need this account in order to register for courses and access the campus-wide computer network (which includes Wi-Fi, online library services, and the ability to log in to computers on campus). As participants in our exchange program, students will be admitted and enrolled as full-time students for the duration of the period for which they were nominated by their home university.
Arrival in Berlin	
Residence permit	After arrival, students must apply for a residence permit *(Aufenthaltserlaubnis)* within three months (except students from EU or EEA countries). Students will be provided with detailed information and assistance regarding this process upon arrival in Berlin by our Pass Service.

Accommodations	
Private accommodations	Students can organize their own housing (for example in a shared apartment with other students, called a *Wohngemeinschaft* or "WG" for short), or they can use the university's Accommodation Service offered through the ERG Universitätsservice GmbH.
University housing service ERG	The Accommodation Service offers a variety of housing options, including dorms, shared apartments, and fully furnished single apartments. Availability runs from the beginning of September/October or March/April onwards. Costs range from about € 500 to € 1200 per month.
Registration deadline	Since there has been a dramatic increase in demand for student housing, students wishing to use the Accommodation Service must apply *online* no later than December 10 or June 10, using the link above. Registration requests are processed on a first come, first served basis.
Orientation	
	Orientation takes place during the 5–10 days leading up to the start of the lecture period. Students are required to participate in the orientation program, which provides them with essential information about studying at Freie Universität Berlin. It covers topics such as course selection, how to use the FU-Net, libraries, and computer labs, and campus tours. The current orientation program is available online at: https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/studium/veranstaltungen/orientierungsveranstaltungen/index.html
Selecting Courses and Attending Classes	
Course Requirements	Freie Universität Berlin does not have any course or credit requirements for exchange students. The regular workload is 30 ECTS, we recommend between 10 and 30 ECTS.
Undergraduate degree programs	Freie Universität Berlin offers a broad variety of undergraduate degree programs. These lend themselves to different combinations, allowing students to mix subject areas: Interactive combination table. With few exceptions, all undergraduate degree programs are open to exchange students. Enrollment in the following courses is subject to availability of lab classes and to prior approval by the institute/department: *biochemistry, bioinformatics, and biology*. Restrictions apply in *pharmacy, law, business administration*, and *economics*. The Law Department prefers direct exchange students from institutions who also accept law students. There are only very few places available for students from other exchange programs. The School of Business and Economics requires excellent German language skills (B2 level or above) for classes taught in German. There is a very limited number of classes in English, and they are not always offered regularly. Please note that Human Medicine and Veterinary Medicine are NOT open to exchange students.
Master's degree programs	Freie Universität Berlin offers a range number of master's degree programs. The following programs are open for postgraduate exchange students without restriction: modern German literature, philosophy, and political science. All other master's degree programs are restricted and need prior approval from the institute/department. Please contact us if you plan to nominate students for a particular master's program. Please note that in general BA students cannot be enrolled in master's programs and cannot register for individual master's level courses. Exceptions can, however, be made on a case-by-case basis upon request. Fee-based continuing education master's programs are NOT open to exchange students.
PhD program	If students fulfill the necessary prerequisites, exchange students may enroll as visiting PhD students.
Special classes for exchange students	The Institute of German Languages and Literature offers a study program exclusively for exchange students. The seminars focus on the culture, society, and history of Berlin and Germany and are an additional offer extended to exchange students who wish to learn more about these topics. Detailed information can be found here: Courses for international exchange students • Education • Freie Universität Berlin
Modules	Bachelor's and master's programs are structured around modules, which usually consist of two content-related courses (e.g., a lecture and a seminar). While modules are offered on a regular basis (at least every other semester), the content of the individual lecture or seminar might vary from one semester to the next.
Study & Exam regulations	Detailed module descriptions specifying contents, structure, contact hours, and credits (Leistungspunkte, LP) can be found in the study and examination regulations (Studien- und Prüfungsordnung): https://www.fu- berlin.de/en/studium/studieren/studienorganisation/pruefung/index.html (German only).
Course catalogue	The courses offered during the current semester are listed in the course catalogue (*Vorlesungsverzeichnis*, *VV*), which is available about one month prior to the beginning of the semester. It is organized according to departments, degree programs, and modules.
Course Registration	Students have to register for courses on our online portal Campus Management before the semester starts. Information on how to access the portal and other details will be provided during orientation. Please note that in order to attend classes within our master's degree programs, students need prior approval from the respective lecturers or program directors
Subjects taught in English	Subjects taught in English will mostly be offered by the Institute for English Language and Literature and the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies. An overview of subjects offered in English is available in the course catalogue. Please use the "advanced search option" to find courses in English. Course-Catalogue-Guide.pdf (fu-berlin.de)

Courses at other universities *Course approval at partner universities*	Exchange students may also attend courses at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, and the University of Potsdam. In order to earn credits for these courses, students need approval from the respective lecturer in advance and must fulfill the individual university's requirements. When applying for an exchange to Freie Universität Berlin, some of our partner universities require students to get approval for their subject selection prior to submitting their application (e.g., a Learning Agreement). Since applications have to be submitted at least six months before the beginning of the exchange semester, it is not possible for students to access the course catalogue of the respective semester in time. Therefore, students should seek preliminary approval based on the course catalogue of prior semesters.
Grading system	
	All departments, except for the Law Department, use the following grading scale: 1,0 – 1,5 very good 1,6 – 2,5 good 2,6 – 3,5 satisfactory 3,5 – 4,0 sufficient 5,0 insufficient/fail
Terminating Enrollment / Transcript of Records	
Terminating enrollment *Transcript of Records*	At the end of their stay at Freie Universität Berlin, exchange students need to officially terminate their enrollment (*Exmatrikulation*). This step is very important, especially if students wish to return to a German university at a later point. Transcripts from Freie Universität Berlin are not issued automatically. Students who wish to obtain a Transcript of Records have to fill out a form and contact our transcript officer at: incoming@fu-berlin.de before leaving Berlin. Students will be provided with detailed information and assistance via e-mail before departure. Important: Students should apply for a Transcript of Records within three months after their stay at the latest. Freie Universität Berlin cannot issue transcripts after that time. The transcript will be issued once the student's grades are published in the student records system. A digital copy of the transcript will be sent to the students' home university with the student in cc.