

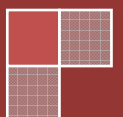
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November 2017*

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Dear Colleagues,

We are very pleased to publish Special Issue for INTE-2017, ITICAM 2017 & IDEC 2017 conferences. This issue covers the papers presented at International Conference on New Horizons in Education, International Trends and Issues in Communication & Media Conference and International Distance Education Conference which were held in Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. These papers are about different research scopes and approaches of new developments and innovation in education, communication, media and technology.

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## Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions: The Case Study of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança

**Cláudia Miranda VELOSO**

*Applied Management Research Unit (UNIAG)  
Institute Polytechnic of Bragança; University of Aveiro  
Portugal  
claudiamiranda@ipb.pt*

**Paula Odete FERNANDES**

*Applied Management Research Unit (UNIAG)  
Research Unit in Business Sciences (NECE)  
Institute Polytechnic of Bragança (IPB)  
Portugal  
pof@ipb.pt*

### ABSTRACT

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) operate in a competitive environment that forces them to adopt a new strategic position seeking to position themselves better in a greatly competitive, dynamic and differentiated market. Internationalisation is becoming one of the main key factor and strategic priorities of HEI all world. Most HEI include internationalisation, as a part of their competitive strategies once is a way to promote cooperation and mobility for both students and staff and knowledge transfer between institutions. The aim of the research is to analyse and evaluate the international academic mobility in the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB, Portugal). The aim is to contribute to the gradual interest of the understanding of the phenomenon of academic mobility and its impacts on IPB, once foreign students are an asset to HEI, during the stay where they are studying, and as well the staff mobility. In addition, given the relevance and importance of the internationalisation strategy followed by the IPB and its international both students and staff mobility, it is intended that the results of this will help the decision makers in the IPB to develop better strategies that will support the internationalisation process within IPB.

**Keywords:** Internationalization; Higher Education Institutions; Polytechnic Institute of Bragança; Competitiveness; Strategic Management.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last years, the higher education has been going through a stage of internationalization. Higher Education Institutions (HEI) around the world are taking advantage of this singularity, as they are competing with each other to attract international students. With internationalisation being a crucial criterion in the majority of university rankings and with the constant pressure of becoming more entrepreneurial (Dill, & Soo, 2005; Deem, Mok, & Lucas, 2008; Karakullukcu, 2012; Bordean, & Borza, 2013), the institutions have started to consider this phenomenon as a feasible source of competitiveness and competitive advantage (Luxon, & Peelob, 2009; King, 2010; Craciun, 2015).

The internationalization of higher education is the process of presenting exchange activities in education and research of several varieties among universities and institutions in different countries (Huang 2004; Egroun-Polack, & Hudson, 2014). One of the main objectives of internationalised higher education is to offer the most relevant and appropriate education to students, who will be the citizens, entrepreneurs and scientists of tomorrow (Hénard, Diamond, & Roseveare, 2012). Internationalisation is not an end in itself, but a driver for change and enhancement – it should help generate the skills required in the 21st century, spur on innovation and generate replacements while, ultimately, fostering job creation (Hénard, Diamond, & Roseveare, 2012). The same authors state that the landscape of internationalised higher education is rapidly evolving; once new countries and institutions are ingoing the global talent pool and challenging the established position of the traditional champions of international education; moreover the English language is dominating new programmes; and, new forms of institutions, programmes and teaching methods are being set up. In addition, the effects of the economic and financial crises are far-reaching and long lasting, changing the flows of students and faculty across continents as well as brain circulation.

Hénard, Diamond and Roseveare (2012), report that internationalisation functions as a two way street: it can help students achieve their goals to obtain a quality education and pursue research; and the institutions may gain a worldwide reputation, as well as a foothold in the international higher education community, and rise to meet the challenges associated with globalisation. The highest five reasons that one HEI start the internalisation are

(Marmolejo, 2012) to: improve student preparedness; internationalise the curriculum; enhance the international profile of the institution; strengthen research and knowledge production; and, diversify its faculty and staff.

In this regards, this paper intend to offer information about the success of Polytechnic Institute of Bragança and to analyse and evaluate the international academic mobility in the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança.

The paper, after the introduction, starts with a literature review of the internationalisation in higher education. Next, will be presented several implications for implementing strategies that would support the internationalisation phenomenon in IPB. Finally, the main conclusion will be presented.

## BACKGROUND

There is no doubtfulness that internationalisation and globalisation are closely connected, even though they are two essentially different processes (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2012; Bordean, & Borza, 2013). In the one hand, the globalization can be well marked as the economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21st century higher education concerning a greater international participation (Altbach, & Knight, 2007). Moreover, in the another hand, the internationalisation has more to do with the specific policies and programs carry out by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments to deal with globalization (Altbach, 2006; Ghasempoor, Liaghatdar, & Jafari, 2011).

According Pipia (2017) the both processes, internationalisation and globalisation, push higher education towards international involvement in globalized world. The differences is presented in in the table below.

**Table 1.** Distinctions between Globalization and Internationalisation.

	Characteristics Features		Result
<b>Internationalisation</b>	The response of educational institutions to the globalization process.	Higher degree of internalization results in the higher degree of globalization and vice versa.	Physical mobility, academic cooperation and academic knowledge transfer.
<b>Globalisation</b>	The acceleration of movement of people, ideas, knowledge, capital, goods and services through national borders.	The process by which different cultures and nations become homogeneous.	Competition, commercial knowledge-transfer.

Source: Pipia (2017, p. 17).

The globalisation of higher education brings together students and professors from different systems, creating a dissimilar and different environment; however many HEI classically expect foreign students to adapt to their new higher education environments (Kelly, & Moogan, 2012). All institutions claim to be willing to become an international organisation, participating in the globalised knowledge creation and transfer. Nonetheless, many have designed student mobility policies that are disconnected from any strategic thinking regarding the objectives and benefit for the institution's missions and student achievements (Hénard, Diamond, & Roseveare, 2012). In order for internationalisation to be both successful and sustainable, it is essential for it to be rooted in the culture, policy and organizational process (Qiang, 2003).

Hsu (2012) claimed that internationalisation was a process to initiates policies to adapt various cultural knowledge and competencies and their practices in campus community. Pull factors had been a significant influence on students to choose study abroad and contribute to internationalise higher education campuses; knowledge and access to information; reputation and quality of institutions; recommendation of others in personal level; financial issues-fees and other expenses; presence of students of same country and option for part-time jobs; environment; geographic and time closeness; and social link-presence of family members or friends were identified as the components and ties that drew the international students (Chou, Roberts, & Ching (2012).

Internationalisation of higher education has been associated with several benefits like as (Bordean, & Borza, 2013):

- (i) One should note the cultural and social impact that this phenomenon is making within the local, regional and even national communities;

- (ii) The movement of students and staff among campuses has allowed them to gain new perspectives and become much more aware of the possibilities for cooperation;
- (iii) Both students and staff were able to recognize international opportunities and be internationally oriented;
- (iv) The internationalisation of higher education offers a new perspective in terms of quality assurance within universities.

McBurnie (2000) and Özturgut, Cantu, Pereira and Ramón (2014) explained that strategizing internationalisation of higher education included three components: (i) international composition of student body; (ii) foundation and development of overseas campus; and (iii) the assurance of internationalising the learning experience.

Wadhwa (2016) argued that the approach to traditional internationalisation which was based on international co-operation and infrequently a profit making activity were at the centre of traditional internationalisation has changed significantly from the last two decades. Appearance of the new phase of internationalisation of higher education is characterised by self-economic interest of maximizing profit and capturing student market by expanding institutional reach in other countries. The observed competition in recent decades in the international higher education market has led to the marginalisation of teaching learning, which is assumed to be the central role of educational institutions.

In view of that one of the basic objectives of higher education is to promote the overall development of the student in a competitive society, it is crucial and important that the students have to acquire the multicultural ability and attitude to serve to the cultural diversity that is present in society (Hurtado, Coronel, Carrasco, & Correa, 2013). Underlining the importance of internationalising higher education, Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2009) claimed that studying in multicultural surroundings increases compassion and respect for global issues, positive attitudes toward other cultures, and better intercultural communication skills and self-image. Roberts, Chou, and Ching (2010) argued that internationalisation was present in countless dimensions in higher education. University policies, initiatives, and practices were being adjusted in the context of globalisation.

Wit, Egron-Polak, Howard and Hunter (2015) argued that internationalisation in Europe has grown out of, and been strongly influenced by, the ERASMUS programme initiated by the European Commission almost 30 years ago. Beyond the three million mobile students, ERASMUS has had an even greater impact on the internationalisation and reform of higher education. It piloted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and initiated access to EU membership for countries in Central and Eastern Europe and other aspiring candidates. The Horizon 2020, the framework programmes and their predecessors over the last 35 years have also had an impact on the international and European dimension of higher education, as have the collaborative programmes with the rest of the world, such as TEMPUS, ALFA and ALBAN, ATLANTIS and others, now brought together with the European mobility schemes in the new ERASMUS+ programme.

## **INTERNATIONALISATION PROCESSES IN THE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE OF BRAGANÇA**

### *General description of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança<sup>1</sup>*

The Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB) is a higher education public institution with a defined mission in creating, transmitting and diffusing technical-scientific and professional knowledge through the articulation of study, teaching, applied research and experimental development. IPB belongs to the European Network for Universities of Applied Sciences (UASNET), which main objectives include the transferability of professional skills and the integration of applied research in their professional and technological education mission.

Founded in 1983, IPB comprises five schools: School of Agriculture; School of Public Management, Communication and Tourism; School of Education; School of Health; and School of Technology and Management. Its activity embraces a wide area of knowledge and technology, namely arts, communication and multimedia, business sciences and law, education and teachers training, agriculture sciences and natural resources, health and civil protection, tourism, sports and leisure, and technologies.

In accordance to the current reform of the European higher education system, the actual goals of IPB are: to contribute to the increase of higher education frequency; to motivate lifelong learning; to improve the quality and relevance of its academic offer; to promote the mobility of students and graduates and to contribute to a better international cooperation in Europe and with the Portuguese-speaking countries. The IPB has consolidated its

<sup>1</sup>Based on web page of IPB: <http://portal3.ipb.pt/index.php/en/guiaects/polytechnic-institute-of-braganca>

dimension to 7,000 students and has achieved the adequacy to the Bologna process through the offer of around a hundred courses and degrees, namely technical specialization courses, bachelors and masters programmes.

Nowadays, over 50 per cent of the IPB teaching staff holds a PhD degree. The IPB is part of the national system of science and technology, through the existence of R&D units and branches at the IPB. In several areas, the IPB presents indicators of impact and excellence of its scientific publications and applied research: according to the Iberoamerican 2012 ranking, developed by the SCImago Research Group, the IPB is the Portuguese higher education institution with the greatest normalized impact and the best excellence rate. In 2017, the prestigious Shanghai Ranking positions the IPB among the 50 best Institutions in the World in the area of Food Science and Technology, being one of only three Portuguese institutions, together with the Universities of Lisbon and the port, to reach the Top 50 of this ranking.

Following the implementation of the Bologna Process and the consequent legislation regarding the mobility of students among degrees and higher education institutions, prior learning must be recognized and credited. The prior learning concept comprises all the previous learning/training undertaken in other higher education study cycles in national or international institutions (crediting of certified training), as well as previous professional experience and any post-secondary school training or education. As such, the IPB promotes the crediting of the student's prior learning when arriving at the institution. Aiming at a quick and full integration of the student in his/her new education programme, the recognition procedures must be submitted when enrolling at the IPB.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) comprises the adoption of a series of tools which enhances transparency and establishes the necessary conditions for an approach between higher education institutions and, as such, enlarges the range of options for students. The use of this system improves comparability, mobility and full recognition of students' academic results. The Polytechnic Institute of Bragança makes use of the ECTS as well as of the principles of the Bologna declaration in all of its programmes and also in the implementation of mobility among higher education institutions intra- and extra-EU.

#### *Internationalisation in IPB*

The internationalisation of the IPB is one of its current strategic challenges, due to the awareness that this will be a positive factor for differentiation among higher education institutions. The last decade has confirmed the IPB as one of the institutions that most extensively promoted academic mobility in Portugal: over 4,000 students in mobility and over 1,000 visiting teaching and non-teaching staff have transformed the brand of the institution. The results obtained have positioned the institution at a level of prominence both nationally and internationally. Currently, the IPB integrates the Top 100 of higher education institutions with the greatest number of incoming teachers and the Top 500 of institutions with the highest rate of incoming and outgoing students on Erasmus mobility. The experience gained in the European mobility project has catalysed the non-European cooperation, with special emphasis on the Portuguese-speaking countries and regions. The IPB has established an academic network with Brazilian Federal Institutes and Universities, as well as with the Macao Polytechnic Institute, representing an annual mobility of nearly a hundred students and the teaching and research cooperation. The presence of a community of students from African Portuguese-speaking countries is also a reality in the institution as a result of the Institute's involvement in the creation and development of higher education in Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe. This will decisively contribute to the qualification of human and academic resources. The cooperation with Macao has allowed the establishment of protocols with Chinese Universities, involving the Portuguese and Chinese teaching and the creation of the Centre for Chinese Language and Culture in Bragança. Currently the IPB is a multicultural institution with 17% of international students. The IPB implements mobility within the European Higher Education Area for over 20 years: more than 200 bilateral agreements with HEIs from 24 different European Countries. Expansion of the international cooperation outside Europe: more than 150 cooperation agreements with non-European HEIs (26 Countries). In IPB 25% of the graduates had an international mobility experience during their study programme (Europe 2020 target: 20%).

The internationalisation process in IPB include various international aspects as teaching and administrative activities at different levels. The internationalisation process involves:

- students: recruitment of foreign students, the organisation of exchange programs, as well as individual student mobility;
- faculty: faculty exchange, joint research programs, training in foreign universities, joint training programs and the organisation of intensive programmes; certification issues, the recognition and measurement: issue

of ‘double’ diplomas, credit system, and the international recognition of education, assessment of the quality of education;

- international cooperation: exchange programmes for the administration and management of human and material resources, consulting and information services, and the evaluation procedure and infrastructure.

For IPB the successful resolution of the internationalisation depends on the mutual efforts and close cooperation of the participants - managers and teaching staff of educational institutions, departments, and schools. Likewise, at the same time, the process of internationalisation has been depending of its features that were related and consistent with the educational mission of the IPB, its staffs and financial resources, physical facilities, scientific potential, the number of students. The IPB internationalisation has allowed:

- increase national and international visibility;
- leverage institutional strengths through strategic partnerships;
- increase the academic community within which to benchmark their activities;
- mobilise internal intellectual resources;
- add important, contemporary learning outcomes to student experience;
- and, develop stronger research groups.

One of the major challenges for the IPB in current century is to:

- maintain a highly capable, intellectually, and culturally competent workforce in a fast changing world;
- stimulate bilingual and multilingual learning as a basis for a language policy based on diversity;
- address the challenges of credit and degree mobility discrepancies and institutional cooperation, stemming from substantial differences in higher education systems, procedures and funding;
- recognise the rising reputation of work placements and build options to combine them with language and cultural skills training and study abroad;
- and, support the important role of academic and administrative staff in the further improvement of internationalisation.

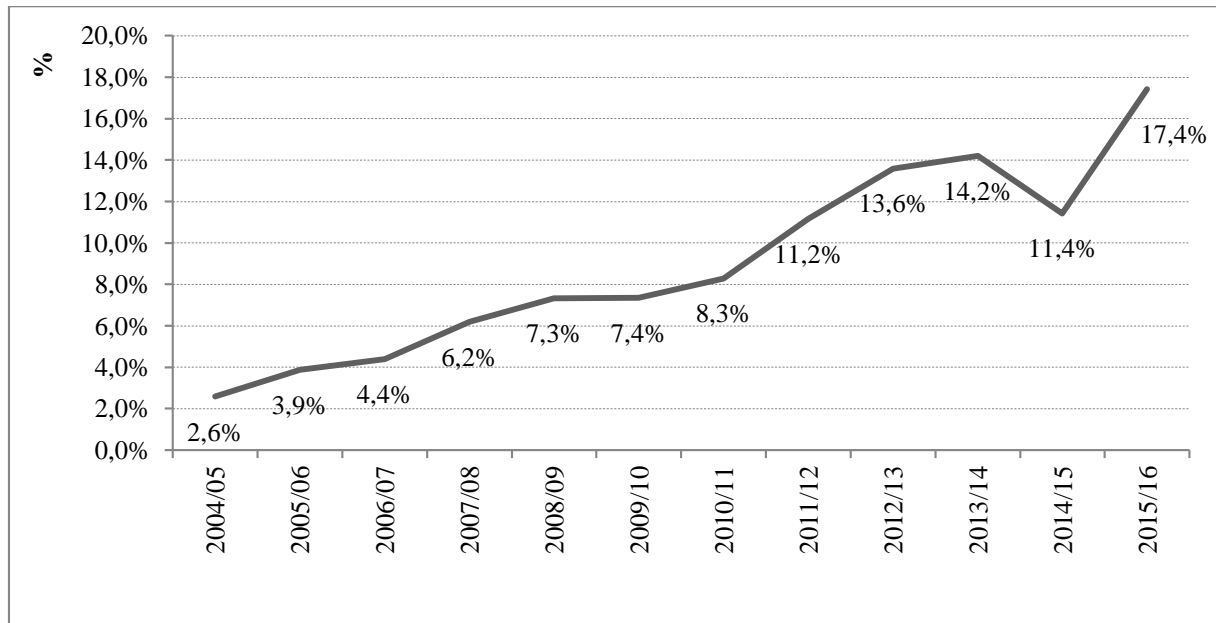
Table 2 shows data on international mobility. It is possible to observe that in the period under analysis there were an important growth, with an annual rate that oscillated between -21% and 45%. The annual average rate of change for both flows, incoming and outgoing, is around 18%. The weight of the number of incoming in the total is around 64,4% and number of outgoing is 35,6%. The increase in number of international mobility since 2004/2005 is a clear evidence of increasing internationalisation in IPB. The obtained data reveals that IPB, as a host institution, gains its popularity among foreign students and shows a significant increase in numbers.

**Table 2.** Numbers of International Student Mobility in the IPB.

	Academic Year												Annual average rate of change
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Number of incoming	91	107	118	203	286	303	347	411	441	542	397	557	18%
Number of outgoing	49	96	148	179	203	221	270	366	456	368	323	308	18%
Total	140	203	266	382	489	524	617	777	897	910	720	865	18%
Annual rate of change	-	45%	31%	44%	28%	7%	18%	26%	15%	1,4%	-21%	20%	-

Is possible to see the importance of this type of students for the IPB, as shown in Figure 1. Currently, the weight of international students is 17,4% of the total number of students enrolled in the IPB. This figure is well representative of the internationalisation strategy that the IPB is pursuing, as well as the importance that this influx of students brings to the regional economy. The trend has been growing over the years.

**Figure 1.** Weight of international students in the total number of students enrolled in the IPB.



Most of the students received in the IPB are of European origin. According to the main countries and since the academic year 2006/2007, foreign students in the IPB come from Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain and Turkey.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study suggests that internationalisation in IPB needs to continue, develop, and expand; especially since globalisation trends make it more pertinent to the understanding of various cultures. In order for IPB to be competitive and feasible in the global market, there needs to be a sustained goal in internationalising teaching, learning, and practices. The increase in number of foreign students since academic year 2004/2005 is a clear evidence of increasing internationalisation in IPB and a sign for the regional development.

There is a need, in an environment of increased dominance of English as the language of communication in research and education, to stimulate bilingual and multilingual learning at the IPB as a basis for a language policy based on diversity in European higher education.

Assumed the possibilities for work placements under ERASMUS+ is leading to stronger growth in credit mobility for work placements than study, there is a need for pay attention to be given to the importance of work placements in internationalisation of higher education of IPB.

In the emphasis on rising competitiveness, increased self-funding and graduate employability, the important role of IPB in social engagement and in the development of global and European citizenship for students and staff must not be lost or forgotten.

The IPB should be focus on partnerships and collaboration that recognise and respect the differences in contexts, needs, goals, partner interests and prevailing economic and cultural conditions; and should be given priority to the following areas of development: improving and enhancing the quality and diversity in programmes involving the mobility of students, academic and administrative staff; increasing focus on the internationalisation of the curriculum and of related learning outcomes; gaining commitment on a global basis to equal and ethical higher education partnerships.

In summing up, the future of IPB looks potentially optimistic and bright, however future positive development and impact will only happen if the several stakeholders and participants maintain an open dialogue about benefits, means, opportunities and obstacles in this ongoing process of change. The internationalisation is also challenged by increasingly profound social, economic and cultural issues; such as the financial crisis, demographic decline, immigration and ethnic and religious tensions.

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