



**Choices and Responsibilities:
Higher Education in the Knowledge Society**

Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)

**THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF PORTUGUESE HIGHER EDUCATION:
HOW ARE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS FACING THIS NEW CHALLENGE?**

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Over the last decades, the Portuguese government has made efforts to promote the internationalisation of the higher education system. On one hand the government supported with grants the training of its post-graduation students in countries such as France, United Kingdom and Germany and, on the other hand, it provided vacancies in higher education for special kinds of students (descendants of Portuguese emigrants and students coming from the Portuguese Speaking African Countries). However after the integration of Portugal in the EU, the European programmes became the most important tool for promoting both the Portuguese students' mobility and the Europeanization and internationalisation of Portuguese higher education institutions.

Portuguese internationalisation policies essentially intend to promote an attitude favouring participation in internationalisation activities. However, as higher education institutions are autonomous, those policies aim at creating opportunities for development and management of these activities instead of imposing them.

In this paper we will attempt to analyse Portuguese HEI responses to internationalisation. After reviewing briefly the recent changes in national and EU policies aiming at promotion of higher education internationalisation, we will present the results of six organisational case studies, conducted with the goal of obtaining an answer to the question: how are Portuguese higher education institutions facing the internationalisation challenge?

The six Portuguese higher education institutions studied were selected to ensure diversity of geographical location, legal status (public or private) and sub-system (university or polytechnic). In each organisation special attention was paid to disciplinary differentiation, as they refer to major differences with regard to the nature of knowledge and disciplinary culture and this leads to different internationalisation approaches. The case studies were based in relevant data on the institutions' internationalisation activities and in interviews with key players.

Based on the internationalisation profiles of the six institutions selected, we will identify which factors foster and which factors impede the development of international activities at the organisational level in the Portuguese higher education system. Simultaneously we will analyse the rationale explaining the different patterns of international activity between and within institutions.