

Unforgettable Summer in Freie Universität Berlin

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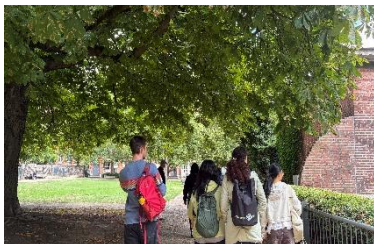
1. Introduction



I applied for the 2026 Summer Short-Term Exchange Program organized by the International Office of UOS, because I wanted to broaden my horizons and spend a meaningful summer vacation. To apply for the program at Freie Universität Berlin, I obtained a TOEIC score of at least 785 and wrote a study plan in English. As a result, I had the opportunity to spend a month in Berlin, where I participated in the FUBiS program and took courses at Freie Universität Berlin.

2. Lectures and Courses

I have always been interested in architecture, so I thought the course *Architecture in Berlin: A Walk through History* would be interesting and decided to take it. Berlin has a wide variety of architectural styles, and I wanted to explore buildings that were different from those in Korea. I also believed that Berlin had much to teach me about history. Since Germany has experienced the painful history of division like Korea, I wanted to learn more about German history through this course. I was also eager to discover more about Berlin, a city with many museums and art galleries that preserve and showcase its history.



The course included field trips in almost every class, and our grades were based on two exams and class participation. Classes were held every Monday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We sometimes had classroom lectures followed by field trips in the afternoon, while on other days, the entire class was spent going field trips.

During the field trips, we traveled around Berlin using public transportation and visited various places, including the city center, the Berlin Wall Memorial, Tempelhof Airport, AEG factory, and Marzahn. Before taking the course, I expected to visit mainly famous tourist attractions



with historical significance. However, the field trips offered much more than I had anticipated. We also had the opportunity to explore places that tourists might not usually visit, such as residential areas, small churches, and libraries that are part of the everyday lives of Berlin's residents. This made the experience even more enjoyable and memorable.

Another highlight of the field trips was the opportunity to talk with and get to know classmates from various countries, including Canada, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, and the United States, while traveling between destinations. These conversations allowed me to connect with people from different cultural backgrounds and made the experience even more rewarding.

3. Accommodation



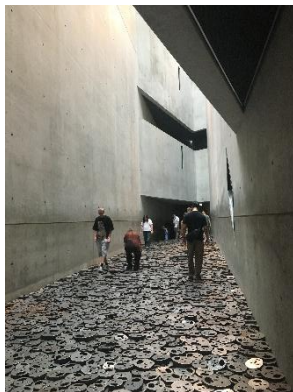
I chose to stay at the Schlachtensee dormitory based on the accommodation information provided in the application materials. Each resident had a private room, while the kitchen and bathrooms were shared. Everyone in my building was Korean. Staying there was a great opportunity to meet and become friends with students from various universities, including Chung-Ang University, Ewha Womans University, Chungnam National University, and Pusan National University, as well as the University of Seoul.

One thing I found slightly disappointing about the dormitory was its distance from both the university and downtown Berlin. On Mondays and Thursdays, I had to get up early to commute to campus in time for my 9 a.m. classes. Even after spending time in downtown Berlin after class, I had to leave early to make sure I did not miss the bus back to the dormitory. Nevertheless, I gradually adjusted to this routine over the course of a month. Getting around Berlin by public transportation became less challenging than I had initially expected, and the experience turned out to be a valuable part of my time in Berlin.

4. Local Life in Berlin

During my month in Berlin, I purchased a Deutschlandticket for €63, which allowed me to use public transportation. Unlike in Korea, people do not usually tap their cards when boarding public transportation. Instead, ticket inspectors do random checks to make sure passengers have valid tickets. For this reason, I thought purchasing a monthly pass would be much more convenient for getting around the city.

After class, I often went downtown with my classmates and enjoyed various activities together, such as shopping at vintage stores, trying tacos and currywurst, watching a German-language play, and attending DJ parties. On the last day of class, we celebrated the end of the course by spending time together at a Biergarten and a pub.



On days when I did not have classes, I visited various historical and cultural sites in Berlin that were not included in our field trips, including the Jewish Museum Berlin, the Hamburger Bahnhof – National Gallery of Contemporary Art, Berlin Cathedral, and the East Side Gallery. I also took the opportunity to travel to other German cities, such as Potsdam, Leipzig, Cologne, and Hamburg. By exploring Berlin beyond the classroom, spending time with friends, and discovering other parts of Germany, I had a fulfilling month in Germany.



5. Overall Reflections

When I first arrived in Berlin, I felt nervous and worried about living in an unfamiliar city. However, as I gradually adjusted to life there over the course of a month, I found myself feeling sad to leave when my last day in Berlin finally came. I was very attached to the city, and the experience was a valuable opportunity to broaden my horizons. I believe this summer vacation will remain a lasting memory because I was able to learn so much in Berlin, a city filled with traces of history and impressive architecture.

I also visited several other cities in Germany, but I found Berlin to be more peaceful and enjoyable than any other city I visited. There were many friendly people and a variety of

exciting events, which made me feel that Berlin was one of the best cities to live in. Through the FUBIS program, I also had the meaningful opportunity to attend lectures in English and communicate with friends from different countries. Looking back, I feel that I spent a truly fulfilling summer vacation with no regrets.