

Code of Conduct at Freie Universität Berlin

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“Veritas,” “Iustitia,” and “libertas” – truth, justice, and freedom – constitute the core values of Freie Universität Berlin and set the standard for our conduct.¹ In keeping with Freie Universität Berlin’s history and identity, the university and its members embody a culture of acceptance, openness, plurality, and respect. Each and every person at Freie Universität Berlin is cognizant of their responsibility in upholding these values and their role in setting an example for others.

Ensuring Mutual Respect: Freie Universität is a space where discussions and debates are conducted in an objective and science-based manner, all the while maintaining a constructive atmosphere. Whether we meet online² or in person, we treat each other with respect. We use gender-inclusive language in all official communication across all status groups and make a concerted effort to factor in diversity awareness in our interactions with our fellow university members.³ We listen carefully to points of view that deviate from our own, learn from each other, and consider why individuals come to have differing perspectives. We take responsibility for our behavior and reflect on how our actions affect others.

Combating Discrimination and Promoting Diversity on Campus: Freie Universität Berlin is renowned for the sheer diversity of people that make up its community, each of whom brings with them a different way of life, personal situation, and perspective. Our university is dedicated to the goal of promoting equal opportunities⁴ and creating an environment for teaching, studying,⁵ working, and research that is inclusive and respectful to people from all backgrounds. That is why we as university members do not tolerate discrimination,⁶ bullying, and psychological, physical, or sexualized violence,⁷ nor do we look away when others are discriminated against.

Academic Integrity and Compliance: Freie Universität has a zero-tolerance approach to academic misconduct.⁸ Conflicts of interest are disclosed and dealt with in an appropriate manner. Where necessary, members of Freie Universität handle sensitive information with the utmost confidentiality, and always uphold data protection⁹ and information security principles. This entails acting responsibly in line with the applicable regulations.

Supervision and Leadership: In the interest of students, instructors, researchers, and employees, Freie Universität Berlin takes all possible measures to ensure that those who take on supervisory and leadership roles adopt a constructive approach to this task. Supervisors and advisors are committed to providing the best possible support to those under their care and embrace a culture of constructive feedback and criticism. Hiring and evaluation processes are designed to be as fair, inclusive, objective, consistent, and transparent as possible. As members of Freie Universität Berlin we reflect on interdependencies in relationships and are mindful of power dynamics. All members of the community in leadership roles are responsible for the welfare of employees and students. They are aware of the important role they play in leading by example.

Environmental Protection and Sustainability: Freie Universität Berlin is committed to combating human-made climate change.¹⁰ This is underpinned by a holistic understanding of sustainability¹¹ that guides how we run our university and compels us to save resources where we can.

Freie Universität Berlin’s Code of Conduct applies to all members and guests, and is especially relevant for those in leadership and management roles who should serve as role models. It provides a summary of the relevant statutes, regulations, ordinances, mission statements, agreements, directives, and policies that stipulate how we create a respectful, supportive, and inclusive community.

1 Preamble to Freie Universität Berlin’s University Statutes (in German): www.fu-berlin.de/service/zuvdocs/amtsblatt/2025/ab082025.pdf

2 Code of Conduct: Rules for Digital Coursework at Freie Universität Berlin: www.fu-berlin.de/en/universitaet/profil/studium_lehre/code-of-conduct

3 Gender-inclusive Language at Freie Universität (in German): www.fu-berlin.de/sites/diversity/antidiskriminierung/formen/sprache/gender

4 Statute for Safeguarding and Promoting Equal Opportunities (in German): www.fu-berlin.de/service/zuvdocs/amtsblatt/2024/ab032024.pdf

5 Mission Statement for Teaching and Education: www.fu-berlin.de/en/universitaet/profil/studium_lehre/leitbild

6 Antidiscrimination Policy: www.fu-berlin.de/sites/diversity/_media/doc/Antidiscrimination_Policy_pdf.pdf

7 Regulations on Sexualized Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence: www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/nein-heisst-nein/_media/Regulations-on-Sexualized-Harassment_-Discrimination-and-Violence.pdf

8 Statutes for Safeguarding Good Research Practice: www.fu-berlin.de/sites/gwp/informationen/dokumente/GWP_Satzung_FUB_2024_EN.pdf

9 Data Protection Policy: www.fu-berlin.de/en/redaktion/impressum/datenschutzhinweise

10 Climate Protection Agreement (in German): www.fu-berlin.de/sites/nachhaltigkeit/commitment/klimaschutz/KSV-FU-Berlin-2018-2027_final_NEU-mit-Unterschriften---farbig.pdf

11 Sustainability Mission Statement: www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/nachhaltigkeit/commitment/leitbild/Sustainability-Principles-of-Freie-Universita_t-Berlin_FINAL.pdf