

Freie Universität Berlin

International Network University

The Institutional Strategy of Freie Universität Berlin for the Excellence Initiative of the German Federal and State Governments at a Glance



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Freie Universität Berlin Today

A Leading University

Freie Universität Berlin is a leading internationally oriented university which always ranks among the Top 10 universities in German national comparison and always achieves first position in terms of the number of placements among the top ten universities in a range of rankings. Freie Universität offers more than 100 courses of study in all discipline groups of a classical full university.

Commitment to Freedom

Freie Universität was founded in 1948 in response to the persecution and murder of students critical of the Soviet system in what was then Universität Unter den Linden (from 1949 Humboldt-Universität) in the Soviet sector of divided Berlin. The idea of founding a free university received enormous international support at the time. Until the end of German par-



The central lecture building of Freie Universität: The Henry Ford Building was constructed in the 1950s thanks to donations from the United States. In 2007 it was re-opened after a period of restoration carried out in accordance with guidelines for historic monuments. The restoration was to a large degree made possible with donations.



The Philological Library is surrounded by the building complex housing the humanities and social sciences. The library was designed by the British architect Lord Norman Foster. It was opened in 2005.

tion in 1990, Freie Universität quickly developed into one of the largest universities in Germany. Together with Technische Universität Berlin, it made possible the reconstruction of Humboldt-Universität from 1990 onwards by waiving about one third of its budget allocation and providing structural support. Today, Freie Universität engages in intensive cooperation with Humboldt-Universität, notably by joint operation of the medical school, Charité, and in more than 100 other fields. For this reason, the institutional strategy of Freie Universität Berlin includes components that were proposed together with Humboldt-Universität: a Dual Career Center jointly with other research facilities in Berlin, together with Technische Universität the Alliance of Berlin Graduate Schools, and a joint representation in Brussels.

A Cooperative University

Freie Universität cooperates closely with the other Berlin universities and with extramural institutions in the region. Due to its founding history as an international university, it has a unique international network of more than 100 partners worldwide and representations in New York, Moscow, Beijing, and New Delhi as well as an alumni organization in the United States. Key cooperation partners of Freie Universität in Germany include Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and many leading extramural research institutions, from the Max Planck Institutes to the Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, and the Leibniz Association to the Robert Koch Institute. No fewer than 26 researchers from these institutions are full professors at Freie Universität Berlin. The German Foreign Office and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as well as the Council of Graduate Schools, Washington DC, are involved as partners in the university's internationalization process, based on personal memberships in the university's International Council.

A Reform University

After German unification in 1990, but especially since the year 2000, Freie Universität has been able to successfully innovate its profile and increase its research performance dramatically, e.g. as regards the acquisition of third-party research funding and the number of graduates as well as doctorates.

These achievements are the result of a thorough reform of the university, as reflected in its new statute, a new public management, the Bologna Process, profile-enhancing structure planning, a quality management system, improvement of the income position as well as technical and facility modernization.

The disciplines showing the best performance include: political research, education research, psychology, economics, most disciplines in the humanities, physics, chemistry/biochemistry, pharmacology, geosciences, mathematics, human medicine, and veterinary medicine.

Freie Universität is a campus university comprising almost 300 buildings on the historical central campus in Dahlem that was established 100 years ago for institutes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and other academic institutions. In addition, it includes three sub-campuses, the Benjamin Franklin Campus in Steglitz (university hospital), the Geocampus in Lankwitz, and the Veterinary Medicine Campus in Düppel.

Mission

The university's guiding mission derives from two sources. As one of the two successor universities of Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Freie Universität secured Humboldt's ideals for the city of Berlin in 1948, expressed in particular in the integration of teaching and research and especially in the principle of academic freedom. The second source is its founding act itself: justice, truth, and freedom were the guiding principles which the university was and is to serve. They are realized not least in the



Otto Hahn, Lise Meitner, and Fritz Straßmann carried out research in this building when it was part of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics. Since the 1950s, the building has been part of Freie Universität.



The Veterinary Campus Düppel is on the grounds of a former feudal estate. Various new institute and clinic buildings are spread out among the buildings under protection as historic monuments. This photo shows the campus dining hall.

university's international orientation and the responsibility it entails for the world, in its openness for cooperation in and outside the Berlin region, and in its modern organizational structures.

Freie Universität Berlin in the Future



The building complex for the humanities and social sciences has been completely reconstructed and now reflects a new image. Its reconstruction was part of a restoration of the entire central campus.

Dual Structure

Freie Universität has developed a dual structure since 2003. Since research of the highest international standard can only be implemented by interdisciplinary cooperation, the departmental structure governing academic affairs, in particular teaching, is now supplemented by a cluster structure for the research focus areas, some of which were granted funding in the Excellence Initiative:

- ▶ *Topoi – The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations* (joint application of Freie Universität and Humboldt-Universität; awarded funding in the second round of the Excellence Initiative),
- ▶ *Languages of Emotion* (awarded funding in the second round of the Excellence Initiative),
- ▶ *Neurocure: Towards a Better Outcome of Neurological Disorder* (joint application of Freie Universität and Humboldt-Universität as the supporting organizations of the university hospital Charité; awarded funding in the second round of the Excellence Initiative),
- ▶ Applied Mathematics (MATHEON, joint DFG Research Center of Freie Universität, Humboldt-Universität, and Technische Universität),
- ▶ Education Research,
- ▶ Culture and Media,
- ▶ Diversity,

- ▶ Regenerative Therapies (BMBF-Center of Charité, Freie Universität and Humboldt-Universität as the supporting organizations of Charité).

The development, structure, and evaluation of cooperation in specific research fields is dealt with in three focus areas organized as centers:

- ▶ *Area Studies*,
- ▶ *Humanities*,
- ▶ *Biosciences*.

These and possibly further focus areas will form core components of the Center for Cluster Development.

Junior Researchers

The training of junior researchers in structured Ph.D. programs will take place under the umbrella of the Dahlem Research School, which was founded in 2005 as a one-stop agency for Ph.D. candidates and is driving the development of Ph.D. programs in cooperation with the clusters of Freie Universität. The following institutions currently belong to or cooperate with the Dahlem Research School:

- ▶ *Graduate School of North American Studies* (awarded funding in the first round of the Excellence Initiative),
- ▶ *Berlin Mathematical School* (jointly with Technische Universität and Humboldt-Universität, awarded funding in the first round of the Excellence Initiative),
- ▶ *Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies* (awarded funding in the second round of the Excellence Initiative),
- ▶ *Berlin Graduate School of Muslim Cultures and Societies* (awarded funding in the second round of the Excellence Initiative),



Science Campus Dahlem: Berlin Mathematical School, a project of the three large Berlin universities, was approved in the first funding round of the Excellence Initiative.



The Graduate School of North American Studies, approved in the first funding round of the Excellence Initiative, is part of the John F. Kennedy Institute.

- ▶ *Berlin-Brandenburg School for Regenerative Therapies* (awarded funding in the second round of the Excellence Initiative),
- ▶ *Molecular Sciences* (formerly funded by the DAAD, now funded by Freie Universität),
- ▶ *International Max Planck Research School Complex Surfaces in Material Science*,
- ▶ *International Max Planck Research School Life Course: Evolutionary and Ontogenetic Dynamics*,
- ▶ *International Max Planck Research School for Computational Biology and Scientific Computing*.

International

As an International Network University, Freie Universität also operates a number of international branch offices. This network is being expanded to enhance the international profile of the university, offer scientific expertise in disadvantaged regions, and attract people to enter into relations with Freie Universität Berlin.

The Institutional Strategy of Freie Universität Berlin in the Excellence Initiative

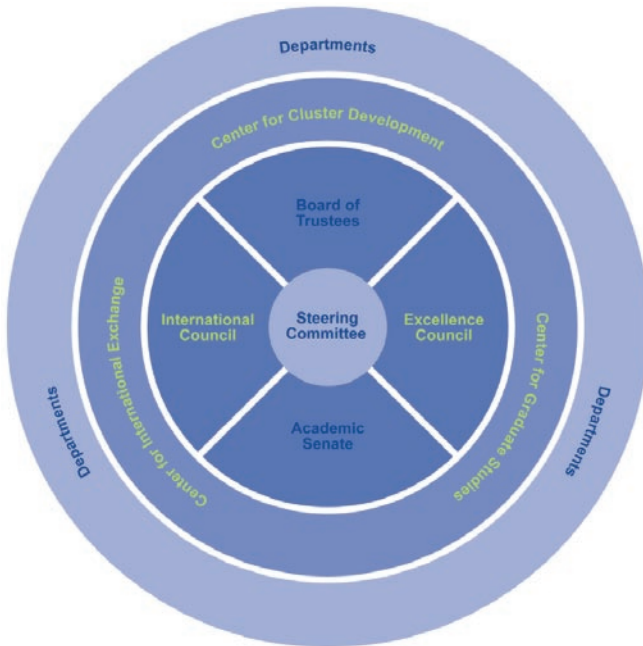
Strategic Centers

The institutional strategy of Freie Universität relies on the university's well-developed quality base, which has already undergone fundamental reform, to provide the essential impulse for the university to join the group of internationally leading universities more quickly and in a more sustainable manner than it could if it had only the given state funding. Based on the strategy of extending its network structure, Freie Universität wants to achieve the leap into the top tier of international universities with the aid of three Strategic Centers. Freie Universität is expanding, professionalizing, and securing its networks as:

- ▶ Research networks with the support of the Center for Cluster Development as the linchpin of its institutional strategy,
- ▶ Training networks, provided by the Center for Graduate Studies at Dahlem Research School,
- ▶ International networks with support from the Center for International Exchange.

The three Strategic Centers ensure fruitful and professional interaction between the departments and research focus areas:

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Blue = Status quo
Green = new elements of the
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The building located at 3 Boltzmann Street is the first building that Freie Universität began to use when newly founded. It formerly belonged to the Kaiser Wilhelm Society.

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Center for Cluster Development (CCD)

The CCD is a service facility for researchers at the university. It

- ▶ determines potentials for new research alliances;
- ▶ provides seed money to set up research alliances, e.g., interdisciplinary centers;
- ▶ supports researchers in gaining external funding, in the formulation of applications for research alliances, and in finding research partners;
- ▶ analyzes the competitive environment;
- ▶ provides funds for the co-financing of approved projects;
- ▶ provides professional project controlling;
- ▶ supports university bodies in planning research clusters;
- ▶ organizes the evaluation and reporting of the research alliances.

Dahlem Research School (DRS)

The DRS is the umbrella organization for the structured Ph.D. programs of Freie Universität Berlin and acts as a one-stop agency. It

- ▶ establishes standards for Ph.D. programs;
- ▶ develops interdisciplinary networks for Ph.D. programs;
- ▶ assists the integration of external partners in Ph.D. programs;
- ▶ ensures international cooperation in the Ph.D. programs;
- ▶ provides training in key qualifications, languages, and didactics;
- ▶ ensures a fair and transparent selection of scholarship holders;
- ▶ awards scholarship funds for the completion of doctorates;
- ▶ provides Ph.D. candidates with an optimal support service;
- ▶ guarantees optimal mentoring of Ph.D. candidates on the basis of mentoring contracts with professors;
- ▶ cooperates with the other Ph.D. programs in the region;
- ▶ acts as an agency for career placement of graduates.

Center for International Exchange (CIE)

The CIE is the core of the international network of Freie Universität Berlin. It primarily organizes its activities through its international representations in Latin and North America, East Asia, India, the Middle East, and Eastern and Western Europe.

The Center for Area Studies was founded in 2006. It links the Area Studies at Freie Universität with those in the region under study and bears special responsibility for providing academic support to the CIE. The tasks of the CIE are to:

- ▶ award international scholarships for guest students and professors;
- ▶ allocate and support Ph.D. candidates of DRS (as well as undergraduate students) at the local universities;
- ▶ attract outstanding Ph.D. students from abroad to study at DRS;
- ▶ develop and implement summer schools as well as non-consecutive Master and Ph.D. programs in cooperation with international universities (joint degrees);
- ▶ build and manage alumni networks in the respective host countries;
- ▶ attract international academics for visiting posts at Freie Universität and manage the administration of such visits;
- ▶ organize scientific events and exhibitions to present the research activities of Freie Universität and facilitate scientific exchange;
- ▶ contact and solicit German researchers abroad with the aim of “brain regaining”;
- ▶ provide visiting positions for researchers of Freie Universität and support them on location;
- ▶ assess and allocate international research requests from companies and public contractors for researchers at Freie Universität;
- ▶ keep abreast local with scientific developments and policies.



Freie Universität's leafy central campus is spacious and has many trees and shrubs. The building complex for the humanities and social sciences features many small inner courtyard and roof gardens.

Gender

The policies of Freie Universität as regards gender equality and family support are exemplary by international standards. The university was awarded the Total-E-Quality-Award twice in succession and has received the certification as a “family-friendly university.” This is the result of a range of measures which will also be applied in the institutional strategy of Freie Universität:

- ▶ gender equality as a criterion of performance-based funding allocation;
- ▶ promotion of gender equality measures in discretionary funding allocation under target agreements;
- ▶ support of girls in their decision to study at university;
- ▶ integration of gender research issues into the new Bachelor/Master structure;
- ▶ special qualification programs for women as part of junior researcher promotion;
- ▶ establishment and implementation of the program “ProFiL – Professionalization of Women in Research and Teaching: Mentoring – Training – Networking” (jointly with Technische Universität and Humboldt-Universität);
- ▶ promotion of female appointments;
- ▶ compatibility of family life and academic careers;
- ▶ women and gender research in the university;
- ▶ visibility and public impact of consistent gender mainstreaming policies (e.g., by awarding the Margherita-von-Brentano-Preis, etc.);
- ▶ cooperation of Berlin universities and extramural scientific facilities in the dual career field.

Management of the Institutional Strategy

Management of the institutional strategy will be based on the concerns and expertise of the university's researchers. They are organized into the various focus areas and clusters based on the guidelines developed by themselves. This strict bottom-up orientation is the prerequisite for successful research activity.

The organization of the process in terms of project controlling is the responsibility of a staff group of the President, which is also in charge of organizing the evaluation in a regular cycle corresponding to the highest international standards. Quality assurance is enhanced by cooperation with Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich in an agreed benchmarking process. Scientific quality assurance of the process is based on the ongoing consulting activity of the 25-member Excellence Council with regard to the university's research activities and of the International Council as regards international competitiveness. This does not affect the legal responsibilities of the university's bodies (Board of Trustees, Academic Senate, Steering Committee).



This building has been home to the Office of the President of Freie Universität since 1994. It was built in the 1920s according to plans by Heinrich Straumer, the architect who designed the Berlin Radio Tower (*Berliner Funkturm*). After World War II the building was headquarters for the Allied Kommandatura.

A Future in Freedom and Excellence

Freedom and excellence are two sides of the same coin. This is why Freie Universität is and shall continue to be a site of excellence. And due to its excellence, the university is a guarantor of academic freedom. Freie Universität is fortunate enough to have already been able to implement decisive reform processes itself and can now make the most of the opportunities presented by the Excellence Initiative to create the conditions necessary for excellence and freedom. It can directly build on the development that has already been successful as its institutional strategy. However, support of the institutional strategy is indispensable to its swift implementation and success, so that the university can continue to rise in stature nationally and, above all, internationally. This includes the launch of the three Strategic Centers as a structure as well as the funding of these centers with money that will flow directly into scientific projects and research alliances, into the Ph.D. programs in the form of scholarships, and into the university's international activities. This will permit:

- ▶ an increase in quality,
- ▶ personal responsibility,
- ▶ professionalization of research management,
- ▶ increased income from external sources,
- ▶ further growth of networks,
- ▶ researcher-based decision-making,
- ▶ more equality in education through scholarship awards,
- ▶ more employment opportunities for junior researchers,
- ▶ more information about international developments and more participation in them.

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