

# At a Glance

A Short Portrait of Freie Universität Berlin





*The Philological Library is surrounded by the building complex housing the humanities and social sciences. Designed by Lord Norman Foster, the library building has been the recipient of many awards since its opening in 2005.*

## WINNER IN THE GERMAN EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

Freie Universität Berlin is a leading research institution. Since 2007, it is one of Germany's Universities of Excellence. In the global competition among universities Freie Universität takes its place as an international network university. Its future development strategy is focused around three strategic centers: for research strategy, for international cooperation, and for graduate studies. Development and assessment of research projects takes place within various focus areas such as area studies and nanosciences. The university's offices abroad in Beijing, Brussels, Cairo, New Delhi, New York, Moscow, and São Paulo provide a platform for international cooperation. The university's performance in the Excellence Initiative has provided funding for several new doctoral programs and transdisciplinary Clusters of Excellence.

## FREEDOM CARRIES AN OBLIGATION

Freie Universität Berlin was founded by students and scholars on December 4, 1948, with the support of the American Allies and Berlin politicians as a response to the persecution of students critical of the system at Universität Unter den Linden in the Soviet sector of the divided city of Berlin. These students and scholars wanted to study and carry out research at Freie Universität, free of political influence. Thanks to generous donations from the United States, Freie Universität was able to construct several new central building complexes including the Benjamin Franklin university hospital complex and the Henry Ford Building, the central lecture building. Based on its founding tradition, Freie Universität's seal bears the Latin terms for *truth*, *justice*, and *liberty*. The university presents its Freedom Award to personalities who have made a special contribution toward the cause of freedom, among them the South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the former President of the Republic of Korea Kim Dae-jung, and the musician Daniel Barenboim.



*In 1963, U.S. President John F. Kennedy gave a programmatic speech at Freie Universität.*

*The Henry Ford Building was constructed between 1952 and 1954 as the main lecture building.*



## INTERNATIONAL FROM THE VERY BEGINNING



*People from 130 countries come together at Freie Universität.*

The foundation of Freie Universität Berlin was facilitated through international support, and international impulses have shaped its research and teaching ever since. In order to survive, both on an academic and an intellectual level, Freie Universität established connections from its geographically isolated position in West Berlin to organizations and personalities in Western Germany, Europe, and the world beyond. What began as a necessity rapidly evolved into a successful strategy: currently, Freie Universität has approximately 180 partnerships with scholarly institutions worldwide. The university is a drawing card for researchers from abroad. Freie Universität is the location in Germany most often selected for visiting scholars through the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. A total of 30,600 students are enrolled in more than 180 subject areas. 16 percent of the students come from abroad, as do 26 percent of the doctoral students.

## YOUNG UNIVERSITY – RICH TRADITION

Freie Universität is located in the leafy residential district of Dahlem in southwestern Berlin. Various types of research institutions are located here, including four Max Planck Institutes, the Zuse Institute Berlin, and the German Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing. Around the beginning of the 20th century, following Prussia's plans to establish a "German Oxford," Dahlem developed into a center for research of the highest caliber. The first new buildings housed government science

agencies and new research institutes of the University of Berlin. The Kaiser Wilhelm Society – forerunner of the present-day Max Planck Society – was founded in 1911 and established several institutes in Dahlem. A dynamic group of researchers carried out pioneering research resulting in numerous Nobel Prizes, including Albert Einstein, Max Planck, and Werner Heisenberg. Since its foundation, Freie Universität has been using buildings formerly belonging to the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and, in addition, has added numerous architecturally innovative buildings. Freie Universität's central campus consists of building ensembles within walking distance of each other. The planners oriented themselves along the type of campus found in the United States – a novelty in post-war Germany.



*Otto Hahn, Lise Meitner, and Fritz Straßmann achieved world fame for their research performed in this building. Today, biochemists of Freie Universität do their research here in the Hahn-Meitner Building.*



## INNOVATION AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

The years 1968, 1990, and 2007 are milestones in the history of Freie Universität. During the 1960s, the university was the scene of student protests that provided the impulse for more openness, equality, and democracy. After German unification in 1990, Freie Universität Berlin revamped itself. The university's research performance increased markedly, due partly to emphasis placed on specific cross-disciplinary research areas. The year 2007 was another important year for Freie Universität: it was the university with the highest number of approved funding applications in the German Excellence Initiative, becoming one of the universities of excellence in Germany. In 2012, Freie Universität succeeded in defending this title in the second round of the Excellence competition. In the 2015 ranking of the *Times Higher Education* magazine, Freie Universität was listed among the five best German universities. In the same ranking the humanities at Freie Universität were found to be among the best 20 globally.

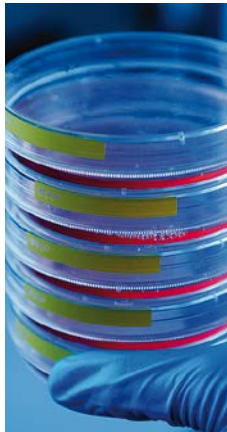
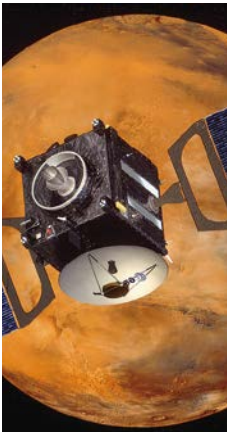
*In the spring of 2015, a new building complex was opened. It houses numerous smaller academic departments.*



## VARIETY IN SUBJECT AREAS AND RESEARCH

The broadest spectrum of research in the humanities in Germany at Freie Universität Berlin comes together under the auspices of the Dahlem Humanities Center. One unique feature is the large number of specialized subjects such as Arab studies and Jewish studies. The Center for Area Studies clusters the regional studies research on North and Latin America, Eastern Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, and individual European countries. Governance research is one highlight of the Otto Suhr Institute, one of the most renowned political science institutes in Europe. In the natural sciences, major focus is placed on physics, mathematics, and computer science, as well as the life sciences and Earth sciences. The broad spectrum also includes the Department of Veterinary Medicine, one of five veterinary schools in Germany. Charité – University Medicine Berlin, the medical school jointly operated by Freie Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, has the largest university hospital in Europe.

*Freie Universität Berlin is one of the best research universities in Germany.*



## STUDYING IN A STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT

Freie Universität Berlin is a full university with 15 departments and central institutes offering over 180 degree programs across a wide range of subjects. Exchange programs for students have played an important role from the very beginning: the first exchange students went to Stanford University, U.S.A., in 1949. Currently, Freie Universität participates in the programs Erasmus+ and Promos by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst and also maintains agreements with over 90 universities for direct exchange. Junior researchers are supported in structured Ph.D. programs under the auspices of Dahlem Research School. Many well-known personalities from politics and society studied at Freie Universität, including the



*The Philological Library offers excellent study facilities for students and faculty. The library consists of 14 sub-libraries with 750,000 printed volumes.*

former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Roman Herzog; the former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher; the former president of the federal constitutional courts and long-standing president of the Goethe Institute, Jutta Limbach; the former governing mayors of Berlin Eberhard Diepgen, Walter Momper, and Klaus Wowereit; and the Nobel Prize laureate in Literature, Herta Müller.



## CAREER AND ENTERPRISE

The general career preparation courses in the bachelor's degree programs and the Career Service of Freie Universität help to prepare students for the workplace. In addition, Freie Universität encourages the formation of companies by its students, graduates, and faculty. Freie Universität along with Charité – University Medicine Berlin is one of twelve universities in Germany to be recognized by the German Federal Ministry of Economics for its strategy for supporting startups. A center for company founders has four different locations where it can offer young entrepreneurs office space with 120 work areas as well as advice and support during their start-up phase. Numerous successful companies have emerged from the university environment, e.g., in information technology, the service sector, or science. Freie Universität has been the recipient of various employer awards, including awards for the introduction of environmental protection measures and for the exemplary management of human resources facilitating equal opportunities. The Dual Career and Family Service offers support to employees and students with balancing the responsibilities of family and professional life.

*Various research projects have resulted in new business ideas.*



## COSMOPOLITAN AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



*During the Long Night of the Sciences, Freie Universität Berlin has a special program for children.*

Researchers at Freie Universität Berlin regularly open their institutes, laboratories, and libraries to the public, for example, during the Long Night of the Sciences or open house days. The Center for Cooperation with Schools organizes various activities open to schoolchildren. These include a children's university and a summer school with many activities in the special labs for schoolchildren, NatLab and PhysLab. Many lectures on a variety of topics, as well as courses in the Guest Card Program are open to the public. The university confers honorary doctorates on outstanding personalities from Germany and abroad: these include the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan; the Nobel Prize winners in Literature, Orhan Pamuk and Imre Kertész as well as the author Salman Rushdie.



*Freie Universität's Botanic Garden is the third largest of its type in the world. It attracts 300,000 scientists and visitors annually*

## FACTS AND FIGURES

**Students:** approx. 30,600 | **Professors:** 341, incl. 47 joint appointments with non-university research institutes; 140 fixed-term professors | **Departments and Central Institutes:** 11 Academic Departments, 1 joint Medical School with Humboldt-Universität, 3 Central Institutes | **Degree Programs:** 181 | **Doctoral Programs:** 50 | **Collaborative Research Centers:** 11 as host university and 8 as participating institution; 6 as part of Charité – University Medicine Berlin and 4 as participating institution | **Government Subsidies:** 312 million euros, 56 million euros of this amount is for pension and health plans (2015) | **Expended External Funds:** 126 million euros (2015)

*Figures exclude Medicine, unless stated otherwise*

## DEPARTMENTS

- ▶ Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy
- ▶ Business and Economics
- ▶ Charité – University Medicine Berlin, the medical school jointly operated by Freie Universität and Humboldt-Universität
- ▶ Earth Sciences
- ▶ Education and Psychology
- ▶ History and Cultural Sciences
- ▶ Law
- ▶ Mathematics and Computer Science
- ▶ Philosophy and Humanities
- ▶ Physics
- ▶ Political and Social Sciences
- ▶ Veterinary Medicine

## CENTRAL INSTITUTES

- ▶ Institute for Eastern European Studies
- ▶ Institute for Latin American Studies
- ▶ John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies

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