FU-BEST Program
Academic Regulations

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **Grading system:** FU-BEST uses the North American A-F grading scale, including + and -, but without the possibility of A+. 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 A-F 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.

4. **Drop/Add and Withdrawal:** Drop/Add decisions must be made for each course after the first session of that course at the latest. Adding a course is only possible if space in the desired course is available. Until the midterm exam, a course may be dropped without any notice on the final transcript. After the midterm exam and until the final exam, a student may withdraw from a course and 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.

5. **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.).

6. **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 3 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.
7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **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.

10. **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 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.