

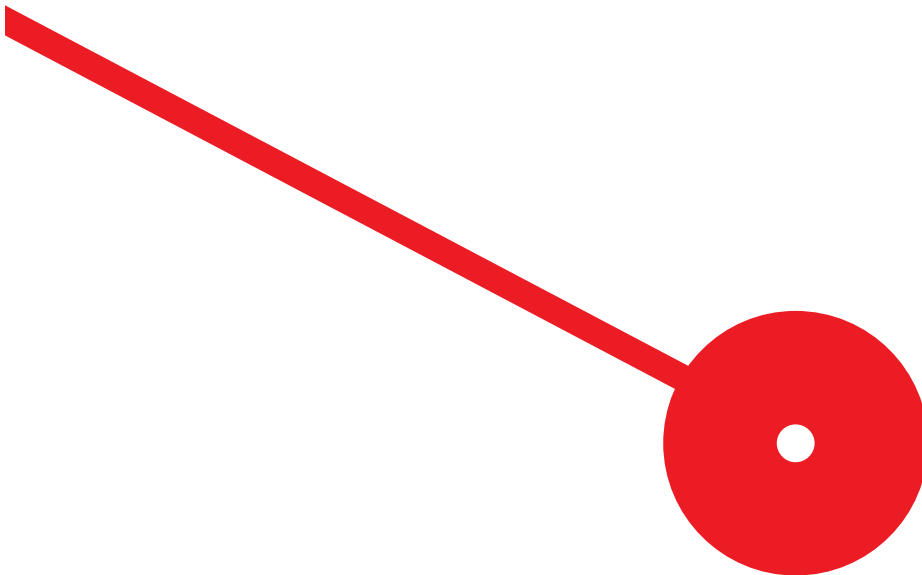


A Journey to Remember: ISCAP Mobility & Notoriety Case Study

Nuno Miguel Santos Ribeiro

Final Version (This version contains the critiques and suggestions of
the members of the jury)

2023/**2024**



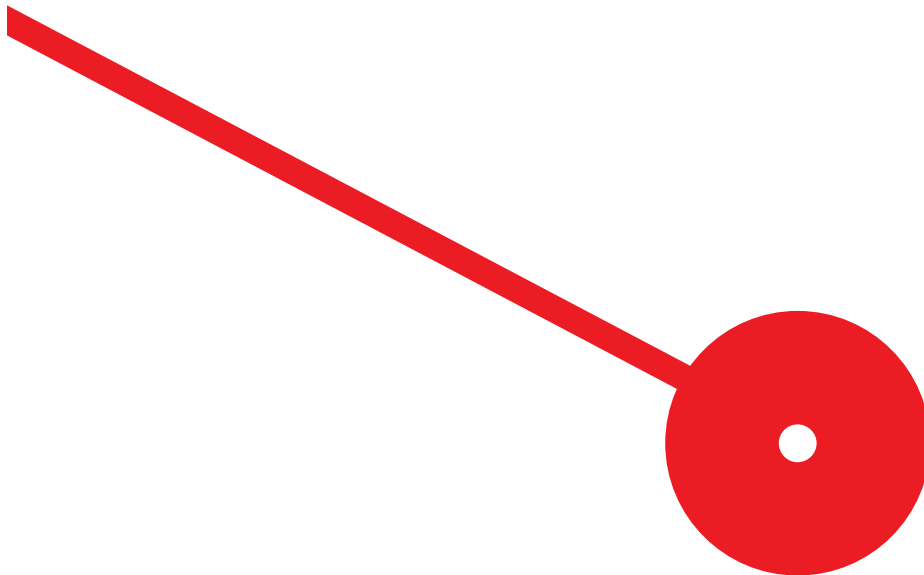


A Journey to Remember: ISCAP Mobility & Notoriety Case Study

Nuno Miguel Santos Ribeiro

Relatório de Estágio apresentado ao Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em Intercultural Studies for Business, sob orientação da Prof. Doutora Sara Pascoal.

Nuno Miguel Santos Ribeiro. A Journey to Remember:
ISCAP Mobility & Notoriety Case Study
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“Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.”
— Socrates, n.d.

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Resumo:

O presente relatório de estágio serve como testemunho do trabalho que desenvolvi num período total de 7 meses no Gabinete de Relações Internacionais do ISCAP, cujo qual cria eventos de carácter internacional, de modo a desenvolver a imagem e notoriedade do ISCAP a nível internacional, além da gestão de parcerias e intercâmbios globais de estudantes e staff no programa ERASMUS+. O intuito da minha participação no departamento pode ser descrita com a aquisição de experiência profissional numa área relacionada com o Mestrado, e utilizar de forma prática os conhecimentos teóricos abordados em aula. O estágio proporcionou-me inúmeras oportunidades de desenvolvimento, nomeadamente nas áreas da comunicação, marketing, design, gestão de eventos, turismo, liderança, trabalho de equipa, e em especial, o contacto intercultural.

As crescentes alterações do panorama de mobilidade e interação cultural entre países devem-se à globalização, um processo de conectividade intercultural e internacional justificado maioritariamente pelo desenvolvimento tecnológico do século XXI, e da criação de novas iniciativas não só educativas, como também diplomáticas como o ERASMUS+. O objetivo do relatório de estágio é proporcionar uma sólida base teórica acerca do contacto e entendimento intercultural, com foco especial no paradigma internacional da comunidade académica do ISCAP, de modo a compreender os esforços feitos através do meu trabalho no GRI para o melhor desenvolvimento de iniciativas interculturais no ISCAP, e consequentemente a sua notoriedade.

Algo importante a salientar, é que adicionalmente à análise das competências desenvolvidas e experiências vividas da minha parte, quis compreender a opinião e as experiências dos outros, neste caso, os estudantes internacionais, que são uma importantíssima parte da comunidade iscapiana. Para tal, realizei entrevistas e um questionário direcionado aos estudantes internacionais, de modo a perceber que aspetos foram benéficos ou contraproduativos na sua estadia na instituição, e de que modo podemos implementar melhorias na organização geral do ISCAP.

Palavras-chave: Intercultural, Estudantes Internacionais, Mobilidade, ISCAP

Abstract:

The present internship report serves as a testimony of the work I have developed over the course of 7 months at ISCAP's International Office, which develops events of an international nature to uphold ISCAP's image and notoriety at an international level, along with managing global partnerships and exchanges of students and staff within the ERASMUS+ program. The aim of my participation in the mentioned department can be described as attaining experience in an area related to the Masters, and utilizing the theoretical knowledge covered in class in a practical way. The internship provided me with numerous opportunities for growth, namely in the fields of communication, marketing, design, event management, tourism, leadership, teamwork, and especially intercultural contact.

The growing changes in the panorama of mobility and cultural interaction between countries are due to globalization, a process of intercultural and international connectivity, justified mainly by the technological development of the 21st century, and the creation of initiatives, not only educational but also diplomatic, such as ERASMUS+. The goal of the internship report is to provide a solid theoretical basis about intercultural contact and understanding, with a special focus on the international paradigm of ISCAP's academic community, to understand the efforts made through my efforts at GRI, for the better development of intercultural initiatives at ISCAP, and consequently its notoriety.

Something important to note is that, in addition to analyzing my own skill development and experiences, I wanted to understand the opinions and adventures of others, in this case, international students, who are a very important part of the ISCAP community. To this end, I conducted interviews and a survey, to understand which aspects were beneficial or counterproductive during their stay at the institution, and how we can implement improvements in the general organization of ISCAP.

Key words: Intercultural, International Students, Mobility, ISCAP

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List of Abbreviations

AASA- Centro de Apoio Académico, Social e Administrativo a Estudantes Internacionais
(Center for Academic, Social and Administrative Support for International Students)

AE- Associação de Estudantes (Student Association)

A.I- Artificial Intelligence

App- Application (digital tool)

CEI- Centro de Estudos Interculturais (Centre for Intercultural Studies)

CIPALP- Comissão Iscapiana para Estudantes Países de Língua Portuguesa (Commission for Students from Portuguese Speaking Countries)

COMAP- Committee for International Students of ISCAP (Comissão de Acompanhamento do ISCAP)

CP- Comboios de Portugal (Trains of Portugal)

CPLP- Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese Language Countries)

DB- Database

DM- Direct Message

DMIS- Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

DOMUS- Platform used by students to manage an array of things, such as their finances, personal data, classes, book meals, and to contact staff in case of any inquiries, etc.

ERASMUS- European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students

ESE- Escola Superior de Educação (Higher Institute of Education, part of P. Porto)

ESHT – Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo (Higher School of Hospitality and Tourism, part of P. Porto)

ESMAD – Escola Superior de Media, Artes e Desenho (Higher School of Media, Arts and Design, part of P. Porto)

ESMAE – Escola Superior de Música e Artes de Espetáculo (Higher School of Music and Performing Arts, part of P. Porto)

ESS – Escola Superior de Saúde (Higher School of Health, part of P. Porto)

ESTG – Escola Superior de Tecnologia e Gestão (Higher School of Technology and Management, part of P. Porto)

EU- European Union

FAQ- Frequently Asked Questions

GAP- Gabinete de Apoio a Projetos (Project Support Office)

GCRP- Gabinete de Comunicação e Relações-Públicas (Communication and Public Relations Office)

GRI- Gabinete de Relações Internacionais (ISCAP's International Office)

IEP- Interculturally Effective Person

IN/ IN Officer- Incoming Officer

ISM- International Student Mobility

ISCAP- Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto (Higher Institute of Accounting and Administration of Porto, part of P. Porto)

ISEP- Instituto Superior de Engenharia do Porto (Higher Institute of Engineering of Porto, part of P. Porto)

IT- Information Technology

IW- International Week

JP- Joint Programme

OPO- Porto

OUT/ OUT Officer- Outgoing Officer

P. Porto/ IPP- Instituto Politécnico do Porto (Polytechnic Institute of Porto)

S.E.O- Search Engine Optimization

SAS- Serviço de Ação Social (Social Action Service)

SI- Semana Internacional (International Week)

STCP- Sociedade de Transportes Coletivos do Porto (Collective Transportation Society of Porto)

TV- Television

U. Porto- Universidade do Porto (University of Porto)

INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by globalization and connectivity, education is experiencing a big leap in terms of international mobility, going beyond any geographical limitations, and fostering a continuous cross-cultural exchange of knowledge. This essay delves into the topic of international student mobility, with a specific focus on the renowned Institute of Accounting and Administration of Porto (ISCAP), both in terms of incoming students and outgoing students. As a fundamental part of this exploration, we showcase the purpose behind educational mobility, the impact it has on students' self-realization and psyche, and how it all aligns with the European Union's Erasmus+ program.

Key concepts in the realm of education mobility will be clarified through an extensive literature review chapter, such as distinguishing multicultural and intercultural and what are the implications of such terms when applied to ISCAP's academic community, how international education mobility has evolved and the dynamics surrounding it, what is intercultural competence and how ISCAP practices it.

As we navigate through the institutional "Caracol" (snail, term used to describe the circular corridor present in the institution) of ISCAP, we will embark on a historical journey, tracing the evolution from its roots to its contemporary status, and additionally understanding how ISCAP's International Office was created and how it has grown.

The strategic urban infrastructural approach (at an urban level, along with the interior of the institution itself), administrative organization, and its commitment to effective communication and marketing strategies will be dissected to understand the mechanisms behind its notoriety, especially in attracting foreign students.

Additionally, the measures and resources taken in place at ISCAP to aid international students at a multidimensional level, in the realms of inclusion, academic success and even cultural immersion will be analyzed.

The report dives deep into the intricacies of my internship experience, defining the role played by the ISCAP International Relations Office (GRI) in facilitating the integration of foreign students, the events it hosts, and its diverse internal framework. I will also talk about my first impressions, how I was oriented through my internship, work practices, and skill development will all be thoroughly described, as to offer a comprehensive understanding of the internship's impact on my personal and professional life, not to mention in the development of ISCAP's recognition and notoriety at a global level.

Some post-internship activities still related to GRI that I participated in will also be mentioned, for the purpose of exploring how I used the skillset I developed at the job location, in other personal and professional contexts.

The elaboration of a survey directed at international students who came to ISCAP for a varied period of time within the last 2 years was also conducted, and through it, a detailed data analysis will showcase the evolution of ISCAP's IN and OUT mobility, exploring the motivations that drive foreign students to choose this institution, how they feel in terms of integration, and what were their favorite elements and challenges of ISCAP (to also understand potential constructive criticism). Considering the general nature of a survey, to provide an even more personal and detailed data collection, I organized 3 interviews with ERASMUS+ students of different nationalities and ethnicities. I aim to learn and share their personal academic experiences, shedding light on the interculturality present and the impact on ISCAP's notoriety by word of mouth, the robustness ISCAP holds into their curriculum once they graduate, and the many stories they might want to share about their experiences.

As we conclude this exploration, the research of all these topics will provide for a better understanding of ISCAP's notoriety in terms of international education mobility. The honest approach of students' voices in the survey and interviews, as well as my own, and shared colleagues experiences I saw throughout my 5 years at ISCAP, will help us formulate highly constructive criticism as to how can the institution improve in a multitude of ways, from institutional and organizational ones, to event management, and intercultural awareness and competence development in the academic community, both for local students and staff.

The topic of cultural differences and how international students navigate those situations will also come into play. It is an important aspect to consider, keeping in mind how diverse the amount of origin countries from the different international students that studied and those who are still studying at ISCAP from the data pool of the survey.

This report serves as a testament to the symbiotic relationship between the institution, the city of Porto, and the global academic community, encompassing the essence of cross-cultural exchange and educational enrichment.

CHAPTER I – EDUCATION MOBILITY- KEY CONCEPTS

1 Introduction

It is of utmost importance to clarify key terms before delving into the specifics of my internship, and gathering data, which will be approached as we go through each section of this paper. The objective here is to understand how Globalization is at play within the context of this ever-changing world, and in the setting of ISCAP's international and local academic personnel mobility, as well as to make a clear distinction if the environment which is trying to be promoted at ISCAP is either Multicultural, or Intercultural, and what those concepts mean. We will delve into how Erasmus+ constitutes an important resource in international contact and gives opportunities to everyone in higher academic institutions at a professional and personal level and understand in what ways does it promote equality of opportunity and secure people's rights in an academic context. Additionally, we must seek the notion of intercultural competence, as a means of establishing an intercultural academic environment in ISCAP, and what skills are related to it.

International Student Mobility (ISM) will also be an integral part of the chapter, as we classify the different types of mobility, and how ISM can benefit ISCAP and Portugal, and understand the role ISM plays in the dissemination of knowledge within our globalized world.

The theoretical framework present in this chapter will give a solid foundation to understanding often used connotations, which will improve overall readability and understanding when later analyzing the practical side of the thesis.

2 Key Concepts

2.1 Interculturalism and Multiculturalism

Interculturalism is the concept of a society or environment where cultures can be integrated together in a common existence, a mutual integration where cultures interact and live within common ground and sharing their customs, in a joined way, rather than what happens in a multiculturalist environment or society, where differences are

celebrated and cultures don't connect, but rather live side by side (NewStart Magazine, 2007, as cited in Meer & Moodod, 2011).

From a different perspective, Multiculturalism is the idea of a delimited, non-changing space where cultures cohabitate in a secluded, individualized state. It preaches that people share a right to live within a certain territory and are obliged to cater their lifestyles to their respective cultures in a diversified group or communities. Multiculturalism can be boiled down to different people, with different cultures coexisting in a space where each group indulges in their own customs and traditions (Sarmiento, 2018).

The key difference when compared to Interculturalism, is communication. Multiculturalism promotes tolerance, and Interculturalism openness. This reciprocity to communication in Interculturalism facilitates cultural and experience exchanges among people, turning notions of single identities to a notion of multiple, encouraging the formation of interdependencies (Wood et. al. 2006:7; Booth 2003; 432, as cited in Sarmiento, 2018).

This distinction is especially important for this report, as ISCAP tries to promote an Intercultural academic environment through different initiatives and resources (as we will see how in a later chapter), an environment where students from any nationality or background can be integrated within the community, make friends and immerse themselves in Porto's (and consequently, Portugal's) culture.

2.2 Globalization

Globalization refers to the complex process of the world becoming more interconnected and displaying a major increase, accessibility and exchange of goods and services, technology, information and culture, no longer limited by borders, be it geographically or culturally (Diamond, 2024). This vast connection among different nations with different customs helps promote international trade, which contributes to strengthening cooperation among them, along with interactions and integration in a socio-cultural and economic context, which can lead to interdependence between them (Vladlenova et. Changlong, 2021). With globalization, the internationalization of education has become a crucial part of a country's economy, especially for those who are developing and

emerging. Not only did this diversify international talent, but also workflow, with students acquiring different skillsets and perspectives in the destination country, comparing for example, to a student who studied the same subject but only in their country of origin (Cui et. al., 2022).

Higher education institutions, such as ISCAP, compete to attract the brightest students, while facing major societal issues such as demographic decline, and aging population. All while maintaining and working towards having a competitive edge when it comes to their international programs and rightful place in the knowledge economy (Breznik et. Skrbinjek, 2020). The internationalization of a higher education institution can be defined as the extension of the spatiality of a university beyond borders through student, scholar and knowledge, programs and providers mobility. The ability to perform international mobility in an educational context is not widely distributed across the world, with factors such as race, class, nationality, religion and gender being at play as potential contributors (Larsen, 2016, as cited in Voller, 2018). The mobility of students; the notoriety and branding of a higher education institution, and scholars and programs became a source of both cooperation between international educational faculties but also of competition and reflected the process of internationalization of these institutions within the last 30 years. International education can be considered an industry, and therefore a source of power, notoriety and revenue. This eventually led to the prevalence of the English language in research, as a linguistic middle ground for scholars, staff and higher education institutions, and governments worldwide became increasingly interested in promoting higher education facilities to become more international. Between 2010 and 2020, the overall international student number doubled and consequently there was an increase in competition between talented international students. From a political perspective, this also led to selective immigration policies to change from low skill to high skill immigration (Wit & Deca, 2020).

2.3 ERASMUS+ and Education Mobility

Within the spectrum of European higher education, there are key resources to combat discrepancies when it comes to student mobility and opportunity, internationally. I am of

course referring to the Erasmus+ program. A vast description of the program can be found in Appendix I.

Now that we have clarified the Erasmus+ program within the European paradigm, let's venture into the concept of Education Mobility, essentially, an umbrella term for mobility in an educational context.

We can break down Education Mobility into at least 2 branches of Tourism: Cultural Tourism and Academic Tourism.

First let's start with understanding Tourism: it is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that involves the fluctuation of individuals to locations, namely, countries, outside of their common environment for personal or professional purposes, and these individuals can be considered visitors, a concept which encompasses tourists, excursionists, residents and non-residents that take part in tourism related pursuits (UNWTO, 2023, as cited in Poutier, 2023). Tourism is a form of mobility, and mobilities inform and are informed by tourism (Sheller & Urry, 2004, as cited in Hannam et. al., 2013).

Cultural Tourism can be described as a type of tourism in which a traveler's priority in terms of motivation is to indulge in tangible and intangible cultural attractions and products, within their tourism destination, and naturally, learn, discover and experience them, essentially performing intercultural contact. When it comes to cultural attractions, the term can refer more specifically to historical and cultural heritage, for example: creative industries, architecture, cuisine, traditions and beliefs, lifestyle, literature, film, music, among others. Cultural Tourism contemporarily presents itself as having an incredibly broad nature, as it relates to very vast topics such as creativity and culture (UNWTO, 2017, as cited in Richards, 2018).

On the other hand, Academic Mobility is a term that is multifaceted and dynamic, in the sense that Academic Mobility, as the name implies, is not just the movement of academic staff and students across borders, it has many aspects to consider:

The type of mobility, with variations such as short-term, long-term and even virtual; the notion that there is insufficient data of academic staff compared to the massive amount of available student mobility data, in terms of research, in the sense that definitions vary widely and there isn't a vastly accepted common concept for it; classifications based on

sectors, such as higher education institutions, and research institutions, as well as the degree of each mobility performing individual (not in subject, but rather in their experience or expertise, such as junior researchers, senior academics) (Teichler, 2015).

In situations where the students performing Academic Mobility become part of the working population of a host country and participate in that nation's production, they have performed what can be known as highly skilled migration, considering that these individuals have become highly skilled not only from their original country's studies, but also the diversity and sharpening of other valuable skills in the host country (Tremblay, 2005). To exemplify, let's consider an International Student doing a Masters' Degree in Portugal, and having a preceding Bachelors from their origin country, and that individual decides to stay and work in Portugal once finished.

Not only would it boost the economy, but it would also bring innovation and different insights for whatever industry they decide to work in. Not to mention, the constant intercultural contact present in their lifestyle could enrich both this individual and local Portuguese people whom they will interact with, to learn more about each other's culture and foster understanding among people from different backgrounds (Obrien & Mojdeh, 2013, as cited in Tomasi et. al., 2020).

From my personal experience in a short-term mobility to Latvia, during Academic Mobility, intercultural contact is inevitable and even deeply intertwined with Education Mobility, as the high consumption of local goods, such as groceries, potentially asking for directions, or even following the original purpose of that mobility, which is getting involved in academia, such as interacting with other scholars and lecturers, fosters that kind of environment. Furthermore, knowledge exchange is a major aspect to consider in these types of mobilities, not even necessarily academic knowledge, as for example, if I am buying local groceries, I could find a local product I do not have in my home country and a local person can inform me about it, that is cultural knowledge as well.

Now that we can differentiate and compare concepts such as Tourism, Cultural Tourism, and Academic Mobility, the question remains of: what are the motivations of people for Education Mobility, and to be more specific, within Higher Education Institutions?

A study was conducted on the academic years of 2008/09, and 2009/10 in 11 EU universities, but with responses from an array of different European countries, 26 to be precise, and totaling 360 respondents. This study included both with Incoming and

Outgoing students, and one of the sections described their motivations for mobility. The findings showed that the factors students value most when it comes to their motives were to experience new things, to personally grow, to contact new people, and lastly, to stay a semester in a different location from home. The least important motivations were their obligation to participate in the mobility program, the ERASMUS+ grant usage, or even building a solid academic foundation for their thesis (Lesjak et. al., 2015).

This study showed that students tend to value the experience and cultural immersion a lot more than just the academic (helping them on their thesis, for example), or bureaucratic (Erasmus grant use) aspect of things, valuing intercultural contact and an extremely personal experience and development process when performing these mobilities. I personally conducted a survey and interviews to verify if these motivations are true to students who came to ISCAP in Education Mobility and through ERASMUS+, which we will analyze in a later chapter.

2.4 Intercultural Competence

It is up to higher education institutions to create programs and curricula, in an inclusive and non-centric knowledge way. It must be intra and interdisciplinary, and universities must seek co-operation at an international level, for cross-institutional dissemination of knowledge (Wells et. Gilder, 2011). This process will help create an intercultural and international academic environment where students, staff and people in general can promote understanding amongst each other from a customs and cultural perspective, and ERASMUS+ can serve as a facilitator and intermediary by promoting student exchange and mobilities, and the flow of people of different backgrounds in an international and intercultural setting, helping higher education institutions adapt as they gain more experience in both sending and receiving personnel (students and staff).

This brings us to the next important concept worth mentioning, which is intercultural competence and International Student Mobility (ISM), Appendix II analyzes both concepts, and how ISCAP develops intercultural competence in its academic community.

3 Conclusion

From the diversified research presented throughout this chapter, we were able to understand that ISCAP aims to promote an intercultural academic environment, rather than multicultural, by defining both terms. We also framed globalization within the context of higher education, and how education mobility is rising in popularity, predominantly due to knowledge pillars, such as higher education institutions are becoming more interconnected.

We confirmed Erasmus+ as a solid global educational resources developed at an international level, predominantly in Europe and through the European Union, and steadily expanding to other parts of the world to help students perform both long-term and short-term education mobilities, diversifying workforce skillsets and promoting cultural interaction and understanding, as well as equality of opportunity for all, in education.

ISM brings a plethora of benefits for higher education institutions from a prestige and reputational perspective, and benefits the host country's economy, not to mention fostering strong global connections among countries, which may help create more opportunities and resources, as was the case of Erasmus+, which can be either strengthened or even complimented by other new resources because of global cooperation.

Another aim of this chapter was to have a general understanding of what drives students to perform Education Mobility, and if it was for academic development only or rather a very personalized experience, and we verified the latter, as the study that was mentioned in this chapter showed that most students opt to travel in an academic context for personal growth and immersion in a different culture.

Another important concept we described was intercultural competence, which we verified as an umbrella term for a strong intercultural skillset which requires adaptability from an individual in scenarios where one is presented with an environment with a multitude of cultures.

In the following chapters, I aim to exemplify how ISCAP promotes intercultural competence in its community, how the facility works closely with Erasmus+ to promote ISM, and additionally, how ISCAP combats the difficulties mentioned in the process of internationalization and integration of international students.

ISCAP's organizational resources for internationalization and International Students' Support are:

From an administrative perspective: GRI, the Academic Division, the Alumni and Career Office, CEI (Centre for Intercultural Studies), GAP (Project Support Office), and GCRP (Communication and Public Relations Office).

From a student initiative perspective: We have COMAP and the Student Association.

A comprehensive global analysis of ISCAP and its internationalization efforts is provided in Appendix III, offering detailed insights into its outreach and collaborative strategies.

Data regarding ISCAP shows that the institution features more than 4500 students, 200+ teachers (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, n.d.), 200+ International Students. It is the second oldest institution in P. Porto and is the most international faculty of all of P. Porto to this day. (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, 2023; Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, 2020)

ISCAP features 2 degrees lectured in English, namely, the bachelor's degree in Creativity and Innovation, which has an ERASMUS+ joint program with mandatory mobility to both Lithuania and Estonia, and of course the master's degree in Intercultural Studies for Business (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, n.d.).

CHAPTER II – INTERNSHIP AND FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES

4 Introduction

The following chapter presented delves into the most relevant topic on the report, considering its nature, the internship. To be precise, my story from beginning to end with my very first on-field work experience, work practices and conduct, how I fostered my co-worker friendships and acquaintances, my direct intercultural interactions with international students, and my involvement in the academic community and ISCAP's global notoriety development.

ISCAP's International Office, often referred to as GRI, is the predominant tool for international student inclusion as well as internationalization of the institution, as well as P. Porto, with all 8 member institutions having an International Office.

In more technical terms, the main goal of GRI (ISCAP) is to promote ERASMUS + initiatives, such as sending and receiving students and staff members from all over the world, encouraging cooperation among universities at a global scale, organizing and managing international and intercultural events, to divulge ISCAP and P. Porto as academic entities and their notoriety. The main target audience of GRI constitutes both the ISCAP community, as well as international institutions and associations (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, n.d.). I have included an incredibly detailed overview of both ISCAP and GRI's origins, please check Appendix III.

I thoroughly described my self-discovery journey throughout the internship in this chapter and was able to discover what I truly want to do, which is working in creative industries, like marketing, design, and advertising.

Please accompany me in reading and understanding my journey, as you might relate to some of the commonalities of starting out a real job, becoming progressively more skilled and acquainted with work practices and potential problems and difficulties we must learn to face and overcome, as a process of growing, both personally and professionally.

4.1 First Impressions and Expectations

Before we proceed, I believe it is worth mentioning that despite me being a student at ISCAP for more than 5 years, I never had the opportunity to travel, due to familiar circumstances and what I could personally manage in terms of time and what I could handle through my academic journey, thus, I had never been to the International Office (GRI) before, I never felt the need to do so. I had trouble finding its location as well. I decided to go ask some questions and discover what it was all about.

It was September 2023, and with the help of the security guards at the university, I was guided to the Office. There, I met Ana and Cláudia, the IN and OUT mobility officers, which I didn't think we would be colleagues simply because I was so unfamiliar with the GRI, at the time.

They were extremely nice and provided me with all the information I needed. I noticed how other foreign students would also cheerfully come to ask questions and a spark of inspiration struck me. I always wanted to have intercultural contact, to know other cultures, and use my language and communication skills to help and connect more with the world.

Coincidentally, I was looking for an internship opportunity, in September, and within the next day after visiting, I spontaneously made an application as an intern for GRI, contacting Dr. Alexandra Albuquerque with my resume. We struck an interview together for the following week, and she seemed interested in my academic background and what I could provide for the Office's development and good functioning. Although I was quite nervous, being my first job, I enjoyed her straightforwardness and found her assertiveness inspiring. I also got to introduce myself properly to Ana and Cláudia, my new co-workers, who would accompany in taking the first steps as a GRI intern. They were always patient with me, and the different combinations of our personalities made for a positive work environment and consistent teamwork.

First, I started in October. Before the official curricular internship in January started, I did extra-curricular work in the Office. I would study and go to the 1st semester classes of my masters, while also balancing 4 hours of GRI labor, divided into 2 hours each day, twice a week. I was very inexperienced, and felt a bit awkward constantly asking questions, but

I quickly learned how to solve problems, and how to work around what was requested of me (We will talk about it, in a more in-depth way in the following chapters).

I genuinely believe that the fact that I decided to start earlier before the official curricular internship started was a fantastic learning experience, in the sense that it prepared me and gave me the right qualifications for a better prepared approach when January came around.

4.2 Environment and Orientation

The decoration of the workspace was very thematic and pertained to the field of work: international relations. I saw memorabilia from all over Europe, even some parts of Asia, and many pictures of the Staff visiting a variety of different countries from all over the world. For a moment I imagined that it could be me, having the intercultural contact I desired. I knew that I didn't need to go so far to have it, as me helping the ERASMUS+ students with their questions and additionally having the potential to make new friends, would be a great opportunity to do so, from the comfort of my hometown.

Another expectation worth mentioning, or perhaps an insecurity of mine initially, was that asking too many questions or impeding my staff colleagues from continuing to work on their own responsibilities by asking them to provide me with aid would be a nuisance and that they might find me to be annoying because of it. But deep down I knew that was not true, I thought "that can't be true, they literally help students everyday who ask a lot more questions than me, collectively", and of course, that was correct.

In fact, Ana and Cláudia very patiently explained to me all my tasks, and provided me with the proper guidance, they reassured me and made me feel comfortable, and so did Dr. Alexandra, who always made everyone feel comfortable and did an excellent job at managing everyone at the office and provide the proper guidelines and feedback for an ideal work environment and ethic.

The positioning of the office provided me with contact with previous lecturers of mine, who would come to ask questions or just have a quick chat. It feels distinctively empowering to connect with people who live different life paths than you, who have more (or less) experience, and know more about a variety of subjects I had not heard of before, and I can share my personal expertise on topics they might not be so familiar with as well, a mutual exchange of information and knowledge.

During my internship, we received new interns, 6 to be precise, with the intent of providing a stronger backbone for the staff team and better distribute the workload, and personally, I saw their struggles on my own, when I first started out, and I helped them in everything I could. I felt like a true officer and member of the International Relations Office (GRI), leading, and guiding them, and of course, being nice and patient to make them feel welcome.

I enjoyed getting to know them, their goals, and how they fit into the team. Two of them were finishing their bachelor's degree and were pondering about what master's to follow up with next. I told them about the program of my Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business, that sparked a lot of conversation and questions they were asking me, and I gave them a detailed tour of ISCAP, told them how I felt during my own journey in the degree in question, and little tips of how to navigate the university and its cultural practices (One of them ended up enrolling in the Masters, at the end of the internship.).

That is exactly how ISCAP makes their students feel welcome and thriving, and we feel compelled to spread the word to potential new students and even people in our lives about our good experience at the institution.

5 Work Practices and Tasks

In this subchapter, the objective will be to give an overview of the main goals of the tasks that will be described. I will also mention specific details about the tasks and internship itself, some specifics such as my opinion, something interesting that happened, or changes

throughout time. The tasks are divided into subtopics, to keep things logic, concise and organized for the readers.

5.1 Major Tasks

5.1.1 Databases

My first ever task within the office was the filling of online shared documents (among the GRI STAFF) regarding protocols between ISCAP and foreign universities, for international student exchange through the ERASMUS+ program.

Essentially, I had to look up on the ERASMUS+ agreement document among the 2 universities, and fill out our database with what department would our students travel and study at, for example: some universities have different specific departments and faculties, which we had to know which ones our students would go towards, such as “Department of Law”; “Faculty of Communication and Marketing”, etc.

At first, I searched for this data predominantly online, and eventually for the remaining institutions, which did not have the information I was looking for, offline, through the unexpected high number of documents physically present in the office, carefully organized in one of the cabinets.

We had standard things there, like actual previous years documents from certain events, data about other international institutions which ISCAP has protocol with, paper, stamps, pens, headphones, even utility and leisure stuff for when we needed a break: I´m referring to coffee, sugar, tea, even some international sweets that foreign students would occasionally bring for the staff to share.

I also enjoyed that bonus of being able to try some sweets from all around the world, since it would be little products that we usually could not find in local Portuguese stores, and it sparked some interesting conversations with some of my online international friends (not from ISCAP), and they would teach me more about their cultural origins and significance, and their own opinions regarding the flavors, which I am always interested in.

All in all, this task relating to ERASMUS+ protocol for exchange students gave me a great sense of duty, and that the work I was doing not only was important for helping other students, but also promoting the intercultural exchange and understanding among other scholars and lecturers worldwide.

An important task worth mentioning is the organization in Excel of Teaching Staff Mobility (Internally, from ISCAP). It was an extracted file from Office 365 Forms, and I did my best to aesthetically, and logistically, to maximize comprehension and readability.

Basically, make an Excel sheet with data regarding the teachers and their preferred teaching destinations and universities.

5.1.2 Digital Communication

Regarding digital communication, I am predominantly talking about email exchanges, forms, and survey deliveries, and clarifying any doubts students or teachers, both foreign and national, could have.

One of the tasks within the field of communication I had to participate in was the delivery of Blended Intensive Program (BIP) and International Language Week certificates from October 2023.

For this, I had to edit a template online, making sure that the certificate was up to date, and having all the necessary signatures, and changing the colors present in the pdf for both events, to be sent correctly.

Within the same topic, some of the participants, along with the certificates, needed to receive a credit note, basically declaring that they had received a certain monetary amount from the BIP. For me to do so, I had to check a reimbursement list, to see which people would benefit from it.

After editing the certificate template and checking where I could find the credit notes for people who respectively had them within the internal GRI database, I had to fill and check

a database which had the names and contact details of the respective participants, so I could get in touch with them.

Next up, a separate task related to a Usability Test that was done at ISCAP, I had to contact another teacher from our university, who had access to last years' certificates, and edited them, changing the design slightly at the borders, adjusting the typography size, and updating all the information with the participant names and event details (how long did the event last, and when was it). Then, I would deliver them by email to all the participants.

One time, I was required to edit out a recommendation letter written by Dr. Alexandra to a former intern of GRI, essentially, just adjusting the format, as well as changing the typography to Porto Sans (ISCAP's signature letter style) and deliver it to him through email.

Problem Solving: When editing this file, I experienced de-formatting glitches, which would be a common occurrence in my day-to-day work when editing specific files in office 365 formats, thus, after using Google and Reddit to find the necessary solution, I found a very useful website that would quickly turn any text into a moldable format, it was called Text Cleaner.

It was around this time that I started using my own official GRI email handle at the end of each electronic reply or written email, and it made me feel part of the team and that my job was to be taken seriously, as I represented 3 different entities: GRI, ISCAP and P. Porto.

We worked very closely with the GCRP of ISCAP throughout my internship. I found out where the Office is located (right in front of GRI, just had to go up some stairs), and whenever a post would need to be shared in ISCAP's main Facebook or Instagram page, we would send it to them by email, or for any website related changes.

Illustratively, there was an international collaboration map we had to update in ISCAP's website, and with their help, we were able to do so. We reported what changes needed to be updated, and they made them into reality.

Social Media

A major aspect that kept me motivated throughout the internship was the versatility required throughout the whole process, considering the diversity of tasks that were demanded of me.

Social Media Management requires planning and strategizing, SEO, design, translation, and copywriting skills.

My focus was on doing not only the communication and administration-based tasks I was asked but also to develop a social media management plan, predominantly for Instagram and additionally Facebook as well.

When it comes to copywriting and translation, I was certain that both local and foreign students would see and potentially read the content of my posts in GRI's social media platforms, and thus, I always made sure when making copywriting, to include translation for both Portuguese and English (unless we had a specific target audience).

Through the website Canva, I began detailing my first steps (see Appendix IV). I thought about colors that would go well with both the black ISCAP logo and the orange version too. So, I concluded that incorporating orange, dark yellow, shades of blue (mostly darker blues and navy), and even white would be a good identity for the GRI page. I tried to slowly implement those colors in every post so it would be visually consistent.

A big difficulty I faced was typography, I wasn't very good at that aspect, but I kept observing other Instagram pages both from ISCAP and its different student associations like the Tunas, Juniscap, COMAP, and other international offices of external universities, to get an idea to the kind of content that they would post and get design inspiration too.

Eventually I learned that combining different letterings, while focusing on aesthetically pleasing readability, should be the priority. Mixing bolder fonts for titles with softer ones for subtitles and other text, as well as the occasional use of hand-written looking fonts would be a nice touch.

With the upcoming mobility event for Portuguese students, I had to prepare social media posts about the different necessary events they had to apply for, such as “Cultural Speed Dating”, and “Intercultural Preparation”. In these posts, I had some form of formality in mind, but I still made it accessible and engaging for students. In the intercultural preparation post, I experimented with the use of different bold colors that go well together, and surprisingly, they came along well, together with the different logos of ISCAP, COMAP and ERASMUS +.

For the Cultural Speed Dating one, I tried to learn how to do a speeding text effect in Canva, I googled it and tried to follow the method applied to my post.

As for the copywriting in both posts, I tried to use attention catching phrases such as “Get ready for your big journey of mobility”, or “Run (as to not lose it), the next event of Cultural Speed dating is coming”, followed by all the necessary information such as detailing the specifics of the event, as well as explaining how to apply.

There was a post that stuck with me positively, which was the “Welcome Session” of the ISCAP Orientation Week. I did not attend this session, as I was working, and it was for ERASMUS+ students to participate, as ISCAP had just received 120 new foreign students. However, afterwards I was given pictures of the event and all the participants and was informed I had to make a post about it. This time, it was my most successful social media post. I noticed when real students, or teachers, or real people in general (not those fake “thumbs up” people you can find on those free stock images websites), the engagement and reach of the post tends to be a lot more fruitful.



Figure 1-Welcome Session Post for GRI

I believe in this case, as seen on Figure 1 the most captivating thing was the “ripped-out” effect, mixed with the different typography styles, as well as proudly representing the community through their presence in the picture of the post, like I mentioned.

I also felt like the design I made was very modified compared to the template I used for it, which shows my design skills improved. I was impressed because I usually put a lot of thought behind each post and the design, but this came to me very quickly, in about 5-10 minutes. I knew this post would reach both ERASMUS+ students and locals, so I made the copy both in Portuguese and English, detailing the context of both the post and the event.

Another post I was requested to make was one for recently graduated mobility (up to 12 months after). Since the last post had been successful, I decided to try out the ripped-out effect again with a template. From there, I thought of putting some images of potential European destinations, and some design assets that would match our visual identity. I made a copy for this post detailing all the terms and conditions for mobility (See Appendix V).

A separate online post I made was the “Language Proficiency Test”. I made its text and copywrite in Portuguese, as it was the target audience, explaining the terms and conditions and how to apply. As for the design choices, I kept the color palette I chose after initially developing a social media plan for GRI’s Instagram. As for the rest, I tried to implement some storytelling, with 2 figures representing a teacher and a student, and showing people the success of the student with the test, obtaining an English certificate (see Appendix VI).

I participated in this event myself, and the online test had 2 versions, a 15 minute one, and a 1 hour one. Since many students would attend, GRI opted for the short version, but I quickly realized the analysis of English competence was flawed with the shorter version.

Keeping that in mind, I suggest enabling students to partake in the longer version at GRI, if they wished or wanted to re-try the test. I also did, and under Cláudia’s (OUT Officer) supervision, I managed to obtain the C2 Level Proficiency.

Rarely, we would receive outside post content to be promoted on our page, so was the case of the “ATHENA Mobility Fair” post, which I did not write neither the copy nor design the image itself, it was something sent to us, and the only thing I would have to do was share it on our page (see Annex III).

Holiday Posts:

Holiday content was naturally an easy idea for producing interactive media, and so, I honed-in with my very first one: Designing a Christmas story and posting in Canva.

By this time, I was still very fresh at making proper visual concepts, so it was a very simple aesthetic, simply saying the generic “Merry Christmas”, but I also added a small creative twist, with the subtitle “From GRI, to Thee”, a short but memorable catchphrase. The staff and Dr. Alexandra enjoyed the idea, and I rolled with it, despite the design not standing out too much yet, as I was quite inexperienced by this time (December 2023) (see Appendix VII).

Human Fraternity Day 2024 was one of my chosen holidays to post about in the Office's social media. I wanted to try out incorporating A.I. designs together with traditional means I was used to, such as templates from Canva and elements. I utilized the built-in A.I. image generator in Canva to make an illustration of downtown Porto and people of different ethnicities enjoying it. I had to try many times, as it didn't make the images very believable, such as characters with weird hands, or facial expressions, but eventually I got to a decent result. I made a nice copy for the post, detailing the importance of human fraternity, and how ISCAP practices it every day. My mindset was always trying to relate holiday themes and any post in general to either ISCAP, or the student community itself, adding relatability and honoring the good name of the institution (See Appendix VIII).

I made a Long-Distance Relationship post for Valentines Day, not just for romantic purposes, but also friendships, which are becoming increasingly common now. I tried to relate to the fact that we have so many foreign students and people that come to ISCAP and later leave Portugal with lasting local and other country friendships. This post can be observed on the official GRI Instagram page, but I decided not to include it in the report.

A further post highlighted the International Women's Day of 2024, where I decided to experiment a bit with variations of our color palette, showing the beauty of women inside and out, within the post. Additionally, I picked a woman figure that would be interculturally diverse. In the copy, I wrote a dedicated message to women, highlighting both women in general, and also mentioning more specifically those who study at ISCAP, to keep the page's topic consistent (ISCAP and the GRI) (See Appendix IX).

Instagram and Facebook Stories:

When it comes to stories, I did not have much time to focus on this type of media, however, whenever I would make a social media post, I would always share it on GRI's social media platforms, to promote the posts and gain more reach. Within this format, I would also share other related pages' content that I thought was relevant, such as some COMAP and GRI collaboration events that they would post, and other important pages such as ISCAP, P. Porto, or International Week pages content (such as the International Students Fair). I would also post reminders for relevant deadlines for students to enroll in certain events or mobility programs (see Appendix X).

As for holidays, during Christmas, I posted a story with an open answer question, to promote interactivity on the page, asking “What is your favorite part about Christmas?”; also, worth mentioning New Years, where I made a live countdown for the occasion (see Appendix XI).

5.1.3 Networking and Student Consultancy

One time, a Polish student, came in and I was alone in the office. He asked me how to unenroll from a course. I could not help him at that moment due to it being an administrative question for Ana (IN officer), who deals with IN mobility, and there were probably alterations that had to be done to this student’s learning agreement.

Sometimes I wouldn’t be able to help students due to their matters being related to the IN and OUT duties which I wasn’t aware of the procedures for such determined situations. I quickly understood that and adapted to the situation. I welcomed him in, and politely asked how can I help, he explained his needs, and as a solution, I asked if he could provide me with his email address, so I could later assess the situation with Ana, the following day. I noted down his contact as well as what needed to be done and communicated accordingly with Ana. Sometimes I wouldn’t be able to help students due to their matters being related to the IN and OUT duties which I wasn’t aware of the procedures for such determined situations.

Another time, a student from Romania was having trouble registering for the exams season of a particular subject in Domus. Me, being extremely familiar with the platform, still actively using it to this day, as I had to access it throughout my degrees here at ISCAP, I eagerly reached out to her, and said “I can help you, please sit down with me and I’ll take you step by step on how you can register.” I told her how to login to her Domus account and took her to the webpage where she could do so, which I explained it also had the limit dates for registry, and when the exam would be. She was grateful and successfully managed to register.

Cláudia (OUT officer) told me if I wanted to do a mobility, I would have to participate in the events to prepare students for an opportunity at travelling within that context, which

I naturally did as well. That was another important point of my internship, I was always involved in the events that I helped prepare. In case anyone had any doubts about the events, I was there to help, despite being off duty, at the events. Some colleagues would reach out to me directly, since I told them I was interning at the office, or they would D.M. the GRI Instagram page itself, where I would also answer them. Sometimes we would casually pass by each other in the hallways, and they would ask me questions regarding different doubts surrounding GRI events and mobility.

An important aspect comes to mind when thinking of consultancy that I did, which was that regarding the International Week, some teachers would come in-person to tell me about their availability changes to receive visiting lecturers from other countries, which I would note down, and reassure them that I would put those changes in place, and notify them of any updates regarding their subject participants or applicants.

Equally important, a Brazilian student had come to GRI to ask about how to book meals within our University Canteen, as the DOMUS platform was not working for her, appearing blank. I had experienced this before and knew alternative resources for booking meals. I taught her about the SAS 360, an application from P. Porto that lets you book meals more easily, as well as providing a readable QR code that is necessary for claiming the booked meal. She was not aware of the app, and found it very useful, thanking me.

There was a particular student that really left a mark on me. He is someone who came from Guinea Bissau, with lower living conditions, such as not having a computer, only a phone, and trying to find a job. He was incredibly humble and kind, despite his conditions. I reciprocated his kindness and wanted to give him everything he needed to make a better life for himself. The first time I met him, he came to GRI and needed to file a request from DOMUS, which I patiently taught him how to, and how to access the platform from his phone, he was not very tech-savvy due to him not having access to a computer at home. Next, I accompanied him to the Academic Services of ISCAP, since he also needed to request a student ID card. I explained the procedure to him and left him at the door for that type of consultancy, returning to my office shift. Much later, during the International Week (part of my internship), he had come to ask not just anyone from GRI, but specifically me for help, since I aided him last time, to print out his curriculum. I eagerly

printed multiple copies in color for him, as I decided it was my duty to help. Afterwards, I taught him about the Alumni and Career Office, of ISCAP, where people could help him career-wise. I walked him to the last floor, where the office is located, and spoke to the lady responsible, explaining our purpose for coming, despite us coming in off-scheduled hours. They booked a meeting together, and this student was incredibly indebted, which I replied that I am just glad to help. I did not stop there. At that time, we were hosting the International Student Fair, and we were showcasing CPLP and African cultures, not to mention foods, especially. One of them was Guinea Bissau, and I quickly remembered that was his original home. Thus, I invited him to try some of his country's origin foods and meet other students from his country as well. It was very wholesome, and he really felt at home eating them. He gave me a hug cause of how much he felt I helped him, and it was very heartwarming. This is what being a student should be about, not just studying, not just having fun, but also helping each other out.

5.2 Other

5.2.1 Manual Tasks

One of my jobs in this type of labor was to fold and print the paper that had all the criteria and information about the post-graduation mobility and spread it all around points of interest of the establishment where there would be a high concentration of students. I used my 5 years of experience in the university to figure this one out, and I ended up putting the advertisement in: Zina's Bar, Iscabar (ex-Tio's Bar), the canteen, the printing office as well as the student association, the waiting room near the entrance where the securities are, and in the entrance itself. A lot of people picked up a lot of the advertisements, as I would very subtly keep track while doing my regular university routine.

During the Change Management Event, I had to go around doors on ISCAP's bottom floor and gluing papers that contained the title of the event, and other activities related to it, as to signal respective doors for the activity to take place, making the location more easily identifiable within the facility. I had to make sure the tags and certificates on Microsoft Publisher were well-made, and then I printed them for the event, and that helped me understand how to maneuver the huge printer for ISCAP staff to use. In Excel,

we had a presence checklist for the event, and I had to confirm which people had already been contacted by phone, and if they said they would come or not.

Problem Solving: A problem I faced here was the printer gave me many slots for printing to choose from, but only one was the correct one. I got accustomed to it, and from then on knew which slot to pick when printing something, or at least the rationale behind why it wasn't working and what can I do.

The creation of gift kits was requested to me for the first time in early January, and in that specific situation, I was informed that some Brazilian students would come to attend an event or study at our facility, arriving in a nearby hotel within the next few days. In this case, not only did I create gift kits, but also packed study bags with them. These kits would often include a tote bag, and a folder with pens, maps and public transportation information of the city, notebooks, and a pen-drive with a presentation of both Porto, ISCAP, and important data regarding its courses, facilities, and international student accessibility. I was the one to get a sample pen drive already filled with the complete information and had to manually get more pen-drives from our storage cabinet, copy and paste all the information, and then seal them all carefully in dedicated small plastic bags that came with them. All the other items were to be put in an organized manner into a folder, and afterwards, into the tote bag, which in this scenario, I had to also put inside the study bags that we were gifting the Brazilian students, not to mention, I would also have to include some nice refillable and reuseable bottles, with the logos of ISCAP and P. Porto. Dr. Alexandra drove me to Axis Hotel and together, we delivered them to the Hotel Staff, for them to be placed in each of their rooms, as a surprise for when they would arrive.

Regarding foreign students' transcript of records, I would stamp them for them to be approved, on behalf of ISCAP and Dr. Alexandra, confirming I had authorization to do so, and the respective file was correctly given to me. This was not a common occurrence; however, I believe it is still worth mentioning as these documents have great importance in the bureaucratic aspect of helping students.

5.2.2 Phone Calls

At the time, I had to make phone calls to confirm the presence of students to an event called “Change Management”, it was quite simple, but since it was my first time professionally on the phone, I was excited rather than nervous. Surprisingly, despite being an introvert, when I have responsibilities to attend to, I lose all shyness, so I handle them well. This is how the phone calls would go: “Hello ____ (name), this is Nuno Ribeiro speaking, currently an intern for the ISCAP International Office, I’m calling in order to know if you will attend the Change Management Event you signed up for?”. Then, I would get varied responses such as “I can’t because...”, or “Yeah I will be there”. And of course, regardless of the reaction I got, I tried to be polite and wish everybody a good day at the end, keeping it professionally casual, considering I was talking to other ISCAP students, just like myself.

Problem Solving: Sometimes the phone would glitch out and say “congested”, but by calling the informatics department of the university, they swiftly came and solved the issue. Once in a blue moon, we also experienced power outages or simply no phone access, due to bad weather conditions, but it was something purely momentary that was solved the very next day, and to keep work consistent on that one occasion where it happened, the swiftest fix was to work from home.

An instance where some of my colleague interns (their recruitment is mentioned within the next sub-chapter) needed assistance, was a situation where they needed to check the corporate phone history of one of the work phones in our office. I quickly figured it out, helping them in the process, and speeding up their tasks, and consequently mine too, as we were working on the same thing at that time. (Preparations for the International Week).

5.2.3 Recruitment of New Interns

This duty is in a separate category considering all the different skillsets needed to execute it, I could not narrow it down to just one, although, naturally, the previous and next tasks I mentioned and will mention will require a multitude of skills and practices.

My role was to promote the recruitment of new interns at ISCAP. For that purpose, I designed a post, which can be observed in Figures 2 and 3 with a picture of ISCAP (the

university infrastructure itself, the entrance), and made it into 2 slides, a title slide, mentioning we have open vacancies for new interns, with a deadline, and the second one detailing the skillset needed for the position.



Figure 2- Slide 1 of the Intern Recruitment Post for GRI

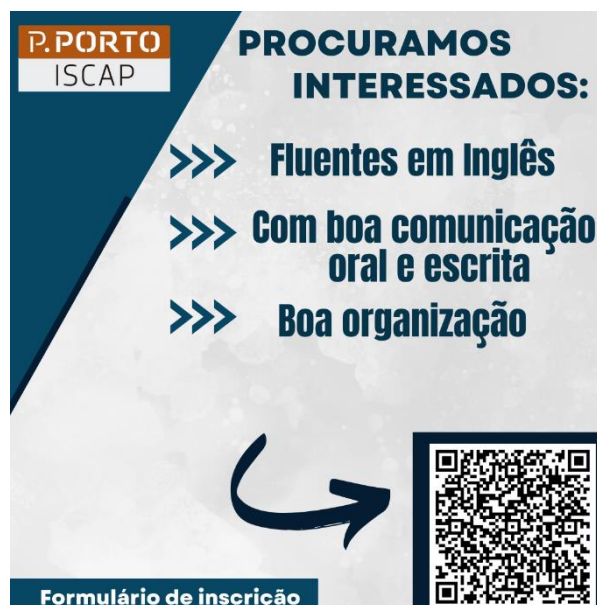


Figure 3- Slide 2 of the Intern Recruitment Post for GRI

A few hours after the post, which had a quite decent performance (social media metrics) when compared with previous posts, I got some questions in the direct messages of Instagram regarding applications, such as:

- “May I apply despite being a student from another P. Porto university?” which I replied affirmatively.

- “As an exchange student from a foreign country, may I apply for this internship at GRI?”, this one was a bit tougher, so I had to ask Dr. Alexandra for her opinion. She said she would answer herself, considering the particularity of the situation, so that was sorted by her.

Dr. Alexandra had already made a forms for this internship vacancy, so I was not required to do so. My job was to elaborate an Excel database with all the gathered information, such as names, contact information, current occupation/studies, interview availability for the following week and motivation letter.

Problem Solving: As I was editing the availability of interviews with all the available dates of each candidate in Excel, I wanted to make a graph displaying it, with ticks or crosses based on whether they could attend on that specific day or not, at different times. I did not know how to apply them, as they were not present on the keyboard. I quickly researched a tutorial on YouTube and managed to find how to do it, enhancing my Excel editing skills.

For all the mentioned information (besides motivation letters), I made the Excel sheet with the data. As for the motivation letters, I decided that it would be more aesthetically pleasing and readable if I made it a Word file (which I edited, and then turned into a PDF for the final version). Simultaneously, as I was editing the database with the different candidates’ answers, Dr. Alexandra would schedule meetings with the new intern candidates, like any other hiring professional establishment, according to my Excel database. Sometimes Dr. Alexandra would be in a meeting during the times that they came (the Officers too, so I was alone in the office), or they would come early, so I had to stop my work and accommodate them, asking them questions and sparking conversations, also offering them a cup of coffee or tea if they wished. Eventually, the GRI Coordinator would come back and host the interviews privately. I then would check if each candidate had already been to an interview, or if any scheduling would need to be re-done.

The basis of these new interns' work was to help with the International Week, so a week after that, me and the new interns were summoned at Dr. Alexandra's Office, to discuss which tasks would be assigned to us, anticipating the event. Despite my main function for the International Week being Communication (Digital, also formulating flyers, posters, brochures, etc.), I also managed to do other things we will discuss. On the other hand, my colleagues got tasked with some marketing, sponsorships, design and database management tasks.

Expanding the team was sort of a breath of fresh air...and relief, as in the first week or two of preparations for the International Week I was handling most tasks myself, multitasking, and gaining experience that would later help me guide the other interns.

The first thing after the interns were fully incorporated within the team was sending them the International Week intern manual through email. I would then explain how the IW database works for them and be open to any questions that they would have, of course.

A situation where new interns needed my help, was with using and activating our printer, located right near the door of our office, I taught them about which commands needed to be selected in Word or PDF files, Print -> Select Printer-> Customizing (Size, Color and Formatting Options...). The previously mentioned slot difficulty I faced before hiring interns helped me easily navigate the printer and be able to teach others through my own experiences. Another instance was handling a Word file that needed an image in a particular position that an intern was working on. She had asked me for help, and after checking around the Word settings and tools, I found the "Wrap Text -> Behind" option, which solved the problem and both me and the intern learned something new, allowing us to move the image freely within the Word document.

Towards the middle of my internship, we ended up recruiting a Spanish intern. It was very nice to experience intercultural contact within the workplace we call our home. He wasn't very good at speaking Portuguese, so most of the permanent members of GRI (the coordinator, and the IN and Out Officers), spoke to him in English. I felt as if he would be more comfortable, as a short-term intern, if someone were to speak Spanish with him. As a Spanish speaking person, every time I would interact with him, I would speak in his native tongue. This made him speak up a bit more, and whenever he needed help, he would ask me, and that made me glad, considering he was very shy.

5.3 Denmark Students and Teachers Visit

Organization

Dr. Alexandra notified me to make some preparations for an academic community from Denmark that was coming. She said she wanted to pick someone dynamic that could not only show them around ISCAP, as well as taking them to both a Wine Cellars + Boat Tour, as well as a visit to Porto Design Factory. GRI's Coordinator decided to give me a chance to show my social skills and management skills too, I was very open to the idea and accepted the role of guide and organizer of the event.

First things first, I had to book the Calem Wine Cellars + Boat Douro River Cruise. I was given the contacts of the lady who manages the business, and contacted her, booking not only this visit, but 3 others in advance with specific pre-determined dates and times, including the International Week one. Next step, I had to walk my way towards the university canteen and let them know we would be having 14 students and 2 teachers coming from Denmark. This was, in a summarized way, the necessary information relating to the canteen:

- Confirming the meal prices for the visitors
- If they could have a more intercultural meal offer for that week specifically
- If yes/if not, what are the offered meals for them to choose from
- Can they pay by the counter, or is it necessary to be pre-paid/another method

Anyway, I asked the serving lady working there if this was possible (international dishes) and she said to speak to her higher-ups, by contacting SAS IPP, by email.

Problem solving: At this time, we needed an urgent response, so I was tasked with going down to the canteen again and asking for a contact number. The working lady said she could not share the contact or did not have a proper one related to SAS IPP to give me, so I tried asking around with other ISCAP staff, namely a gentleman who had just come from an important meeting. I approached him politely and explained my purpose, and he gladly shared the contact of a person responsible I could call. I did so, and this was when I found out the international meal change was not possible. I still felt like this was a good learning experience considering I was always trying to find alternative ways to get the necessary information.

Next up, I made a Microsoft Forms, to know what our visitors would prefer to eat, and if they had any food restrictions. I carefully took note of the answers, which were then sent to SAS IPP through email, to guarantee the availability of the chosen meals. Following that, I made sure to call Porto Design Factory through the phone, also booking the trip for the visitors. To find the correct phone number, I went on their Facebook page, and there it was. I kept it very professional, as always.

Before the Wine Cellars and Boat Trip, since this was my very first time doing a tour guide task, I resorted to contacting two of my Masters´ colleagues, who just so happened to be the Directors of COMAP at the time, to come with me and aid me in the process. My Spanish Internship colleague was also invited, since he could experience the trip for the first time as a foreigner, but unfortunately, he could not attend. Together, COMAP members and I made a WhatsApp group, where we discussed how we would plan the trip, the meeting point and what time, etc. This made me feel more at ease, considering I did not have experience yet in this matter, plus, I already knew them, which turned out to be even better. Like every international guest we have at ISCAP and GRI, I had to prepare gift kits, specifically, a tote bag with a pen, a folder with important Porto and ISCAP information as well.

Arrival and On-Field Duties

The big day had come where I had to receive and accommodate the Denmark guests, and early in the morning that day, I made it to ISCAP´s entrance, greeting everyone that was there, explaining I would be their guide for the day. I noticed some people were missing so while keeping our talks going, I asked the ones that were there to wait for the rest of the colleagues with me by the entrance. Once I gathered everyone, I started introducing ISCAP and Porto, which they were very curious about. They felt comfortable in asking me many questions, such as “when was ISCAP built?”, “what is Praxe?”, “where can I fill my water bottle?”, and other location and culture-based questions. After the initial exchange, we finally started our tour. I took them all around the building, showing the library, classrooms, student facilities, eateries, auditoriums, gardens, and everything in between. The small crowd was very surprised at how big ISCAP was compared to its outside perspective. As a tour guide, in my first session, I would sometimes fasten my

step to avoid conversation since it was such a large crowd and I am an introvert, but I would always wait for everyone to catch up, so I could explain the next thing worth mentioning about the venue.

After the tour, we settled in the public canteen, and we all sat down and kept talking. When the time I was told of the workshops starting, I led them to the respective classrooms, where I also attended those classes. The overall feedback on the tour was good, they enjoyed it. When it came to the lunch in the canteen afterwards, that GRI and I booked for them, they said they were a bit confused about the program and decided not to eat at the canteen, they wanted to explore the city and eat at another place. This left me a bit confused since we had so much work to book it and prepare, but a mix-up with one of the workshop professors caused this. It was still fine, since the canteen service was not affected, and we just adapted to the situation. Lastly, on that day, Dr. Alexandra gave me the institutional budget for the upcoming trip, I felt a big sense of responsibility and was extremely careful when handling money matters.

The following day, it was time for me to meet up with my COMAP colleagues before our Wine Cellars + Boat Cruise, we met up near “Fonte do Cubo” and crossed the bridge to gather everyone near the CALEM Wine Cellars, as they would arrive. After gathering everyone, I made an announcement to ask them to line up near the entrance, for me to count them. Afterwards, I went inside, notified the Cellar workers of the amount of people, and we all made our way in. Me and COMAP made sure to take lots of pictures to share with our guests later, and finally we all tried the Porto Wine, which they enjoyed. Keeping track of time, we took them to the Cellar souvenir shop, and then leading them towards the boat stand, so we could attend the Boat Cruise. I counted everyone and handed the right amount of money to the gentleman working for the boat company, notifying him that my reservation was in the name of ISCAP, also asking for a receipt to prove I did everything correctly, and all was declared (I would later bring this receipt back to Dr. Alexandra). Our guests loved the boat trip, and afterwards they wanted to explore more, so we went walking downtown, showing them local shops, monuments, and such. Surprisingly, the Denmark students already had planned to go to a particular restaurant, which they told us about. It was a very hidden one, where we had to climb many steps, but we had a beautiful view of the city and river. The Denmark teachers expressed their gratitude for us receiving them, and gave me, the COMAP colleagues, and the workshop teachers a token of appreciation. I also was responsible for carrying

these gifts to deliver them to GRI, where Dr. Alexandra could later distribute them to the respective teachers. It was a wonderful experience to collaborate with my masters' colleagues in a work environment and meet new people.

The next day, regarding the Porto Design Factory trip, I could not attend as I was busy working at GRI, however, I heard it was also an enjoyable experience for our guests. Overall, although I had a lot to learn (and still do), I felt like it was a big step for me to be more open, to put myself out there, and to learn to interact with different cultures, not to mention, proudly representing ISCAP and my duty as a GRI Officer. Within this report, I hope that my progress and growth is reflected, thus, I am not shy about admitting that sometimes I was nervous, introverted, or made mistakes. It is not about being perfect, it is about learning to solve problems, and to gain adaptability and confidence in my work ethic and skill.

5.4 Miscellaneous

The agenda management for my boss, Dr. Alexandra, as well as our IN and Out Officers, was also part of my internship, I would use Google Calendar to arrange meetings for them, based on vacancies (empty slots within the software) within their schedules.

By the time we had recruited 2 people for the IW team of GRI, they had asked us if we could give them a tour of ISCAP. I gladly volunteered as I pride myself in having studied at ISCAP for my whole higher education studies, plus, I knew the facility like the back of my hand. Thus, I took them both on a laid-back walk around the university, showing them the different eateries, classrooms, infrastructure, outside park (both nature and car park), teacher floor, and library, which they really enjoyed and were surprised by the sheer size and how many different functions ISCAP was able to host. In fact, this later motivated them to apply for my Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business, as I explained to them the procedures on how to apply and what the course entailed, which they asked me as well, since they were finishing their Bachelor's Degree at the time, in a humanities related field.

6 The International Week

A major event upcoming for April 2024 needed to be prepared well in advance, was the notorious International Week. The preparation and execution of this event was the main purpose of me and my colleagues' internships at the office. It consists of a week, in April, where teachers from partner universities all around the world join us for a week full of events, lectures, food and of course, intercultural exchange. It is organized by ISCAP, through the International Office, and with the help of COMAP. For the visiting teachers to do so, they must take care of their flight information, confirm their presence for the different events of the International Week, sign a mobility agreement and choose from an array of subjects and lectures offered by teachers of ISCAP, who will work together to prepare and deliver those classes during the International Week. By letting us know which professor and subject they choose, we can assign the foreign teachers a host internal teacher so they can exchange communications more easily with each other. In this scenario, GRI works as an intermediary between the two, and the pioneer for intercultural contact in an academic setting.

My first task was to carefully study and observe the files and organization present in previous years, so later my colleagues and I would have guidelines and procedures to follow when developing the event. Basically, there was a big database in One Drive (Office 365) with records of previous years. Firstly, I had to create all the folders like the previous ones, for 2024. This year's event was exclusive for teaching staff; thus, I adapted a form for the teachers to fill, identical to previous years' surveys, but slightly updated with a few tweaks considering we wanted to make it exclusive this year (for teaching staff), (see Annex IV). Originally, the survey was in Google Forms, but I had to do it through Microsoft Forms. It was my first time utilizing this alternative, as I was used to Google's program. Afterwards, I downloaded the excel version of the answers and turned them into a fully-fledged database in another excel file, separating them by Lecturer / Subject / Topic / Schedule, in a more aesthetically pleasing and organized manner, according to what Dr. Alexandra's standard she mentioned. (Topic, Hours, Academic Level, Schedule, Student Class).

Problem solving: Half the time, I was missing some information regarding teacher schedules, or other information about them, like subject names and description. As a

solution, I would consult ISCAP's Domus (Current Online Secretary) as well as Secretaria Online (the old platform preceding Domus), as it was surprisingly still active and had important schedule details of teachers) to actively look for the teachers' names in the search bar, to find the missing information. If for some reason such as vacancies in their schedules or lack of displayed information from a certain teacher, I would either email them asking about it, or as a last resort, ask Dr. Alexandra for their contact information so I could call them on the phone to clarify. There was a database compiling information of each ISCAP lecturer, which I had to translate into English.

6.1 Design

When it comes to design, I worked a lot on the image of the event. I re-did the colors and typography of the 2023 logo of the International Week into the now established 2024 one, through Photoshop. I was told to utilize the pantone 2024 color of the year, which was peach fuzz (I had to always follow the color hex code to the tee), and that would be the major aesthetic guideline for most design outputs from the team, regarding the event.

6.2 Digital Communication

After collecting the answers and organizing all the internal teacher information into a Google Sheets that would be displayed for the external teachers coming to visit us regarding the International Week, we made another Microsoft Forms for foreign teachers to tell us important data. Although I originally did not do this, just like previous forms I mentioned, I adapted them from Google Forms into Microsoft Forms and updated the required data to fit this year's criteria (see Annex V). After obtaining each response, I would have to contact each of the respondents' selected ISCAP teacher, to confirm if they would accept, and if the schedule and subject information was correct. To do so, I had Word templates for both what to write in the email informing the respective ISCAP teacher, as well as one for how to structure an annexed file that would come attached to that replied email with their subject, schedule and scientific area, so they could confirm. These templates were from the previous year's International Week (It is worth mentioning

that I had a private copy of this Google shared sheet that was displayed for visiting lecturers in our IW database, so I could keep track of already selected ones, and which ones were still available.).

These email exchanges took their course over some months, as new foreign teacher respondents would keep replying, and of course, a lot of logistic aspects such as: someone wanting to swap teachers or subjects, schedule changes due to flights, the subjects that the foreign lecturers would pick have already been selected by another, not to mention I had a goal for every participant to have their schedule filled between 4 to 6 hours within the International Week, or even some teachers (both ISCAP and foreign) not replying.

Problem solving: If it was the ISCAP teacher that wouldn't reply or I could not reach them, it was easy, I would simply ask for their number and call them from the Office's work phone, asking them about their availability and whatever information I needed. If they were foreign, I would first try to ask my IN and OUT mobility co-workers, or even my boss if they had an alternative contact, which in some cases, they did not, and I had to get creative. I searched up their institutions' website, and international office contact details, and tried to get in touch through those staff members instead, which they very kindly replied and gave me the means to contact the teacher(s) I needed. As for filling up the schedules up to 4-6 hours for the participants, I would directly email them asking if they had any more subjects from the list of their interest, and through their replies and me confirming with the respective ISCAP teachers, we filled their schedules up.

The predominant reason this was such a lengthy task was because this was the main way for us to organize the event. First starting with the forms for both sides (ISCAP teacher and foreign participants data), and now it was up to me to organize it all, while simultaneously keeping communication active with answering questions that they would email me regarding the event or organization matters (for example: descriptions about events, website, form access, funding, etc.) daily, and filling out our database. To keep track of every confirmed teacher, I kept writing it on my daily notebook, "ISCAP Teacher -> Which Foreign Teacher; Time; Current Total Schedule Hours". This was done as a first instance solution, which then transitioned to an actual digital database, which I will describe in detail.

In the International Week's Outlook (email) and Office 365 account, if we went into One Drive (our major database for current and previous years) -> SI 2024 folder -> DB, that's

where I stored and created our major database through Excel for the most important data regarding this year's participants and the event itself.

In this Excel file, I had multiple sheets:

- All Data for Participants (Name/University/Country/Position/Email)
- Bureaucracy Checklist (If invitation letter to the IW was received by the participant/ if contract was received / if our institution signed it / if their institution signed it/ if certificate was sent)
- Lectures Plan (Visiting Teacher / their contact (email) / host teacher / their contact / name of the session (subject) / Weekdays where they would teach, with respective room(s) / additional material necessary (for class)

As I mentioned, I had to update each of these sheets every day for an extended period, to keep the International Week organization in check, while replying to emails, making other necessary forms, and contacting people when information was lacking.

When it came to contacting host lecturers from ISCAP regarding visiting teachers who chose them and their subjects, nearer to the date of the International Week, when we already had a better established intern team, I taught one of my colleagues who was newer to work with the template word file for this type of communication, and with enough practice, we managed for her to do the task well, which helped me be less overwhelmed when I had more workload pressure due to the date coming closer. The other interns, from marketing and sponsorships, all got come acquainted with me, and would ask me questions on a variety of subjects, such as “how do I format the text this way?”, “any design feedback for this brochure?”, “how should we organize this on social media?”, “what should I write if the sponsor company did not reply yet?”, and it was a very wholesome and teamwork-based experience, which I loved.

The fact that they asked me for help made me realize I was competent at what I was doing. I am not saying this to brag, on the contrary: I felt like I started from the bottom and would have to ask for help constantly, but I was steadily becoming more and more independent and went to become a full-on GRI officer, like Ana or Cláudia. I knew GRI like the palm of my hand and the workflow on many different areas that needed to be done, so I always offered help and that made me happy, and I genuinely felt proud of the other interns when they achieved their tasks.

After the initial Registration Form for Guest Lecturers, to confirm who would attend the International Week, a second, more detailed Microsoft Forms was sent to those who were

in fact coming. In this form, we included questions regarding which of the events each participant would attend, as well as specifics related to their flights.

To be more specific, I had to authenticate the flights per guest lecturer, knowing exactly what times they would come, thus, I would keep exchanging emails regarding that, and making schedule adjustments if their flights coincided with any early class; not to mention, I also would ask them simultaneously for a professional picture of themselves, so we could put it in our database, for both Host Lecturers, and attending students.

Relating to that, within our database, I created 2 folders, namely “Participants” and Bio notes. In “Participants”, I had the names, picture, and a small description of each guest lecturer, while in Bio notes, I had a larger description for each guest, detailing their personality, and academic and professional history.

After all these major information exchanges, something else to take care of, were the mobility agreements that had to be signed by both universities. Ideally, they would send us theirs first, and afterwards, I would have them signed by our institution, and sent them back by email, updating the “DB” file, every step of the way. Sometimes this process would require me to insist with guest lecturers by email to provide me with this document. Since it took a bit more work from their end, and it was not something readily available, they would either take more time or forget about it, which is understandable.

When all the classes among guest lecturers and host lecturers were fully-fledged and done, I would have to send them to Ana and Cláudia (IN and OUT Officers) and notify the host lecturers of ISCAP whose classes were not picked by any guest lecturers, or in some cases, their guest lecturers simply could not attend, due to a multitude of reasons, through email. In this email, I would thank them for their availability and saying that GRI would love to collaborate with them next year.

As for the ones who were picked, they would receive a final confirmation email of the classes, and the schedules they chose for the guests.

Before the International Week, one of my duties also worth mentioning was to contact the Male and Female Tunas (music groups from ISCAP, made up of students), to attend the Gastronomic Fair, which was one of the events of the International Week.

I found their contacts in previous years ‘email exchanges for the same purpose and used those examples as to how should I structure the emails to contact them. Through those

emails, I exchanged phone numbers with the representatives of the Tunas to contact them on the day of, if necessary, and booked them for a specific date and time.

Since most meals were offered by ISCAP, I did not feel the need to contact SAS IPP and plan out diverse meal plans for them, or formulate any forms to send them, unlike the Denmark visitors 'event.

When it comes to the Program for the International Week, which can be found on our website, <https://www.iscap.ipp.pt/iw2024>, I made it myself.

I was originally given an Excel file with the information and was told it was not very appealing both aesthetically and in terms of readability, so Dr. Alexandra asked me to turn it into something nice. I quickly thought of using Canva, and the program had a design prototype (see Appendix XII), mainly focusing on the backbone of the design itself, meaning, the overall look I was aiming for, I settled on something semi-formal that would still look nice and appealing, where the logo for IW 2024 would contrast well with a gradient, and something related to intercultural connection, which I chose a globe to fit well into the design, and to make it look less empty (see Appendix XIII).

I was told there would be some changes regarding the location of some of the stated events, which were decided a bit “on the spot”, but I was not responsible for the organization part of these events, location-wise, so I just focused on the design aspect of the program. After finishing my work, I emailed GCRP to incorporate it into our website of the International Week, for ease of access. All guest lecturers and host lecturers knew about the website, since during the initial announcement through email of the International Week, it already had been mentioned. Plus, I kept sending emails periodically to all participants about changes, and updates regarding any forms that needed to be filled, any updates to our websites, and frequently asked questions.

Following up, I asked the other communications and design intern team (2 people) to check last year's display schedules (for TV presentation all around ISCAP's display platforms), and to apply this year's 'schedules present in the DB excel file I made to that style and changing its colors to our pantone peach fuzz theme. I also requested them to make sure all bio notes files were updated, as in, removing those who could not make it to International Week, and making sure all the pictures of our guests had the same proportions and structure, within the file. I had to do some tweaks to the TV display file at the end, in terms of information, such as correcting a time mistake here and there, and

making sure the right teachers were assigned to the correct guests. The interns did a wonderful job and together we made all these design projects into reality (see Annex VI).

A brochure featuring our sponsors was also created, where the schedule was featured again, in a visually different way (one was for tv display, the other was for the website and printing), and additionally the logos of our sponsors. This was done by my intern colleagues, and I stepped in by reviewing it, correcting potential mistakes, and turning it into a publisher file for A4 sized paper printing, in color at the end (see Annex VII).

My colleagues (2, sponsor team) sent the sponsor logos to GCRP of ISCAP, to be uploaded to the website. Just like the TV Display and the Brochure, everything needed to be meticulously reviewed, including the database, and all other files such as Participants and Bio notes folders, as to prepare the final touches for the International Week, which was coming incredibly soon by this time. The printer also had to be tested before the final prints of design pieces, as sometimes the machine would fail, not printing with the right colors, or displaying information on both sides rather than just one.

An ISCAP overview and special departments presentation for PowerPoint was also made in Canva. This was a collective work between me and my colleagues. We went for a very minimalist but modern aesthetic, and I sent an email asking each department to formulate their own slides, detailing what their purpose is, some statistics or relevant information, members, and anything they would like to add. This email was sent before we compiled all department slides, and I sometimes needed to physically go to each department, to remind them to send us the slides, when possible, as the clock for the event was ticking.

A potential mistake we did not make was the Canva template beforehand, which led to the slides being visually inconsistent, as each department went for a different aesthetic vision. Nonetheless, we had all the necessary information for the presentation to be done, and we just made the cover and some adjustments, such as text positioning, or visual elements corrections (see Annex VIII).

Something we also produced was physical badges (done digitally and printed), that would be plasticized and trimmed for the International Week. I did not do this task myself. All I did was cut the printed badges with scissors, plasticizing each one, trimming them with a guillotine tool (I had to get it from the patrimony department of ISCAP), and making a

hole in the upper part of them, to be able to assemble them with the P. Porto chains, so they would become wearable by guests and staff members.

I also manually created and organized folders for each of the different classes of each day, gluing a stamp with the description of the class, such as which teachers (local and guest), subject, and time of class. Within it, I had to put a few important papers, containing the guest's bio note, a class attendance list for students, and guest (and class) review for the host teacher. I ordered these by weekday and schedule, for when the time to deliver them would come, it would be much easier in terms of logistics to do so.

Dr. Alexandra requested me to make a Facebook and Instagram post announcing the International Week event, as well as to let people know about our website. For this purpose, I created one on Canva, deciding to go for the same aesthetic and template we used in the ISCAP and its department's PowerPoint presentation.



Figure 4- Slide 1 of the International Week Announcement Post for GRI



Figure 5- Slide 1 of the International Week Announcement Post for GRI

In this post, as observed in Figures 4 and 5 visually, I tried to entail what the event was about, and some of its key features. I also included a mock-up, showing viewers our brochure as well as our website, which could be reached via either desktop or mobile. I figured most people watching the post, mainly on Instagram, where we have more viewers, were using their phones, so a phone mock-up seemed more appropriate for me.

In the copywrite, I made sure to include both Portuguese and English translations, considering students could attend the different partnership classes, as well as some of the other events like the International Students Fair, which we will detail each event in the following segments of this thesis' chapter.

Still within the field of communication, I created 2 WhatsApp groups to ease message exchanges: one for the staff members, and another for the guests, where they, me, the Boss, and our Officers would be. Considering the other interns were not placed in this group, I assumed the GRI Coordinator placed enough trust in my abilities to manage the group. When necessary, I would elaborate a message in the group about mass communication, such as where the next event would be, welcoming them to the group, answering questions and making suggestions. Some guest lecturers would also privately message me on WhatsApp for further discussion of their doubts, with more privacy, and I would answer them promptly.

Another preparation aspect to consider was me and the rest of the intern team carried all our sponsor products, such as food and beverages, to the welcoming room, 003, at ISCAP. To facilitate transportation, we asked the patrimony department to lend us a wheeled hand-vehicle to carry the goods, which they did, and all these sponsor products were also stored there.

Before the final update of the classes, I sent the global schedule of all teachers to the boss, and both our Officers, for review. Besides a specific detail missing of a schedule, which I then added, everything was perfect, and ready to go. However, since 4 people, including me, were now editing the same file, Excel started to glitch out, and mix up schedules and names. This was a big scare for me, considering I worked so hard for many months to make things as smooth and as correct as possible. With a lot of work, we eventually got everything back into place, besides a specific teacher whose schedule was mixed up.

Problem Solving: The next day, the first day of the International Week, she came in early to room 003 (reception), expecting to have a class but she did not, as it was a mix up. At first, this left her very disappointed. Despite this being a glitch's fault, the responsibility to fix the issue would be on me. I apologized to her, and promptly contacted the host lecturer to re-schedule her class, and in a way, it was a good thing that this happened because we found a better schedule that would be more convenient for both. This guest lecturer later understood the mistake and we ended up on good terms, even sparking positive conversations between me and her later during the week.

International Week- Plan Set in Motion

The big day, on the 15th of April 2024, a Monday, would be the big start of the International Week. In this sub-chapter, I will detail the exact experiences of the event.

6.3 Room 003 and IW Events

This room was where we stored the basic food and drinks, as previously mentioned, such as tea, coffee (with a coffee machine from our sponsors), juices, and as for food, we had

waffles and cupcakes. I spent quite some time in this room, not only setting up everything with my intern colleagues, but also for guest lecturer contact, which will come up within the following paragraphs of the sub-chapter.

A lot of times during the week, I had to show up early in the morning, as guest lecturers would arrive, waiting for the host lecturers to pick them up so they would go together to the respective classroom. There were mainly 3 instances where we would have guest visitors (lecturers): morning, during the day after lunch, and in the evening. I tended to stay longer during the morning and sometimes after lunch.

Before each day, me and a specific variable intern colleague would go room by room, all around ISCAP, to place papers in the doors, letting people know which class, by which lecturers, when and what time would classes be. I was given this task predominantly because I was the intern who knew ISCAP best, considering I frequented ISCAP for the last 5 years, and I know ISCAP thoroughly.

Anyway, back to room 003, the reception room, when we got visitors (lecturers), we would hand them their badges that they could wear around their neck, like a necklace, and a folder with the bio note, student presence sheet, and host lecturer class review. Sometimes the guest lecturers would ask me where the rooms would be preemptively (to prevent them being late, knowing the room, and making necessary preparations for their classes), and I would kindly guide them towards their classroom. Most of the time, this would be fine, as another intern would stay within 003, in case anyone else came.

Throughout the day, another duty of mine and the other interns, were to take pictures of each classes, as a folder with all the week's pictures would be created and shared at the end of the event with all our lecturer visitors.

To finish this first day, we had the Welcome Cocktail, where a vast array of delicacies from our sponsors, such as cheese, custard tarts, pork sandwiches, as well as some enjoyable wines of different kinds and usual drinks like coffee, and juice were also present. I was invited to attend as an organizer, and we were allowed to enjoy the food just like our guests. Like I stated in the major task part of the internship chapter, the Tunas, both male and female of ISCAP, were contacted to perform here. I called them up to make sure they would be on time, and everything went smoothly. Our guests really enjoyed the Tunas dances, instrumentation and singing, which is part of academic culture here in Portugal (the sponsor foods and the Tunas performing at the event can be seen in Annex

IX). Afterwards, we cleaned the room up and moved chairs and tables back to their original places in the room, ending off the day.

On Tuesday, 16th of April, I spoke with a multitude of guest lecturers in room 003. There was a middle eastern teacher who also had asked me to see the student association of ISCAP, which I kindly showed her and explained the different spaces it has, such as the living space, what kind of activities take place in all the association and student duties and benefits. Everything went standardly within protocol for the rest of the day, with me taking pictures of classrooms and staying within 003 to receive more guests.

Wednesday, the 17th of April, was a special day, as it was a big challenge for me to be the sole guide for such a large group of people from so many different backgrounds, for the first time without anyone accompanying me. I was tasked with taking all our guests to the Wine Cellars and the Boat Cruise, within the Ribeira in Gaia, Portugal, similarly to our Denmark guests, before the International Week. Both destination pictures can be observed in Appendix XIV. Thankfully, everything went well, I tried explaining each destination carefully, being kind to everybody. I did take some pictures of guests and the different activities but decided not to appear in any of them. After the trip, I ordered a taxicab for me and a few guest lecturers that also wanted to go back to ISCAP, splitting the bill with them. Two international lecturers invited me to participate in their personal branding master class later that day, during the evening, going into nighttime. I gladly accepted, and I learned a lot from them, Dr. Alexandra also participated in it, which was refreshing considering you don't get to go to class with your Boss every day. All in all, it was a pleasure working with both her and the guest lecturers.

When it comes to Thursday, 18th of April 2024, the day started with the reception in 003, with similar protocol as the other days. Afterwards, there was the International Students Fair, an event where we celebrated our CPLP students and ISCAP members, as well as some special guests, predominantly of African descent countries, such as Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, and Angola. In it, there were special food stands with culturally traditional foods for everyone to try, music (we even had a DJ), and special speeches and stories

from our guests (also CPLP). We had special posters for the event (which my sponsor team intern colleagues did very well), and those who were tasked with orchestrating and managing the event were mostly our intern sponsor team, and CPLP students who wanted to share their heritage with everyone, so proudly. That day, me and my Spanish intern colleague were mostly tasked with staying in 003 to receive guest lecturers, but considering the schedules I had organized, I realized it would be a slow day and at that time that the event would take place, we would not get many visitors. Thus, I asked my colleague to stay in 003 for me, and I went to help with the International Students Fair, despite not being part of the organizers, officially. From setting up chairs, tables, and balloons, and serving the traditional foods to guests, talking to everyone and cleaning up afterwards, it was a wonderful experience to get to know and interact with so many people from CPLP communities, which to be honest, didn't know had such a strong presence in ISCAP, at the time. A lot of teamwork was involved in this event, and everything was very well organized from a logistical standpoint, and I am grateful for the opportunity and the fact that I took the initiative instead of being in 003 that day. I obviously took turns with my intern colleague, so he could experience the International Students Fair, as well.

On our very last day of the International Week, the 19th of April, there was the Farewell Lunch. An event where the presidency, GCRP and our senior GRI members would gather with our foreign guest lecturers, to experience some high-end lunch, Portuguese cuisine style, with a private catering company, in "Sala de Atos" (a room for events and usually where the Tunas practice, same as the welcome cocktail on the first day).

Thankfully, all the interns were invited as well, and this was another instance of intercultural exchange, where we and the teachers got to gather around and talk more about our cultures and their experiences during the International Week. Annex X clearly demonstrates how this part of the International Week operated. When everything was said and done, we packed up everything in the room, from the chairs, to the tables, to table cloths, and so on and so forth, and we put them away, restoring the room to its original intended state, as well as bringing any food sponsor leftovers upstairs, to GRI and to the patrimony office for storage, and potential return for the sponsors who asked us to do so.

The clean-up took us most of the day, as not only did we have to put Sala de Atos in an organized manner, but we also had to clean up 003 and move all our stuff back upstairs to GRI and patrimony office. By the evening, when we were finished, and all very tired, Dr. Alexandra told me to give a gift to our president of ISCAP, in the name of the whole team and of course, the superior management of our department and International Week organizers. I made my way upstairs, to the teacher rooms floor, and went into the secretariat part of the building, and was very respectful to the secretary, asking her where the presidential room would be, and stating my purpose. She was very kind, and smiled at me, and I made my way into the office.

As the spokesperson representing so many important people not only to me, but also ISCAP, I tried my best to be respectful and say the right thing. I shook the president's hand, lifted a special wine bottle with both hands, as it was the gift, and I said "Mr. President, on behalf of the GRI team and International Week organizers, I thank you for your contribution and would like to give you a special gift."

Our president, Dr. Manuel Silva is very gentle and was very grateful to receive our gift, and smiled, thanking not just me but all the people I was representing. This made me happy, and I went back to GRI downstairs, and told Dr. Alexandra how it went, which she was proud of.

After the International Week, over the weekend and following days, I organized all the pictures I took from the event and made a folder to share with the guest lecturers that came to visit us. Our database is stored in a way that we cannot share links outside of the institutional email addresses, so, as a solution, I moved it all to a google drive, from GRI's Gmail account, and created a shared link, which they were able to access.

I sent the link through email and wished them all a very happy summer and thanked them all for coming, mentioning the possibility for us to collaborate again next year.

My interaction and involvement did not stop there, as I have shown post-internship activities in Appendix XVI. A reflection upon the skills I have developed throughout my internship can be read in Appendix XVII.

7 Conclusion

The internship felt as if it came at the right place, at the right time. I can't think of any other company or place that would be meaningful to me, and I would have grown as much as I have in such a short timeframe. It made me a better professional, and person, and above all, more mature and independent. I made mistakes, I forgot things, I rushed things sometimes because of how seriously I take my job, which gave off a nervous impression at times to co-workers, but with those experiences, I learned. And because of that, when it was time to teach other new interns, I excelled. I made them feel welcome, I saw myself in them, and I tried to be kind and inspire them to get involved in things too. I got to travel, meet more people than I ever have, especially from other countries, and with different experiences; I got to collaborate with colleagues from my Masters, who would either check on how my report was going occasionally, and some whom I travelled to another country with to perform a BIP, through Erasmus+. I am very proud of how far I have come and want to keep learning more about how to be an even better leader, where I can manage people better, resolve conflicts better, get the whole team on board, and make everybody feel comfortable and working their best. I want to be an inclusive leader, where everyone gets a chance to show what they are capable of, and feel like they matter in the group, because they really do. Overall, I felt like I did more in a year in terms of professional and personal growth, than maybe my whole life. I want every year, for the rest of my life, to be the same or better. To always keep aiming higher and higher, to network and embrace teamwork and making friends and acquaintances and getting closer to reaching my life goals. I would highly recommend anyone to get involved in an internship, or to take that job opportunity you are still thinking about, or to start that hobby you keep mentioning you want to do.

Let's all keep working hard to make the world a better place and to uplift other people, while growing ourselves.

**CHAPTER III – THE VOICES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:
MOTIVATIONS AND CHALLENGES**

8 Introduction

A survey was conducted and sent by email to 486 total International Students of ISCAP, from the academic years of 2022/2023, and 2023/2024 combined.

The goal was to perceive the feedback of Erasmus international students regarding their stay at ISCAP (and Porto), and what were the motivations for choosing ISCAP, their most important aspects they considered when deciding to study here, as well as the difficulties they faced and what would they improve, asking them to provide constructive criticism.

These answers could provide a major insight into many different aspects that are usually seen as simple statistics or figures but often lack to describe the personal reality of each student's experience. My survey's purpose, in a way, was to fill that gap, and to understand why these students opted for both Portugal, and more specifically, ISCAP and Porto, out of all the thousands of options they might have otherwise picked for their Education Mobilities.

Using the platform Google Forms, I carefully planned out and elaborated the survey to be simple to navigate and to answer. Another aspect to keep in mind was that I wanted to write a captivating email to be delivered to each of them, asking to fill in the survey.

I carefully formulated the digital correspondence for mass delivery to all 486 International Students, which can be consulted in Appendix XVIII and through it, I explained my purpose and why their participation would be relevant, emphasizing how these students would play a key role in the creation of my thesis. I included a deadline for the sake of being assertive and keeping my request in their minds, so it wouldn't get lost amidst the many emails they would receive, such as email marketing, their personal and professional affairs, and general notifications from their used services.

For greater detail in my pursuit of the adventures and lifestyles lived in ISCAP by these students, I also conducted 3 interviews with 2 of the respondents of the survey as my interviewees, and additionally, a separate ERASMUS+ student whom I met after finishing my internship, giving us both a general perspective and a detailed one, for more depth within my research.

By collecting this valuable data, we can perceive in what ways ISCAP is doing things right when it comes to its internationalization and International Student inclusion, which translates to its global notoriety, and in what other aspects it could do better. Within this chapter’s analysis, I will compile not only their basic biometric data, but also their motivations, interests, and what they struggled with, not to mention, providing conclusive constructive criticism, not just from them, but also from my 5-year academic experience, with personal opinions and feedback I heard from the community over time.

Drawing on Laurence Bardin's (1977) insights into qualitative methodology, I will employ content analysis to systematically categorize and interpret the data collected from student interviews and surveys. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities behind the students' experiences and perspectives, revealing underlying themes and patterns that can inform ISCAP's strategies for enhancing international student engagement and support. By focusing on both qualitative and quantitative aspects, the analysis aims to create a comprehensive picture of ISCAP's current position and potential areas for improvement in its internationalization efforts.

9 The Survey

The total number of International Students from the academic years of 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 which was 486, came to me through physically counting the number of students individually from an internal file of ISCAP where their names and contact could be found, which was provided to me by Dr. Sara Pascoal, my internship report mentor, despite the data originally belonging to GRI, and I used this information in order to both count the totality of International Students in both academic years, but also have a means to get in touch with them, strictly for the purpose of the survey which was afterwards created. Table 1 details the number of International Students per year, and the year of 2019/2020 was included for comparison.

ISCAP	2019/2020	2022/2023	2023/2024
1st Semester	---	144	134
2nd Semester	---	103	105
Total	242	247	239

Table 1- Number of International Students Enrolled at ISCAP Between 2019-2024
(ISCAP GRI, 2024)

In fact, a news article published by ISCAP in 2020 states that ISCAP is the most international (based on the number of International Students) higher education institution of P. Porto in the academic year of 2019/2020, with 23 different nationalities present in the statistics of that year, and that the countries from those different nationalities with the highest number of International Students in ISCAP were Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Spain. Let's take that into consideration and see if these numbers changed through the later years that we are analyzing.

Something that can be noticed right away is the fact that despite having the COVID-19 pandemic in the middle of the academic year, starting in December 2019 (so the enrollment number of 2019/2020 is still considered pre-pandemic), which had major hinderances on travelling, especially within an Education Mobility context (Yildirim et. al., 2021), the post-pandemic numbers not only returned to normal pre-pandemic consistency, but they also actually momentarily surpassed those figures in the academic year of 2022/2023, and still stayed within close range in the following year. Although it would be nice to compare the numbers during the actual pandemic, I wasn't able to gather such data, so with the analysis of the available numbers, it is still safe to say that figures show ISCAP had a major recovery and its efforts were commendable.

When it comes to the questionnaire itself, the framework was as follows:

To keep things consensual, respectful towards the participants and ethical according to European standards, my very first part of the survey was the Informed Consent, where I carefully detailed the aims, who I am, what is my goal, and how the participants data would be processed, essentially, a proper introduction of the research. Although I already did so in the original email that I sent to a mass of students, I felt like it would be both professional and reassuring that their data would be in good hands and used for the right purpose (academic), I also tried to explain everything in a more detailed manner.

As for the questions themselves, I divided them into sections:

Section 1- Basic Identifiers, such as: First Name, Last Name, Age, Nationality and Country of Residence.

I asked for biometric data for 2 main reasons: To have a range of ages from participants and of course, to verify where they are from, and if their nationality differs from where they are currently residing. The name is just an additional factor so I could guarantee there would be no duplicate answers from the same individual, as the anonymity of each participant is important to me.

Section 2- I dedicated this section to asking ISCAP related questions:

How long did they study at the institution? (Multiple Choice, different answers ranging from less than 3 months to 2+ years)

How did they hear about ISCAP, when looking for ERASMUS mobility? (Answers were: Someone told them, home institution, the internet, or another, open option)

What motivated them to study abroad? (They could tick all that apply intercultural contact, networking opportunities, ISCAP had a subject of their interest, travel opportunity, personal growth, wanting to reside in the country of destination after studies, wanting to learn the native language of the country, or open other option.)

A yes or no question asking if ISCAP was their first education mobility experience.

I felt as if this array of questions from this section would help us determine the length of each student's stay at ISCAP, how did the word of ISCAP reach them, their main motivations, and to understand if this Education Mobility was their first experience in that realm.

Section 3- I asked them to rate each question from 1 to 5 of importance (5 being the most) regarding different choice factors related to selecting a university as a destination from the Erasmus mobility program:

- Academic Reputation
- Location (Geography and Weather)
- Courses Available

- Opportunities for Cultural Immersion (Gastronomy, Holidays, Customs and Practices, etc.)
- Support Services for International Students (ex: International Office, accommodation services, etc.)

Despite us already inquiring about their motivations from a more personal perspective, these questions could give us insight into more specific sources of motivation, based on priority, related to the host country (Portugal) and even the higher education institution itself, ISCAP.

Section 4- Questions regarding both their integration and more details into their motivations.

Asking the students through a yes or no question if they felt a sense of belonging during their stay at ISCAP.

The specific aspects of ISCAP's mobility program that they valued most, they could tick all that apply (the options were location (Porto, Portugal), gastronomy, weather, local culture, and academic reputation/success).

In a general way, I wanted to know if they felt like they fit in within the academic community and their peers, and what local features they valued in ISCAP's mobility program.

Section 5- Another section where they could rate each category of this part of the survey from 1 to 5 when it comes to importance to them, based on the biggest concerns or challenges they might have anticipated facing when studying abroad at ISCAP.

Here are the categories:

- Language Barriers
- Infrastructure (ISCAP, the building itself)
- Cultural Differences
- Accommodation/Housing Issues
- Any other difficulties they faced (open-ended question)

Besides motivation, I considered their hinderances as a staple of the survey, as we must explore both good and bad, and perceive if they had a good experience or not at the institution, in an honest, transparent way where they would feel comfortable answering.

Section 6- As the final section, it features a mix of question styles, including 2 open-ended questions (with a 3rd potential open-ended option), a multiple choice one, and a tick all that apply one.

I asked them to explain to me how they would envision this mobility experience they had contributing to their academic and personal development.

Additionally, I questioned their long-term goals following the completion of their mobility program (tick all that apply: personal growth, better employment, intercultural exchange, networking, entrepreneurship (starting a business/investing/collaborating), learning more Portuguese (the language), and an open option, if they wanted to add anything)

I inquired if they would recommend their ISCAP (and consequently, Portugal) mobility experience (Yes or no question).

And finally, I asked if they wanted to share or inquire about the university's mobility programs.

This section would provide us with the finishing details for our research, such as what their next course of action in terms of goals would be, based on the completion of this mobility; if they would recommend or not their ISCAP experience (which would summarize if they found it enlightening); and to finish up, suggestions they could have for improvement or opinions.

In summary, this survey would supply us with solid evidence and a foundation for understanding the latest International Students' (as of writing this thesis) motivations, difficulties, their country of origin and age range, suggestions for improvement of the integration of International Students and general services within the university, and if they liked or disliked and would recommend or not ISCAP's mobility.

10 The Interviews

As I was simultaneously waiting for responses for the survey, I began searching for potential candidates, in this case, ISCAP current or ex- International Students and ERASMUS+ mobility users to the university. I wanted my candidates to be diverse for best accuracy of different experiences from different cultures, and if possible, include a male and a female candidate for sex diversity as well.

I wanted to aim for a maximum duration of 20 minutes of interview, to keep the interviewees interested and keep information objective. The questions I chose tended to vary significantly per interview, as the fluidity of the conversation was not the same static platform as the survey, and I tried to use that to our empirical advantage. Regardless, the goals of the questions were always the same:

- Understand the duration of their stay.
- What is their country of origin.
- Their adjustment and adaptation process at ISCAP and the factors that contributed to it (or hindered it).
- Comparing the education aspect of Portugal and ISCAP with other institutions in their country of origin.
- Perceiving if they made any meaningful connections and friendships at ISCAP and if they keep in contact with them.
- What ISCAP resources did they use during their stay and how did they perform
- A personal or academic story or experience they could share with me from ISCAP.
- What benefits did they find in participating in the ERASMUS+ program.
- How did their stay and consequential intercultural contact at ISCAP and Portugal contributed to their personal and academic growth.
- Their feedback from the experience and constructive criticism.
- Their perspective on global citizenship and cross-cultural understanding before and after the experience.

Like I mentioned, sometimes the conversation would vary, giving us additional details from their opinion and experiences, but I always tried to keep the interview on topic and accurate to our goal.

I found a total of 3 subjects over the course of months, as it was harder to find participants during the summertime, as classes were no longer active and there was much less commotion around ISCAP, so barely any non-worker students interact with.

Thankfully, 2 of my survey’s participants got back to me in the email and offered to take part in an interview (survey participants). A 3rd volunteer came as a friend of mine that I met towards the end of the summer, at ISCAP, through my internship connections.

11 Data and Results Analysis

Keeping in mind that I sent the email enquiring the International Students to respond, I got a total of 55 responses out of 486 emails sent. Considering that a significant number of emails were not able to be delivered (I got a digital response saying so), I believe 55 is an appropriate number to gather information and allow us to get a general idea of foreign student opinion of ISCAP, based on each student that replied, regarding their motivations, experiences and feedback. The goal was to get a diverse sample pool of students from different countries and backgrounds and from different study areas, with the only thing they have in common being they all study/studied in Porto, Portugal and ISCAP.

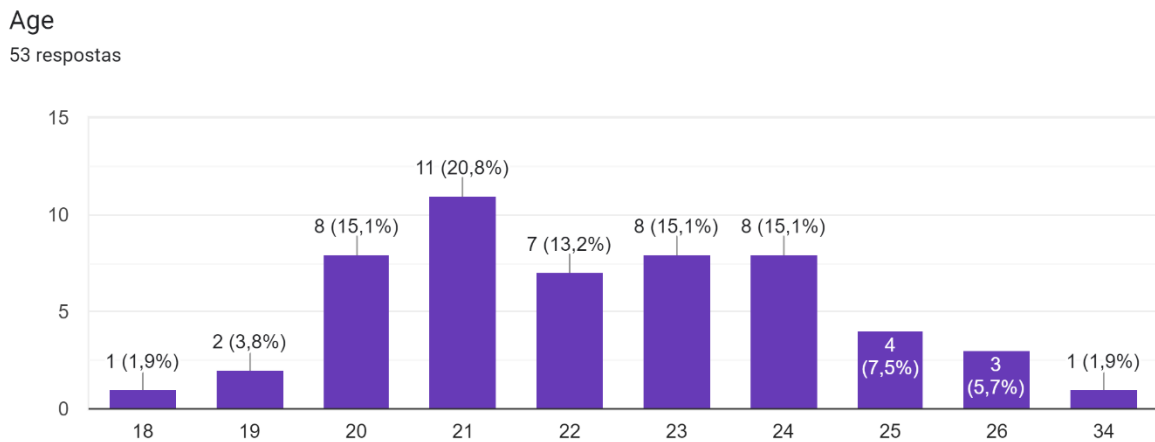


Figure 6- International Student Survey Graph Containing Their Age Range

Let’s begin with some Biometric data. Our 55 participants range from the ages of 18 to 34, as seen in Figure 6. Regarding the International Student participants’ nationalities we found 1 from Azerbaijan, 2 from Brazil, 2 from Belgium, 3 from Croatia, 1 from Czech Republic, 4 from Poland, 1 from Romania, 1 from Slovenia, 1 from Denmark, 2 from

Spain, 1 from Finland, 8 from France, 9 from Germany, 2 from Ukraine, 1 from Hungary, 5 from Italy, 4 from Latvia, 3 from Lithuania, 1 from Moldova, 1 from Switzerland and 1 from Turkey. The total nationalities from both years make up a total of 21 different nations.

Additionally, I asked them for their residency country to see if the numbers would differ from their nationalities. The study found the following results, in countries where the nationalities and the residency differed: 4 students are residing in Portugal, without any nationals from there (naturally, as they are incoming International Students), 1 national from Azerbaijan who does not reside there, 3 students of Brazilian nationality but only 1 residing there, 8 French nationals with 9 people residing in France, 9 German nationals with 8 residing there, 5 Italian nationals with 4 Italy residents and 3 Lithuanian nationals with 5 residing there. Constituting visual aid to international student respondents' nationality and residency data analysis, Figure 7 can be observed below.

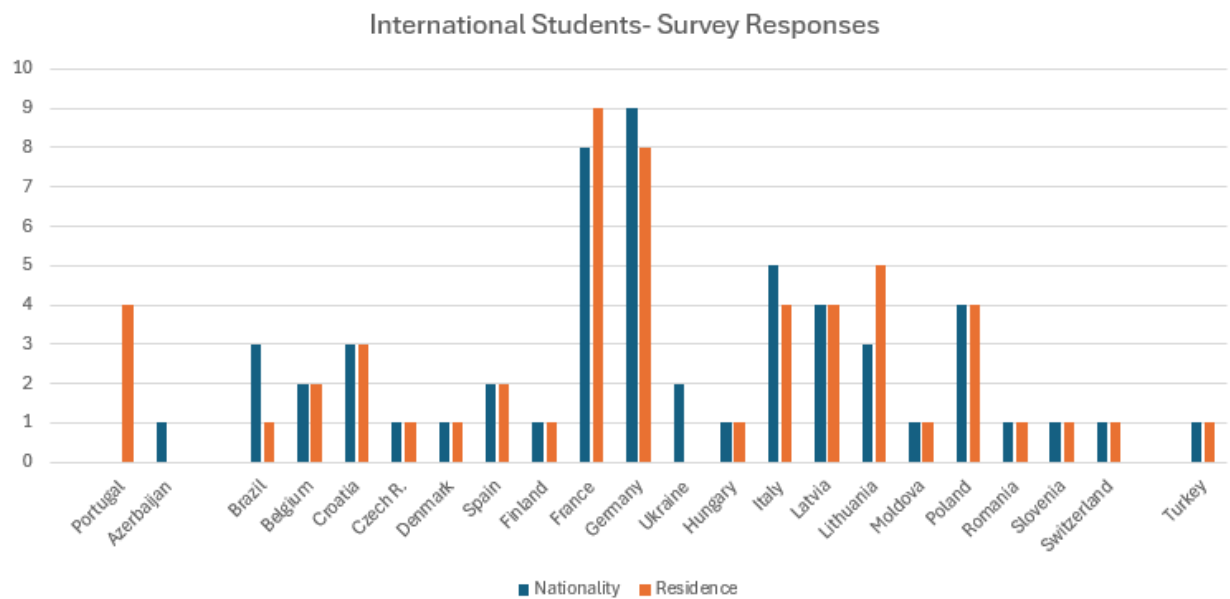


Figure 7- International Student Survey Graph Containing Their Nationalities and Country of Residence

My hypothesis as an attempt to understand and justify the discrepancy between the nationality and residence of some of these students is that perhaps some alumni moved to other countries after concluding their studies, for reasons such as job opportunities, furthering education, or seeking other ERASMUS+ opportunities (such as internships), or even personal reasons. In some cases, a likely situation is their return to their home

country. Results showed that 4 of the students were currently residing in Portugal, this could either be because they are continuing their studies at ISCAP and found accommodation to do so, or because they moved into Portugal, either as immigrants or as residents in non-academic contexts (depending on visa and residency status if applicable). In the case of Ukrainian students, it is predictable that they do not reside in the country of origin at the time the survey was executed due to geopolitical reasons, although this is not always the case. Another idea can be that some students can identify as having double (or more) nationality, explaining the fact that their statistics of the nationalities and residencies differ.

To summarize, the world is more interconnected than ever due to both globalization and the consequent Erasmus+ program and paradigm present in European higher education.

Each students can have a vast array of different reasons to reside or be from a different country, it is a highly volatile variable, as people nowadays can easily move between countries, especially within European Union countries if their country of origin belongs to it, especially for mid to short term duration academic or internship stays, through Erasmus+.

The number of nationalities stayed relatively consistent with the previously mentioned 2019/2020 numbers, only varying the number of nationalities by 2, having 21 nationalities between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 academic years, and 23 in 2019/2020.

How long did you study at ISCAP?
55 respostas

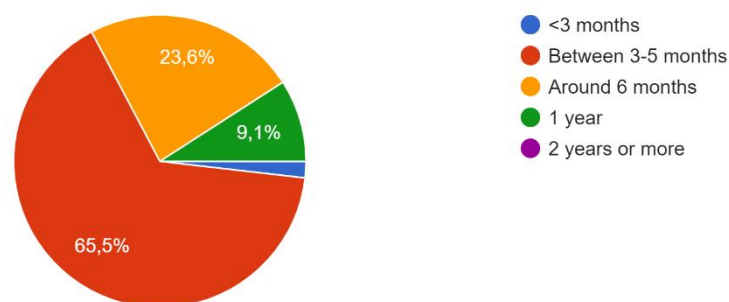


Figure 8- International Student Survey Graph Showcasing the Duration of their Stay at ISCAP (Both Finished and On-Going)

If we observe Figure 8, we can confirm that the duration of their studies in ISCAP showed that a majority of 65,5% studied between 3-5 months in the institution, while 23,6% opted for about 6 months, also highlighting that 9,1% studied there for a whole year, and the smallest percentage of 1,8% studied less than 3 months. This data translates that students from the 2 academic years in question opted for mid-term mobilities rather than short ones, at least in the context of studying at ISCAP, as some could have stayed in Portugal afterwards, that's why the question already shows some specificity in its nature.

Anyway, mid-term mobility from the perspective of the range of data I offered them to choose from can be considered anything between 3 months to a year, and anything less than 2 years. The difference between this duration category of mobility is 89,1% (mid-term) to 10,9% (short-term), again, with 0% on long-term mobility.

How did you hear about ISCAP, when looking for ERASMUS Mobility?

55 respostas

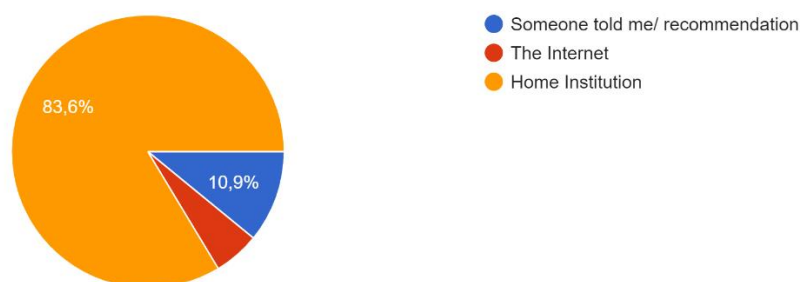


Figure 9- International Student Survey Graph Highlighting How Each Student Found Out About ISCAP

Going on to the next question, I asked how did they hear about ISCAP's mobility opportunity. According to Figure 9, we can verify that a whopping 83,6% found out through their home institution. This is very common, as personally, whenever I heard about new ERASMUS+ opportunities, it was mostly communicated to me through email on behalf of our home institution, ISCAP, so it is natural that other international institutions disseminate them with their students. The remaining 10,9% of students were recommended to travel and enroll in this experience by someone, while only 5,5% searched it up online.

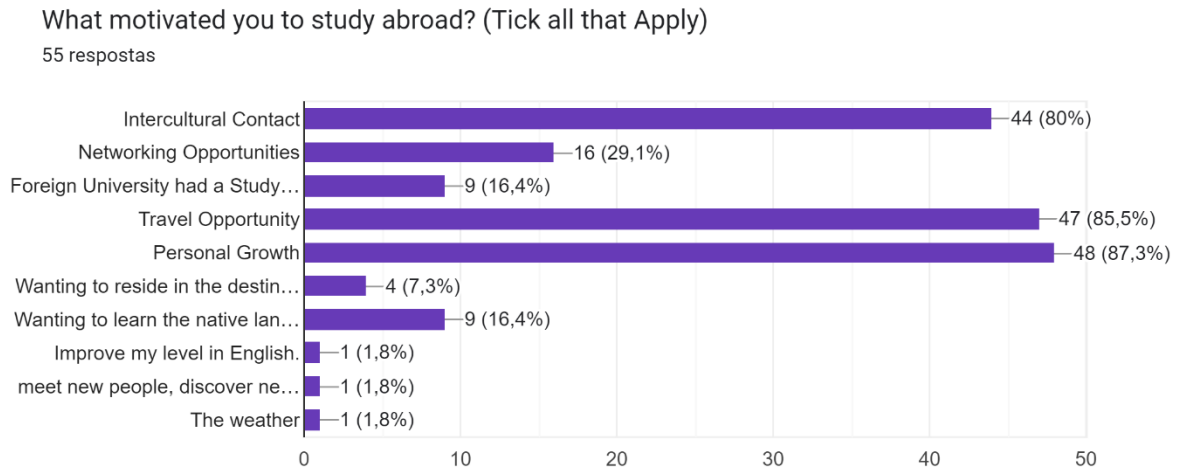


Figure 10- International Student Survey Graph with Potential Motivations for Their Decision to Study Abroad

When it comes to their motivations to study abroad, results seen in Figure 10 showed that there were 3 predominant deciding factors when choosing to study abroad: personal growth (87,3%), travel opportunity (85,5), and intercultural contact (80%). In comparison with the other factors, which although also relevant, did not have the same impact as these 3 key ones I mentioned: network opportunities (29,1%), wanting to learn the local native language (16,4%), the university had a study subject of their interest (16,4%), wanting to reside in the destination country after studies (7,3%), improving their English (1,8%), meeting new people and discovering a new culture (1,8%), the weather (1,8%).

From analyzing these results we can conclude students value contacting with people from different backgrounds seems extremely important to them, and to immerse themselves on local culture with this travel opportunity, not to mention, all of this and also their studies are directly tied to their personal growth, as they enrich themselves from a cultural awareness and knowledge perspective, considering the academic, leisure and lifestyle experience they must partake in while doing so. The presence of students from different cultures and nationalities in ISCAP can help foster a diverse environment so that international students can interact with not only Portuguese locals but also people from countries they wouldn't expect at first glance. Creating more initiatives such as Orientation Week for them to have that intercultural contact they desire and local immersion.

Was Portugal (P.Porto ISCAP) your first education mobility experience?
55 respostas

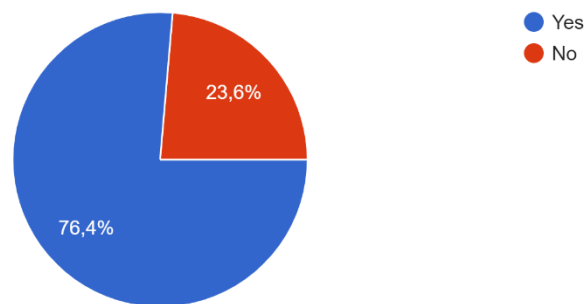


Figure 11- International Student Survey Graph Showcasing If ISCAP Was Their First Education Mobility Experience

As for the frequency of their studies abroad, I asked if it was their first time engaging in an Education Mobility experience, and Figure 11 shows that the majority (76,4%) answered yes, while 23,6% said no. By taking proper measures to upscale the marketing campaigns of these mobilities within not only home institutions (as we saw that method has been quite effective), but also through social media campaigns, where students are most active, through paid ads, dedicated pages, and overall, more dissemination of opportunities, we can get the word out for them to get involved more. I worked closely with GRI in terms of social media management, and although their page is still relatively small, as it has a very specific target audience (the local and international ISCAP student community), it helped promote more students to participate in ERASMUS+ initiatives, and through word of mouth. Events like the International Week also were a solid way to promote ISCAP out there, as dozens of foreign teachers came and taught our Portuguese students, and they can share their positive experience back home. To be honest, I did not hear about any ERASMUS+ opportunities until last year, where I was told personally about the Latvia one, as my academic email often gets a lot of correspondence, and those email marketing attempts go unnoticed, and a few of my colleagues I talked with also expressed the same sentiments. That's why we must cater to the most used platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and even YouTube, for example, based on student surveys and activity that can be collected.

Regarding the 1 to 5 rating of importance-based questions related to selecting a foreign university for their mobility program and to facilitate our assessment, I made some calculations. The original numbers collected for each number per category can be found on Appendix XIX.

Based on the average number of votes for each number 1 through 5 and then divided by 55 (total), Academic Reputation scores a 3,54, giving it a final score of 3. As for Location (Geography and Weather), it scores a solid 4,36, giving it the final score of 4. Available Courses of the university got a score of 3,98 which equates to 4. Opportunities for Cultural Immersion landed a score of 4,09, meaning a final score of 4. Finally, Support Services for International Students achieved 3.6, which represents a score of 4.

To put each factor into perspective and in order of most importance based on mathematical results and importance level, I made an illustrative tier list which can be observed in Figure 12.

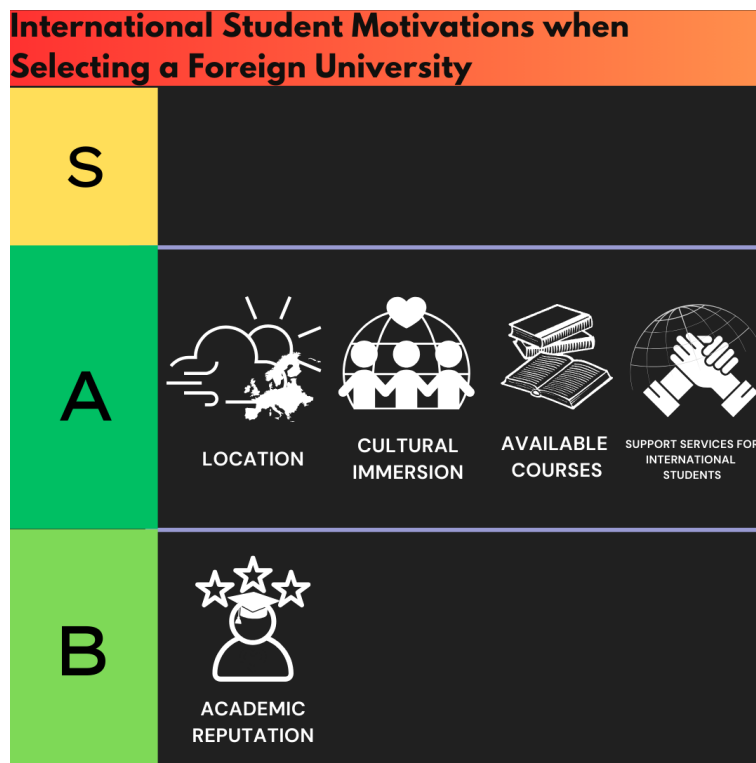


Figure 12- International Student Motivations When Selecting a Foreign University: Tier List Based on Survey Collected Data

The survey shows that international students seek good accessibility and meteorological conditions when picking a specific foreign university, while also valuing the culture. The courses offered in the university are also relevant, considering they may find a study subject that might not be as easily researched or available within their local environment back home, and they also value support services for their immersion and accommodation, such as projects like COMAP, and of course, departments that are catered towards these students with specific needs, such as the International Office, which most institutions have, despite each operating in different ways.

The offer of more English-taught courses such as Bachelors and Masters' at ISCAP, like the case of my Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business, may attract more international students. I certainly noticed a difference in international student numbers when in comparison with my Portuguese-taught bachelor's in business communication, where if I recall correctly, we did not have any in those 3 academic years in that degree specifically, although we did have international guest lecturers who intervened for workshops or shorter lessons. We had at least 1/4th or even 1/3rd of the class be international students in some optional classes where the complete class would branch based on selected courses (Spanish Culture for Business, for example, or Mandarin Language and Culture).

As of writing this thesis, ISCAP has a small number of courses that are English-taught, and the slow and steady, well-planned implementation of English-taught courses can be a successful niche for foreign students who might struggle to learn the local Portuguese languages, or those who feel generally more comfortable using English as a middle ground language. I realize that there are a lot of hinderances and caveats for the implementation of such degrees, and that justifies their need for careful implementation, for example, assuring teachers are linguistically prepared to handle lecturing classes in a foreign language, and students as well, and another factor is if funding is enough for building up new degrees in another linguistic realm (Macaro et. al., 2017). On the other hand, these types of degrees not only boost English fluency on all participants of the degrees (both students and teachers), they break language barriers by creating a middle ground language, as I mentioned, and can increase accessibility for international students, which can present itself as an opportunity for profit and a ratings increase for ISCAP, not to mention, it generates good marketing for foreign participants (Ament, 2021). English-taught courses can also boost cross-cultural understanding, and global awareness, and

promote employability and cognitive and emotional development in participants of such courses (Kassteen, 2013, as cited in Chapple, 2015).

Did you feel a sense of belonging within the time you have been in the university?
55 respostas

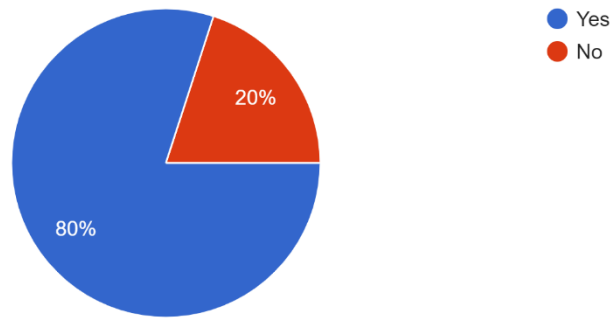


Figure 13- International Student Survey Graph Determining If They Felt a Sense of Belonging During Their Stay at ISCAP

In section 4, where we asked students if they felt a sense of belonging during their stay at ISCAP, as seen in Figure 13, 80% responded with yes, and 20% with no. This can be translated as, yes, although ISCAP's efforts in terms of integrating international students has been positive and consistent, since the majority feels they belong, the goal will always be for a rate of 100%. This means that 20% felt left out or that they don't belong, which is something that can deliver a hit on ISCAP's global notoriety, when those international students talk about their experiences back in their home country and institution.

Earlier, we spoke about ISCAP's Orientation Week, the week where a variety of events take place annually in September to help integrate international students. Although this initiative is very powerful as it lets them connect with a few local students belonging to COMAP and their buddy system, it is limited to those students, which is still a reduced number of people. Sure, one can argue that they have the freedom to willingly talk to other local students after that week full of events, but for more introverted people or better yet, those who are in a completely different cultural environment might not feel so comfortable doing so, especially considering there might be some barriers in communication, such as a language barrier. Even in terms of cultural immersion, if an international student misses that week, there aren't many more initiatives for international

students to participate in, at least not any directed towards them like this specific event from ISCAP's organization.

Creating opportunities where we can merge the local student community even more with these foreign students will help them create more meaningful connections and better their integration. Also, spreading cultural events throughout the year, and adding more throughout, can significantly improve the chances of them feeling a sense of belonging. We will delve at a more individual level of integration experiences of some international students through our interviews.

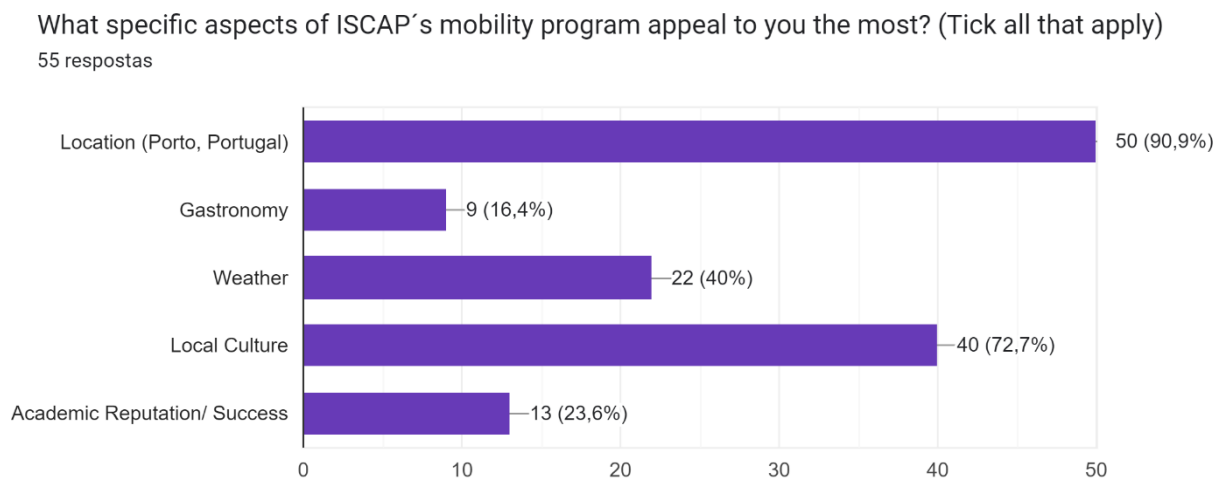


Figure 14- International Student Survey Graph Showing the Specific Aspects They Found Appealing Regarding ISCAP's Mobility Program

Moving on, regarding the aspects of ISCAP's mobility that they valued most, through the data displayed on Figure 14, the top 3 aspects they valued most were: Location (Porto, Portugal) at a whopping 90,9% of votes, Local Culture with 72,7% of votes, and Weather at 40%. For the rest, we have gastronomy at 16,4%, and academic reputation and success at 23,6%.

This data shows that specifically, international students who adhered to ISCAP's mobility and came to Portugal at the specific time of this study which involves 2 different academic years, predominantly came for the country itself and its culture, rather than academic aspects, such as reputation or success. We already had verified this information with the

previous graph that we analyzed from the survey, relating to what motivated them to study abroad. It is crucial to keep in mind this statistic can vary depending on the destination country and institution.

Next, I inquired them about rating certain difficulties that they may have faced or anticipated when studying abroad at ISCAP, and to rate them from 1 to 5. The factors were: Language Barrier, Infrastructure, Cultural Differences, Accommodation and Housing Issues, and Social Difficulties (meeting friends and people).

Using the same measure as the last rating of 1 to 5 question, let's break down the score for each category. Just like the last 1 to 5 question, the original numbers collected for each number per category can be found on Appendix XX.

Adding each number of votes per number category, and then dividing it by 55 (total), we came to the following results:

Language Barrier scored a final number of 2,41, equivalent to 2.

Infrastructure scored a final number of 2,45, equivalent to 2.

Cultural Differences scored a final number of 2,45 equivalent to 2.

Accommodation and Housing Issues scored a final number of 3,58 equivalent to 4.

Social Difficulties scored a final number of 2,4 equivalent to 2.

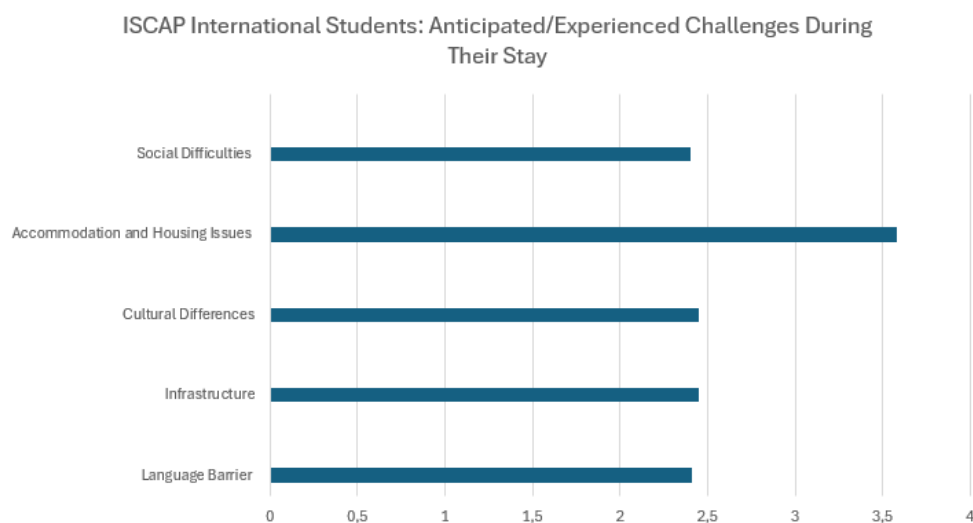


Figure 15- International Student Survey Graph Determining What Difficulties and Challenges Were Anticipated During Their Stay At ISCAP

Through Figure 15, we can see that most of these challenges were not very significant and scored similarly, at around 2 points. The exception was the housing issues, which is a recurring theme for Portuguese people, and international students are being affected by it, as well. To put it into perspective, between 2015 and 2023, the index regarding house sale prices to gross disposable income per capita has increased by 51%, and renting prices naturally also increased, it is the largest increase among European Union member states (Executive Digest, 2023; Público, 2023, as cited in The Portugal News, 2024).

Additionally, we also included a separate “other” section when it comes to challenges these students faced, and they had a lot to say.

The biggest complaint was about the University’s System and how it was quite difficult to navigate the web to find information they needed. This can refer to either the “Secretaria Online”, which used to be the online platform for any inquiries, course management and information access for students at ISCAP, and it was fully in Portuguese.

Nowadays, over the last few years it transitioned to DOMUS, a more updated version which among many interface changes, it also brought English translation. In my own opinion, and from many other students both local and international (including the surveyed ones), a lot of students can agree that despite the DOMUS platform being a step in the right direction, it still feels very complicated and not intuitive to navigate. The issue is not necessarily the design of the website, but rather the technical writing and UX/UI side of things. Taking the students’ suggestions or feedback regarding the platform through surveys or interviews could help ISCAP’s management take it to the next level and save a lot of time for the academic division or even GRI to answer questions related to it. The goal of the report and this chapter of data collection is not meant to judge ISCAP’s capabilities or flaws, but rather to offer significant insight and solutions for the improvement of its platforms, communication and notoriety, both at a local and global level.

Besides platform issues, students were a bit vague, mentioning “the organization” and problems they faced with teachers where there was a lack of understanding during classes, and even access to communicating with them outside of class, considering some would not reply to emails despite months passing by, which in extremely rare cases, I also experienced the same issue in the last 5 years. And by extremely rare, I mean maybe 1 in 10 teachers would not reply.

The weather was another complaint, we had some harsh weather during some winter semesters and students mentioned it. Also, the infrastructure, specifically the circle in the middle of ISCAP (cone/snail) was mentioned as a difficulty when traversing the institution, which although it takes time to get used to, it is almost as a “historical monument” for the infrastructure of the university. However, some improvements can be made, for example, there are middle corridors on each floor where classroom directions can be misleading, as they point left or right, and there is no center arrow. The addition of a center arrow would help ease some frustration of trying to find the correct classroom for a lot of students.

To add on to the topic of infrastructure, some students told me in person that they were not aware of where GRI was at first, and it was also mentioned in the survey by international students. Even in my own experience, I was not aware of GRI until the last 2 years of my ISCAP academic journey, and I believe it was due to 2 major aspects: the lack of necessity since I did not have the opportunity to embark on any ERASMUS+ trips or projects until my very last year, not to mention the somewhat “hidden” position the office has in the infrastructure itself.

I never noticed it, as when you set foot in the main entrance, it stands behind a door to your left, in a secluded office. If there were more signs to let people know where it is located, I feel like it would have more visibility and more students, both local and international, would reach out.

The need for improvement of courses was mentioned as well, and a student stated that the system is very antiquated compared to other foreign universities, some mentioned there were key organizational differences when compared to their home institutions.

I tried to include both already constructive criticism they left, mixed with my own experiences, and even turn non-constructive criticism into something useful for ISCAP’s management and organization to take in as feedback, as I want to see it continuously grow, and evolve, just like it has over the years.

For example, now, in September 2024, I noticed the “Accommodation Manual” (Manual de Acolhimento) that was sent for new this academic year of 2024/2025 by email for new students, which was in Portuguese, has an impressive layout and design, it was a huge progress compared to some previous years, where things felt very formal and strict design-wise, and now it seems extremely creative and well-organized.

Back to the survey, now let's see the positive side of things with the question where I asked them to describe how they envision this ISCAP experience contributing to their personal and academic growth.

A few students simply described it as “a lot”, “good”, “I learned new skills and experiences”, which can be very vague, some spoke about improving their English, but others went into more detail, and I would like to share their direct feedback (I only included the ones I found most relevant, as there were many more, mainly saying similar things), in Appendix XXI.

From what we can observe, despite some challenges they faced, which is normal in a foreign country, 53 students left positive comments and said they really enjoyed the experience, only 2 students spoke well about their social lives here and negatively about their academic experiences. When it comes to Education Mobility, through Erasmus+, a few also mentioned how beneficial it was for them, and how important it was for their growth. Overall, their stay in Porto and ISCAP were extremely positive, and especially in the field of self-discovery, becoming more interculturally competent people, and career-wise. This segment of the survey ties in with another question where I asked them if they would recommend ISCAP's mobility program for other potential international students, represented in Figure 16 and we had a rate of 98,2% yes, with 54 votes, and no at only 1,8%, representing only 1 person.

Would you recommend ISCAP's mobility program to other international students?
55 respostas

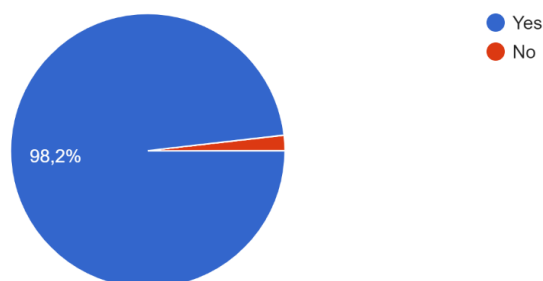


Figure 16- International Student Survey Graph to Find Out If They Would Recommend ISCAP's Mobility Program to Other International Students

For the 2 remaining questions, first, I inquired what their long-term goals are following their mobility at ISCAP, results are represented in Figure 17, and they show that 90,9% seek personal growth, followed by intercultural exchange at 78,2%, and better employment at 56,4%. The remaining data represents somewhat of a minority, with networking at 36,4%, entrepreneurship at 29,1%, learning Portuguese (language) at 29,1%, and finally surfing skill at a mere 1,8%.

Students seek to remain growing in their personal endeavors following their mobility, and they liked it so much that they seek more opportunities for intercultural exchange, while a bit over half of them prefer the better employment opportunities they acquired from the certifications attained from their experience.

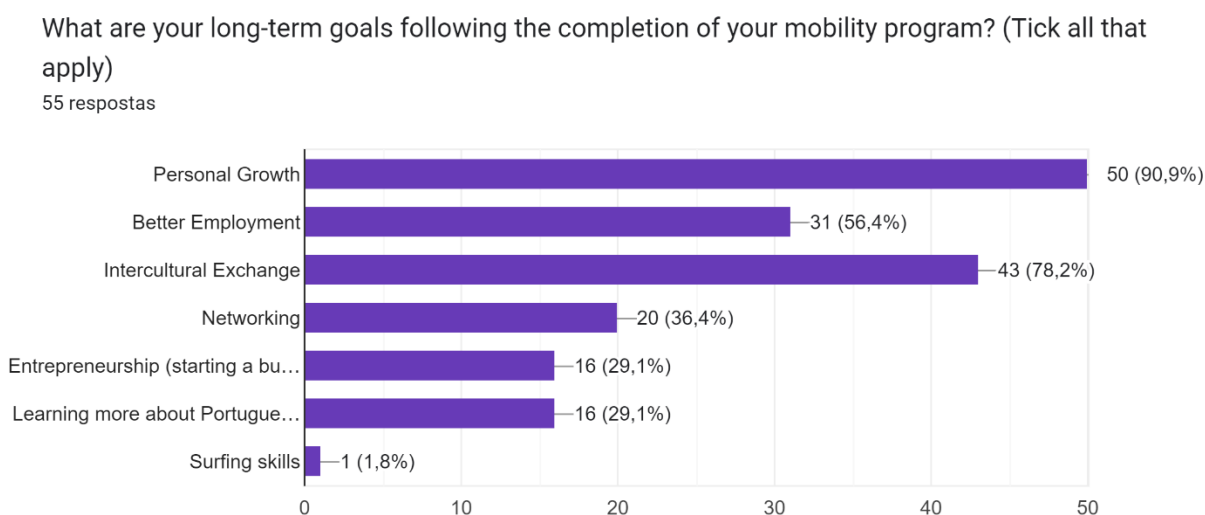


Figure 17- International Student Survey Graph Understanding What Long-Term Goals They Have Post-Mobility

To finish up, I left a very last question asking for their open suggestions towards ISCAP and its mobility programs.

Some key constructive criticism that was left was the need for more interesting subjects in class, and the need for them to be improved considering the university's outdated system. Additionally, the possibility of ISCAP having a dorm (which ties in with the previously mentioned issue of accommodation/housing that Portugal faces) was mentioned, SAS P. PORTO already offers that kind of accommodation service, with

residencies destined to students who have hindered economic capabilities, familiar situations or just distance from their home and families (SAS P. Porto, n.d.).

The latter comments were simply saying that the experience was “the best” or great and thanking specific members of ISCAP’s community who helped them during their stay, such as staff or other colleagues from COMAP.

Moving along with the interviews, all 3 Subjects A, B and C interview transcriptions can be found in Appendixes XXII, XXIII and XXIV, respectively. The analysis of the interviews respectively, are all present in Appendix XXV.

12 Conclusion

The survey proved quite successful in terms of responses and diversity of participants, both from an age range and nationality perspective (18-34), with 21 different participant nationalities present.

Most participants studied for up to 6 months at ISCAP, and 83,6% heard about the ERASMUS+ opportunity through their home institution, which highlights the need to strengthen other means of dissemination for these opportunities, such as social media and streaming service ads, for example.

Intercultural contact, travel opportunity and personal growth are the 3 predominant motivations of international students and workers (from ERASMUS+).

A total of 76,4% of the survey respondents replied that ISCAP was their first mobility experience. Again, I believe this stems from the need for better communication channels and strategies from both ERASMUS+ and home institutions like ISCAP.

Moving along to the question of rating topics from 1 to 5 based on importance, according to my calculations on the average number from the results of each topic, I asked them a few topics to consider when selecting a foreign university mobility program. They described the most important factor being the country itself, namely its location, culture and weather, and equally as important, cultural immersion and academic courses, and

additionally support services for international students, having academic reputation as a not very determining factor.

I asked them about their biggest motivations on why they selected ISCAP's mobility, and they answered with local culture, the location and weather as the 3 most voted factors, further reinforcing the previous tier list made with the most important factors when deciding a university.

The other question of rating topics from 1 to 5 based on importance was about the difficulties faced during their stay, which they voted accommodation and housing issues as the clear biggest difficulty, which is an increasing problem in Portugal, not just for internationals but also locals, and language barrier, cultural differences and social difficulties all scored equal levels of difficulty.

A whopping 80% felt they had a sense of belonging during their stay at ISCAP, however, 11 out of 55 (20%) felt they did not, which is concerning, and those students are to be noted for their opinions on the matter, so ISCAP can improve, and students can feel welcome.

The main issues reported were related to ISCAP's system and organization being slow, confusing and difficulties in communication (both in receiving and finding adequate information and sometimes contacting teachers), the weather conditions were also mentioned. Some constructive criticism was also shared by a small number of students, mentioning the development of more courses and ones that are more interesting.

The students described their long-term goals post-ISCAP, according to the 3 most voted options which all scored more than 55% being: to continue their personal growth, to engage in more intercultural contact opportunities, and to seek better employment chances.

The most impressive data collected, in my opinion, was that despite 20% not feeling a sense of belonging, an enormous amount of 98,2% would highly recommend the ISCAP experience, which shows that the academic experience, quality of service or events organized made up for the difficulties faced not just by the 20% who felt left out, but also other students who reported specific issues. Students appreciate ISCAP and enjoy their experiences there. All 55 students replied with positive comments regarding their

personal development and intercultural competence growth, which was interesting to see the different ways they have grown and evolved.

With the analysis of each individual interview concluded, we can observe which aspects they had in common, to verify if there is a pattern among international students. Although the number of interviews was only 3, it was a very diverse sample, not just in originating countries, but times that they came and went to ISCAP as well, not to mention the format of the interviews (local or online) and array of questions that slightly varied.

All 3 of the interviewee's stays at ISCAP lasted from 3 to 6 months, so a short to medium duration stay. Regardless, they still experienced a lot of things and the chance to immerse themselves in local culture, as they all had a significant amount of things to share, and their personal stories verified that the things they went through were meaningful.

For their adaptation process, they all described it as smooth and easy, especially subjects A and B, since they came during very academically active times of the year, and felt they had good support, either from friends or from local ISCAP staff. Despite C coming during a holiday, they still felt the adaptation was easy considering they just needed some time to adjust.

When it comes to challenges the subjects faced, a common aspect that all 3 interviewees described was the language barrier, as locals would ignore the minorities at times (international students) and speak Portuguese among themselves, or some people didn't know how to or feel comfortable to engage in English conversations. Like I previously mentioned, building intercultural competence and awareness among the local community will help foster a more welcoming environment from a verbal perspective, among other aspects.

From my personal experience, ISCAP is building this widespread competence at an increasing rate (over the last 5 years I have studied and worked here), with better dissemination of Erasmus+ initiatives and events that promote intercultural contact and competence, for example, initiatives like International Week, or other ones like Cultural Speed Dating or the workshop for intercultural preparation, etc.

All 3 mentioned they made friends at ISCAP, even C who was socially hindered due to the holiday. In fact, all 3 do or plan to keep in touch with these friends, despite the distance. The tendency however, is that international students gravitate towards befriending international folks rather than locals, and a contributing factor to this that was mentioned, was the lack of cross-community (international students and locals) events, and the high concentration of international student exclusive events right at the beginning of the academic year, making it difficult to socialize with either, and if one misses out on those events, they might feel left out.

As previously stated, I believe the spreading out of the events, and creating new ones involving both local and international student communities, uniting them as one, would promote an intercultural environment where international students can experience a more authentic local culture environment and make even more meaningful experiences and friendships.

When it comes to cultural differences, all 3 experienced their own differences. An aspect that can be considered both a difficulty and cultural difference, at least for student internationals (A and B), was the local professors arriving late, which is common practice in Portugal. This was considered rude by international students, and it's something to take into consideration.

Regarding international student resources, COMAP was the most well-spoken of, with the buddy system being highly functional and practical for helping international individuals at ISCAP. GRI was also very effective in the process of helping international students and staff were described as kind, however, sometimes the communication on the needed documentation was a bit slow and confusing.

As a former worker at GRI, I believe that the office is powered partly by its student interns, as without them, the staff team is quite small, which I see as a total plus for new interns for a more cozy and welcoming environment for the most part, but in times of the year where student interns are reduced, such as when students tend to finish their studies and academic holidays are approaching, the process of GRI's work can be slower, as there is a lot to do for the small team.

There is a strong focus on the hard and practical work of GRI, rather than their marketing or communication, and as we observed with my internship, I helped cover those blind spots to try and disseminate as much information as possible for the general academic

community. I believe GRI's efforts are very important and have a huge impact on ISCAP's global notoriety and the events they host are unparalleled, in a positive way.

Overall, all 3 subjects really enjoyed their experience, would recommend it, and their hunger for more intercultural knowledge and adventures has grown. Global initiatives like ERASMUS+, which give so much to everyone, are empowering the future market to be more diverse (in terms of both people and skillset) and competitive (highly qualified people), in a positive way.

Both the survey and the interviews helped me develop my communication skills and strategize the most effective way to turn them into a reality, which I did, and we reaped the results from both initiatives. My goal was to better understand the needs of international students and workers at ISCAP, and their opinions on both the institution and ERASMUS+, which we achieved. I got the privilege of personally experiencing their stories and emotions associated with their adventures and even relating to some, through the interviews. My biggest hope is that my research will help ISCAP to develop its notoriety even more, and to keep innovating in the fields of intercultural knowledge and foster intercultural competence in the local community, providing international students and newcomers with a shared experience through more events and initiatives, which I know everyone in the community can benefit from.

To conclude, understanding key concepts related to Education Mobility allowed us to easily navigate important terms used throughout this report. The origins of P. Porto, and more specifically ISCAP as an institution, led us to perceive elements that have been kept alive and ingrained at its core, to this day. What I am referring to is, of course, the strong values of inclusion, development and proactivity that thrive more and more, within the spirit of each person that passes through the institution every single year. ISCAP is an institution that gives and keeps on giving to workers and students. New resources are being developed both by ISCAP staff and the student community to enhance the institution's internationalization and international student inclusion as of recently (See Appendix XXVI).

My internship served as a testimony to that. I have grown so much, not just academically and professionally, but also personally. All the work I developed both in terms of endless papers and essays that helped me develop essential writing and communication skills in both my degrees to operate in today's competitive job market, as well as the interpersonal experience, life lessons and work practices I did at GRI, will surely help me in the next chapters of my life, until the very last one.

Although I have an incredibly positive opinion towards ISCAP, that does not mean however, that it cannot improve. That is exactly why I developed the survey that we analyzed and delved into, along with the interviews. I knew myself, colleagues and even other students I have never met had constructive criticism to give, so ISCAP can keep growing and improving, so I wanted to understand if the positive feelings I had and difficulties I faced were a recurring theme with other people, not just locals but also international folks. Annex XIII shows an ISCAP article confirming that Porto was the top ERASMUS+ destination of 2024. I believe at least a fraction of that result was partly due to me and my intern colleagues' hard work at GRI, with the BIPs hosted and the International Week.

My biggest hope is that whoever is reading this can relate to some of my experiences and things I have written, of getting first job experience, the mistakes we make when we are starting out, the incredible experiences and great connections we foster with others along the way, and growth. I did not want to write something monotone and not expressive, so I hope it was entertaining, or rather, engaging, yet somewhat formal.

With full confidence, I can surely say, this was a journey to remember.

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Appendix I – Erasmus+ Program Description

The European Union founded the Erasmus (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) program, also named after Erasmus of Rotterdam, in 1987. The program's main goals were to promote the intimate cooperation between universities and higher education facilities all over Europe, and to do so, an organized system that would help the integration of student interchange beyond borders was necessary, thus, Erasmus was born (Erasmus Commission, n.d.; Erasmus Generation Blog, n.d.). The program underwent a vast expansion and metamorphosis over the years, leading to the evolution of Erasmus, into Erasmus+, which is a larger scale project with a budget of 26.2 billion euros budget. The current program ranges from 2021-2027, and the focus consists of social inclusion, digital and environmentally friendly adaptations, and inspiring young people to participate in government, community and work. The Erasmus+ program also supports the European Pillar of Social Rights, implementing the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and developing sports within the European paradigm.

Essentially, Erasmus+ encourages the mobility of higher education staff, trainees, young workers, and most importantly to the topic of the thesis, students, by creating a vast network among universities, predominantly in the European Union (but currently expanding outside as well) and granting funds and resources for these short and long period mobilities to take place (European Commission, n.d.).

Back to the topic of social disparities, through the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Union defends European citizen's rights to inclusivity and excellency in education, lifelong learning and training in a sustainable manner (Istomina, 2023), regardless of their ethnic, socio-economic, gender or sexual background.

Erasmus+ policy and the EU Youth 2019-2027 strategy have plenty of measures to combat inequality and discrepancies among students, in terms of education and mobility opportunities. Namely, Erasmus+ offers additional funding for students with “fewer opportunities”, so they may participate in the program without financial issues.

Secondly, the program offers preparation and support services, including psychological, practical and logistical assistance for issues that may present as a barrier towards the

disadvantaged students' participation, in the realms of familiar, financial and logistical difficulties. The criteria to determine if a student is eligible for additional support or funding has a plethora of factors to consider such as family circumstances and economic hinderances, regardless of their grades. From an institutional standpoint, schools and institutions are motivated to take measures to guarantee inclusion within the Erasmus+ projects, such as promoting adequate accessibility and accommodation before mobility. Erasmus+ additionally allows students to personalize their mobility experience, for example, choosing to go with colleagues they already know and to select the duration of their mobilities (within the available offers, of course), this helps in easing the preparation experience and foster a more confident and relaxed environment before, during and after mobility.

Finally, Erasmus+ provides structural support and measures, such as diversity and inclusion initiatives in each country, that way, it can make sure the program is intercultural and inclusive in different national and international contexts. (Freitas, 2022)

Appendix II– Intercultural Competence and International Student Mobility

Intercultural competence is a broad concept with many definitions considering the varied skillset it encompasses, such as intercultural sensitivity, global competence, cross-cultural adaptation, and cultural knowledge. However, it can be summarized as how individuals carry themselves within intercultural settings, and interculturalism, which we defined earlier, is at the core of the concept (Luo & Chan, 2022).

The term intercultural competence considers the multidimensionality of an intercultural environment, where many cultures are present and interact among themselves. Essentially, it recognizes the heterogenous nature of each culture, which translates to the notion that cultural groups are internally diverse (in factors such as ethnicity, religion, linguistic, and even regarding their nationality) and in constant metamorphosis, due to personal experiences and of course, social contexts. Thus, for an individual to be considered interculturally competent, one must be able to understand that volatility, respect it, and being able to interact with those culturally different individuals, combining values, attitudes, knowledge and understanding. Having this valuable skillset will help form positive and constructive relationships, among a diverse environment (Barrett, 2018).

In 1986, Bennet introduced a framework to perceive the different dimensions of intercultural competence, denominated Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). In his model, he explains that individuals experience progressive orientation towards cultural difference, which translates to them becoming more knowledgeable over time of different cultures, and learn to adapt to their different cultural contexts, enabling them to have more meaningful and sophisticated intercultural immersions.

People go from denial to defense/reversal and then minimization, which all 3 orientations can be considered ethnocentric perspectives. On the other hand, after those 3 orientations, people move on towards acceptance, then adaptation and finally integration, as they become more interculturally competent, and just like the previous 3 concepts, these 3 can also be defined with a specific term, in this case, ethnorelativism. (Bennet, 1986, as cited in Li, 2020)

To become interculturally competent, or in other words, an interculturally effective person (IEP), one must be able to live joyfully and perform well in a culturally different environment. This profile showcases the skills, knowledge and attitudes that such person demonstrates when interacting interculturally.

To be more specific regarding the traits of an IEP, it relates to the skill of communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds, in a way that is respectful and trust earning, encouraging cooperation and productivity in a workspace, which generates more opportunities towards achieving both professional and personal goals. A solid asset an IEP must have is also adaptability, in the sense that they must cater to their professional skills to adapt to local conditions and limitations. Lastly, being able to feel joy and at ease within a hosting culture. (Vulpe et. al., 2001)

ISCAP offers its students Intercultural Competence skills, by integrating joined classes with International Students in English. For local students to apply for international mobility through Erasmus+, they must participate in Intercultural Competence events and preparations, which we will mention details of such events in the Internship chapter. In these events, they get to know the experiences of other students who already participated in such mobilities, or even talk and interact with foreign students who are studying at ISCAP and originate from the local student's desired destination country, I attended some of these events personally. These pre-departure intercultural training instances can engage students with their cultural self-identities and help develop a solid skillset to manage discomfort in intercultural scenarios, not to mention, the Intra-group learning and dynamics present in one of the events where local students get to interact in a group with foreign students, before their mobility. These intra-group dynamics are essential in any setting where people from different cultural backgrounds are interacting, regardless of if it is abroad or in their home country (Mu et. al., 2022), consequently, it will help ISCAP personnel become more acquainted with intercultural interaction and familiarity with the skills necessary to become an IEP, and for them to feel at ease and confidence in their mobilities.

Intercultural Competence is not limited to local staff or students: International Students also get to participate in inclusive events where they can experience intercultural contact and more intra-group dynamics with locals, as the previous event I described represents a good example, but also other instances, such as the Orientation Week, which will come to mind also in the Internship chapter.

It is important to keep in mind that implementing Intercultural Competence initiatives in higher education institutions is no easy feat, considering the dense curricula of educational facilities and limited human resources, plus introducing new initiatives along with the already present ones to promote an even more intercultural environment where that competence can be developed for both students and staff requires evidence-based Intercultural Competence interventions, as well as the posterior evaluation to verify its effectiveness. A summary of Intercultural Competence initiatives and their evaluation will help pinpoint alternatives for them, and to identify key sources of evidence (Ramstrand, 2024).

International Student Mobility (ISM), has a major impact on many different areas of a host country, for example, when it comes to the economy, international students represent potential human capital inflows, giving them visibility, not just from an educational standpoint, but also as potential life-long contributors to the economy of a host country, as some might choose to stay and make a living there, and filling important sectors in the job market, not to mention paying tuition fees. When it comes to cultural exchange and soft power, ISM supports local industries while doing so, even if it is a temporary mobility, the students buy local products from stores of the host country, and potentially create opportunities in other sectors beyond higher education, such as retail or real estate.

Moreover, in the realm of skill migration, ISM can promote those students, future workers, to fill in labor shortages in the host country, and policy makers can make way for them to more effectively transition to the local job market, considering they have been locally trained, despite being international students. Some ways policy makers could ease the process would be, for example, visa reforms or work-permit programs.

In some countries, however, the integration of international students can be a challenge, mostly due to the lack of sufficient institutional support, meaning integrating them both at an academic and social level. Without those support services, such as counselling, cultural inclusion and overall orientation, the creation of an intercultural environment in higher education could be at risk (Amuedo-Dorantes & Furtado, 2019; Tung, 2016; Van Mol, 2014; Zheng, 2014; Coffey et al., 2021; Nada and Araújo, 2019; Urbanovič et al., 2016; as cited in Luo, 2023).

ISM begs the question of how to categorize students based on said mobilities, as in, what type of mobilities are possible within an educational context. There are 3 main subdivisions of ISM:

Degree Mobility, where students seek to achieve the completion of a degree abroad (such as attaining a Bachelors, Masters, PhD or post-doc degree), which tend to be the longer lasting education mobility student stays, and these students can be denominated as visa, foreign or international students.

Secondly, we have Credit Mobility, which is the case of Erasmus+ students, for example), who seek short-term mobility involvement and transfer their credits abroad back to their home institutions. In these Credit Mobility cases, students often remain enrolled in a degree in the originating institution and simultaneously perform intensive courses abroad for credit attainment and tend to last from 2 months to a year, when it comes to European mobilities. I personally experienced an even shorter credit mobility in Latvia, which will also be mentioned later in the thesis, which lasted about 2 weeks, but that's referring to a more specific variation of Credit Mobility, which are Blended Intensive Programs.

Lastly, Certificate Mobilities refer to lesser (time wise) stays in foreign countries, for students to improve their skills in a certain scientific area, such as summer programs, culture or language-based mentorships, workshops and seminars. (De Wit, 2021; Helms et. al., 2015; OECD; 2019; Knight, 2012; as cited in Amaro et. al., 2024)

Appendix III – ISCAP and GRI Origins

Introduction

This Appendix serves to introduce P. Porto, more specifically, one of its 8 higher education institutions, ISCAP, and at a deeper level, GRI. We will start with a historical approach, as in when these organizations were created, with what purpose, and when. In this process, we shall delve into understanding its development and evolution over the years. Along with GRI, we will describe important resources (departments and student clubs) that help both local and international students become better integrated within the academic community.

Essentially, this section represents an introduction to our university of focus, ISCAP, and many themes that will be extremely relevant for further chapters, and to provide readers with a broad understanding of each different entity at hand, and how they operate.

The methodology used here shall be the consultation of the different academic organizations' website, to understand their origins and framework, as well as word-of-mouth questioning to perceive missing information, by me asking around higher-ups at ISCAP.

History and Organigrams

Polytechnic of Porto

It all started in 1837, with the creation of the Polytechnic Academy of Porto, a determining institution that led the revolution of higher education in Porto, collaborating with many other faculties, namely by sharing its headquarters and location with them. In 1911, the University of Porto was created, and with its creation, the Faculty of Sciences, and the Faculty of Engineering of University of Porto, followed. The industrial School of Porto later evolved into the Higher Institutes of Engineering (ISEP) and Accounting and Administration (ISCAP) of Polytechnic Institute of Porto.

The Industrial School of Porto goes back all the way to 1952, when it was founded, which would later become the Industrial and Commercial Institute of Porto. The year was 1918, when these 2 institutions would segregate themselves into two. A whopping 60 years later, in 1975, the Industrial Institute of Porto becomes ISEP, integrating higher education within it.

The following year, the Commercial Institute becomes the Higher Institute of Accountability and Administration of Porto (ISCAP), which also integrates higher education.

The time which the Polytechnic Institute of Porto (IPP, also known as P. Porto) was finally founded was 1985, integrating the emerging institutes at the time: Higher School of Education (ESE), and Higher School of Music, which in 1994 would become the Higher School of Music and Performing Arts (ESMAE), with the aim of promoting other forms of art.

In 1988, ISCAP and ISEP become integrated within the P. Porto.

When it came to 1990, the Higher Institute of Industrial Studies and Management was created, located at first in 2 hubs, and in 2001 uniting in 1, between Vila do Conde and Póvoa de Varzim.

In 2016, the Higher Institute of Industrial Studies and Management was replaced and terminated, by the new Higher School of Media, Arts and Design (ESMAD), as well as the Higher School of Hospitality and Tourism (ESHT). (Instituto Politécnico do Porto, n.d.)

Although P. Porto has its many own sub-departments related to Social Initiatives, Culture, Sports, Human Resources, etc., we will focus on its 8 institutions, rather than structure itself, as our focus will be breaking things down and understand where ISCAP fits, in the whole “puzzle”. (Instituto Politécnico do Porto, n.d.)

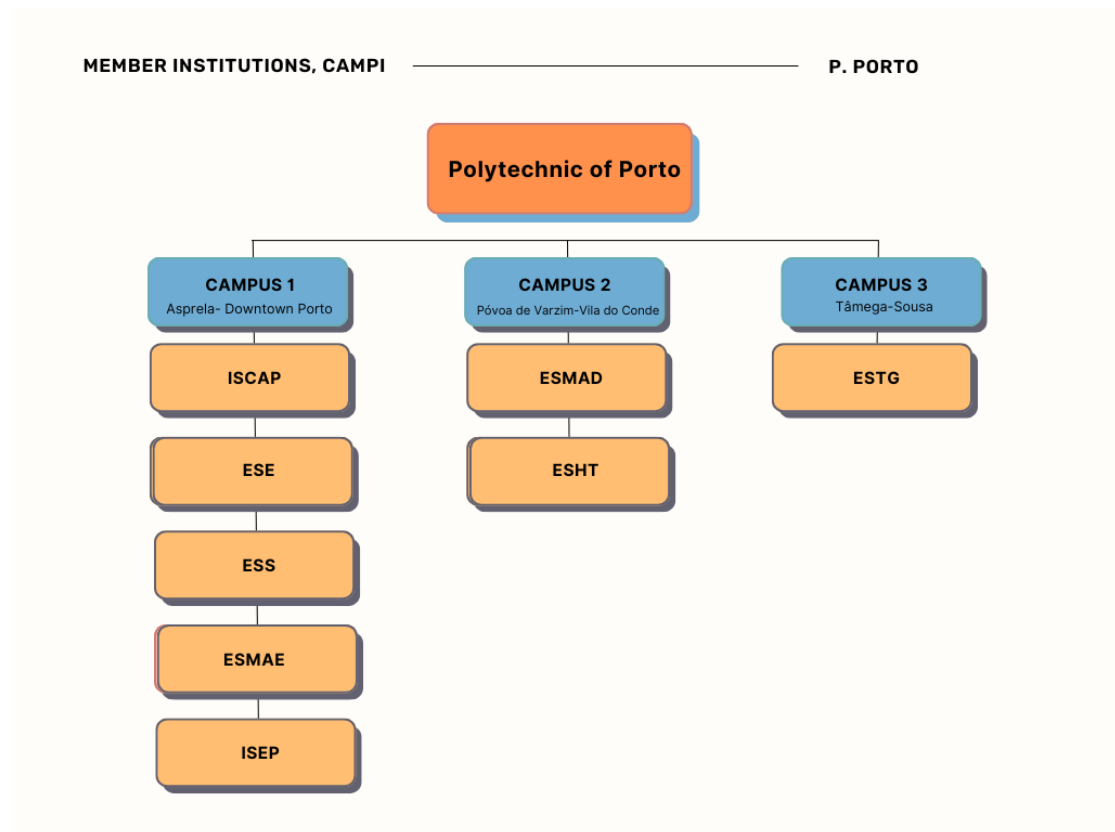


Figure 18- P. Porto University Campus Distribution and Member Institutions (P. Porto, 2024)

As seen on Figure 18, the different Higher Institutes of P. Porto are currently spread out across 3 different Campi. Campus 1 (C1) is divided between Asprela and downtown Porto and is home to 5 of the 8 universities of P. Porto: ISEP; ISCAP; ESE; of Health (ESS); and ESMAE.

Campus 2 (C2) is located between Póvoa de Varzim and Vila do Conde and hosts the 2 following universities: ESMAD and ESHT.

Finally, Campus 3 (C3) in the regions of Tâmega and Sousa, integrates within it the Higher Institute of Technology and Management (ESTG). (Instituto Politécnico do Porto, n.d.)

Annex I can be consulted for a geographical view of the 3 Campi, displaying the 8 universities.

ISCAP

The Industrial and Commercial Institute of Porto, as previously mentioned, was transformed into 2 different educational entities, in 1918: Commercial Institute of Porto, and Commerce Institute of Porto. Due to evolutions in economic science and job markets, tribulations regarding law and logistics regarding the development of certain commercial and administrative degrees were present, in the sense that development was still in place for them to function and be on par with the market and societal needs.

For this reason, the Commercial Institute of Porto became the ISCAP we all know today, as well as being integrated into P. Porto in 1988, promoting an exchange between commercial and social entities (companies and associations) and education, providing a more technical, or better yet, mixed (with some theoretical elements) approach to education.

(Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, n.d.)

My paternal grandfather used to lecture economics and commerce in the old installations of ISCAP, in Rua Entreparedes (Entreparedes Street), which used to be the original ISCAP location before the construction of brand-new installations, in 1995.

This new building is located near the University Campus of Asprela, and although it was a modernizing transition, some of the cultural essence of old ISCAP was kept in the new one, and a great example of that is the notorious “snail” corridor that we have in the current ISCAP, honoring and remembering the stairs in a spiral display, from the old building (see Annex II).

The current infrastructure of the institution features a vast library (featuring plenty of books that can be borrowed, with free magazines for students to take which are updated weekly at the door of the library, and even computers for research and study purposes) as well as a free-study room (essentially a work space where you can study in a more open space than the library, if necessary, also equipped with computers).

There are 3 canteens, which have many meal options at different price points, including vegan and vegetarian ones in every one of them: Zina's Bar, IscaBar, and the public Canteen of P. Porto (in ISCAP, there is one in every P. Porto institution).

It also features 2 auditoriums, 3 amphitheatres, a performance room (Sala de Atos), I.T centers, multimedia and languages labs, a digital marketing lab, and a diverse array of administrative offices (spread out among the different floors of the venue) and a teacher/presidency floor.

The classroom displays are very diverse, good ventilation and heaters, if needed, not to mention, plenty of space, despite having both larger and smaller classrooms. It's safe to say ISCAP is well-equipped to handle a great number of students, and to provide conditions for teachers and staff, both teaching and non-teaching as well.

An important aspect to mention is that this building, unlike the old one, has plenty of accessibility for disabled people. Within my 5 years of ISCAP studies, I have seen and had classes with some wheelchair-using students, and they seemed to get by relatively well.

ISCAP's institutional vision constitutes social responsibility, experience and innovation.

The presidency, and ISCAP's administration, is guided by 4 major values: education, research, internationalization, and community integration.

(Rui Pinheiro, Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, n.d.)

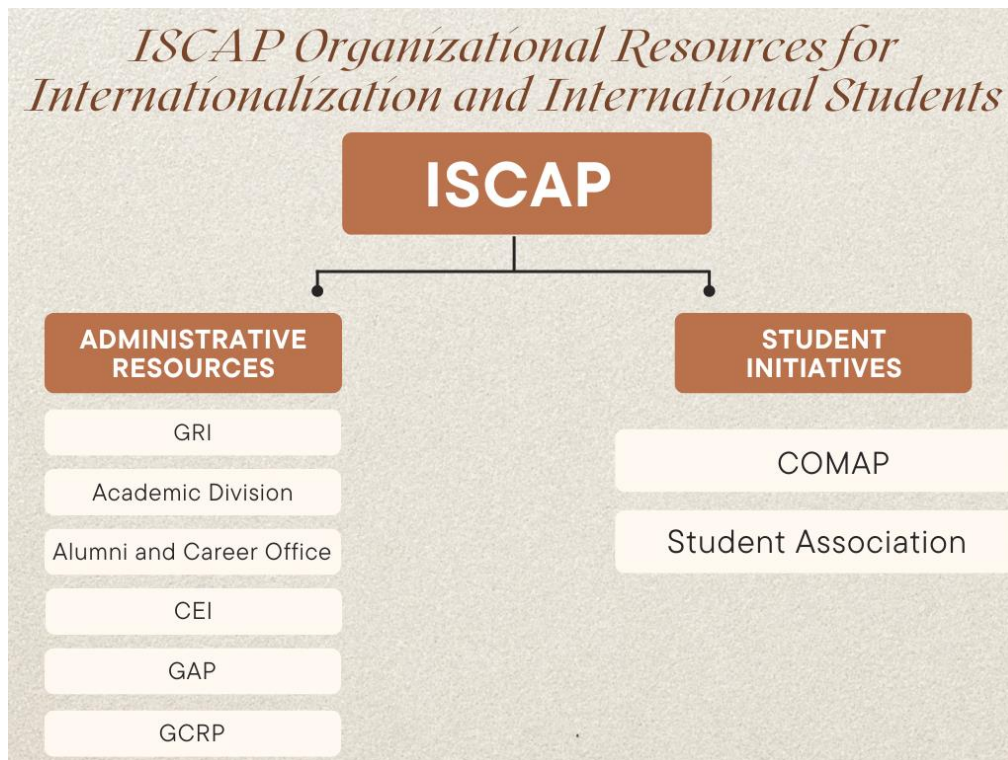


Figure 19- ISCAP Resources for International Students (ISCAP, 2024)

With Figure 19, the university's organizational resources for internationality and interculturality will provide a better insight into how these values are put into practice. This organigram, only featuring the major departments that are relevant to the report's topic, supports the academic community, specifically, international students, and everything related to both internationalization and interculturality, although we will briefly mention other departments occasionally.

Data regarding ISCAP shows that the institution features more than 4500 students, 200+ teachers (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, n.d.), 200+ International Students. It is the second oldest institution in P. Porto and is the most international faculty of all of P. Porto to this day. (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, 2023; Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, 2020)

ISCAP features 2 degrees lectured in English, namely, the bachelor's degree in Creativity and Innovation, which has an ERASMUS+ joint program with mandatory mobility to both Lithuania and Estonia, and of course the master's degree in Intercultural Studies for Business. (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, n.d.)

The built-in mobility of the mentioned bachelor's degree is a fantastic selling point for both local and international students; meanwhile, the Masters represents a solid foundation for local students who want a career with an international focus, regardless of if they intend to work locally in Portugal, or abroad. The fact that it is about Intercultural Studies also helps when it comes to attracting foreign students, as they already experience being immersed in an intercultural setting, but also get to study the scientific subject, with a diversified learning environment both in terms of courses and career prospects.

ISCAP's International Office (GRI)

ISCAP's International Office, often referred to as GRI, is the predominant tool for international student inclusion as well as internationalization of the institution, as I have mentioned.

When it comes to its history, ISCAP begun its internationalization process in 2004, which was the year GRI was also created. Although it faced some obstacles, such as the low to no adherence of International Students at the time, the lack of organization of mobilities and they were scarce as well, the lack of English programs for students from abroad, and some resistance to the dissemination of ISCAP at a global level. English represents a very important uniting language among international incoming students, despite them being predominantly from neighboring European countries at the time, as although both locals and incoming students were not native in speaking the language, it could present a linguistic middle ground and promote common understanding.

In 2005, ISCAP joined the European Network SPACE (European Network for Languages and Business Studies), which was an international network among member institutions within Europe, which would help connect them, promoting information dissemination, collaboration, exchanges and development of joint programs among member institutions. This was a powerful internationalization tool at the time for ISCAP, since mobilities grew,

and so did projects and partnerships. Additionally, 2 members of ISCAP played administrative roles in the network. Unfortunately, the network shut down later (European Space Network, n.d.), my hypothesis on why must be predominantly due to the lack of necessity of smaller internationalization and mobility initiatives, not to mention policy changes and potential lack of funding. Essentially, the ERASMUS+ became such a huge resource that many of the smaller projects were no longer necessary.

In 2006, the very first International Week was held, orchestrated by GRI. It represents a crucial event for ISCAP's internationalization, we will delve into in more detail in the Internship chapter. For a brief introduction, it consists of a week where foreign teachers visit ISCAP to lecture classes to Portuguese students, which was fantastic from an educational and international view, as it added international perspectives to many subjects, promoting cultural and mobility exchanges and disseminating ISCAP at a global level. The event is held annually to this day.

Like we previously mentioned, the lack of English spoken classes represented an obstacle for incoming student interest, thus, in 2008, the English Programme was created to match the offer of Portuguese for Foreign Students. The implementation of such program led to an exponential increase in Incoming students.

The Orientation Week, where Portuguese students and foreign ones would explore the city, with both entertainment and informational purposes was created. The major difficulties upon its first edition were the time related difficulties of scheduling it at a convenient date and late publication of the academic calendars, problems that would be solved over the years, and the event is held to this day.

Another event, created in 2011 called "Culture on the Move", biannually disseminated the culture of Incoming students towards ISCAP students who signed up for mobility, as a mean to prepare local students for intercultural exchange when they perform said mobilities.

These brand-new initiatives and events led to ISCAP students getting involved in the organization process, leading to the creation of COMAP in 2011. (a more detailed approach is given later in this chapter).

In 2012, the first Double Diploma with Université Bretagne Sud (France), together with another Double Diploma with Alytos College (Lithuania) programs were created, helping

students form an international curriculum. Some hinderances students felt, especially with the French university were having to either learn or already be minimally fluent in French, as it was the main working language in the French Double Diploma program.

In 2014, ISCAP begun its first Joint Programme (JP) with universities originating in Lithuania and Estonia. The JP gives students the opportunity to participate in an equal program (meaning, developed in cooperation among the 2 universities), while on the other hand, Double Diploma programs allow students to get credits in the visiting institution that later recognizes and credits them, so they can obtain a double diploma.

Another network which ISCAP enrolled in, in 2014, was the ACINNET, extending the international partnerships reach and mobilities to Brazil, South America and even some ex-colonies from Africa.

In 2016, ISCAP focused on expanding its projects through ERASMUS+, research and increased staff and student mobility. Since 2012, ISCAP's leadership established incentives to encourage faculty participation in research, with points being awarded for projects, publications, network participation, and industry relations, which then were turned into funding for professional development.

ISCAP also developed Research Centers, in the sense that it begun with 4 total centers, 3 of them merging into one, resulting in 2 total Research Centers by 2017. Funding for each Center was based on performance. This would promote international information dissemination, contributions and exchange.

Essentially, with so many initiatives we mentioned, plus, student involvement in foreign student integration, ISCAP's notoriety at a global level was growing, and still is to this day.

The main struggles for these ambitious projects, and upcoming ones are related to limited financial resources for international activities and levels of faculty engagement. By securing sponsorships (food and drinks), adjusting scholarship distributions, and promoting an intercultural environment within the university, ISCAP faces these issues and thrives in the international educational field. (Mesquita et. Castilho, 2017)

Resuming the main topic, and focusing on GRI's characteristics, according to my observations during my 2023/2024 internship, it has a pivotal role in the inclusion of

International students in the sense that it helps them whenever they need something, from accessing some of ISCAP's online platforms, to formulating Transcripts of Records (important document related to ERASMUS+), to help integrate them within the community itself, or any issues related to their academic courses or doubts. The events they promote, which we will talk about in a later chapter, tend to involve many people, from a vast array of both ethnic and international backgrounds, and are held quite often, I would say about once per month.

These events range from conferences, to workshops, to online meetings, to get-togethers, and significant exchanges in terms of interculturality and even mobility. The target audience and involved ISCAP and foreign people might differ from event to event, as sometimes it is GRI Staff exclusive with some foreign staff, or presidency of ISCAP + GRI Staff, some might be between ISCAP international students and the local student community itself, some could be between ISCAP teachers and foreign students abroad, and so on and so forth.

GRI is composed of 3 main Staff members and are often open to receiving both local and international students as interns for the Office.

The 4 main Staff Member positions are:

Incoming Officer (IN), in this case Ana, which handles affairs related to incoming students, such as documentation, integration and things related to their classes and academic experiences. A common occurrence within her workflow is communicating with partner universities through email to ensure the exchanges are well documented and standard protocol is followed.

Outgoing Officer (OUT), in this case Cláudia, which handles affairs related to outgoing students and her work consists of working with outgoing mobility, divulging new ERASMUS+ opportunities, and following protocol and prepare for such projects, just like Ana, often communicating with partner universities to handle exchanges. She also receives plenty of students at the office, answering questions related to the topics I mentioned.

Coordinator, in this case Dr. Alexandra, who created GRI and leads all affairs, when necessary, problem solving and usually is the one who represents GRI during major

events. She organizes everything regarding mobilities before they are taken care of, in more detail, by the IN or OUT Officers. She can always help anyone and everyone with GRI related questions.

Interns, usually students, as previously mentioned, who volunteer either curricularly or extracurricularly, and tend to help with any tasks related to both IN and OUT mobility for students. They can handle email exchanges and mass communication in that sense, work with sponsorships, do marketing for the Office through social media and website updates, manage Office 365 forms and databases, express their creativity through physical promotional pieces such as flyers or posters, and in general, make things easier for the senior permanent Staff of GRI (It is worth mentioning that International Students can also intern at any other ISCAP department if the vacancy is available, this tends to be the most common one).

(Instituto Politécnico do Porto, GRI, n.d.)

All the members work closely with each other, in a teamwork-based environment, as everything done among all Staff is closely related with one another, and it is a small team. The coziness and perfect size of the GRI promotes many opportunities for interaction among Staff, and co-operation.

Other Resources

COMAP

The Committee for International Students of ISCAP (COMAP) was created in 2011, with the aim of helping integrate International Students, promoting Interculturality within ISCAP by helping them network with not only other International Students, but also Portuguese local students, as well as helping them with any doubts, sharing Portuguese traditions and sightseeing, giving incoming students the opportunity for cultural immersion and exchange.

According to their official dedicated website, COMAP has its own original Buddy System, where Portuguese volunteer students are assigned 1 or more International Students, and are tasked with both providing them help with their doubts and questions, additionally, they genuinely can become friends by hanging out and setting up get-togethers among themselves.

A guide for Local Students travelling abroad to different countries is another functionality of the webpage, with information regarding living costs, travel destinations, transportation, universities, and basic language tips. Within the same target audience, an ERASMUS+ guide is also available, for things such as registration, calendar and FAQ.

They feature a FAQ section for International Students too, plus, an accommodation page, for ease of finding a place to stay near ISCAP or a desired place within Porto. Moreover, testimony of previous International Students is displayed so they can understand if enrolling in the Buddy System or ISCAP in general is something they are interested in.

(COMAP, n.d.)

The global events for International Students and COMAP members are often promoted on their dedicated Instagram page. (COMAP, n.d.)

COMAP works closely in conjunction with GRI, as we will see in the Internship chapter, for example, in tours through downtown Porto and Gaia, and events involving International Students.

Alumni and Career Office

Although not commonly used by International Students, but rather by locals, it is still an available option if incoming students need help with developing their LinkedIn pages, defining their career paths better, or seeking mentorship from a professional perspective.

The Office was created with the intent of boosting ISCAP's student careers, and even features many ex-student International Ambassadors living in many different countries worldwide, who promote ISCAP at a global level and show availability towards helping students, namely finalists about to enter the job market.

Through their success stories, and this powerful resource to boost professional prospects among the student community, it is something that benefits everyone. (Alumni, ISCAP, n.d.)

Office of Communication and Public Relations (GCRP)

The Office of Communication and Public Relations (GCRP) is naturally a staple tool when it comes to boosting ISCAP's notoriety at a local and global level, as they manage all ISCAP's marketing and communication media, such as their social media pages, website, and other means of communication, such as newspapers and news articles (both written and video).

They function under the direct order of the Presidency, with the aim of promoting the good name of ISCAP and relations, both international with other universities and local ones, and the public. (GCRP, ISCAP, n.d.)

Other Resources (Academic Division, CEI, GAP, AE)

The Academic Division organizes, certifies, and informs the academic community, often known for offering consultancy to students with general doubts regarding general matters.

In that sense, both local and International Students can use this resource, which from my personal observations, it is the most widely used helping tool. (Divisão Acadêmica, ISCAP, n.d.)

A notorious department that promotes interculturality and internationalization within ISCAP is the Centre for Intercultural Studies (CEI), which was established in 2007, and created an e-journal, where scholars and teachers alike post about diverse topics within the field of intercultural studies. The members of CEI attend international events and represent ISCAP while doing so. The Centre serves as a database of knowledge within this increasingly important field. (CEI, ISCAP, n.d.)

Another department would be the Project Support Office (GAP), just like their title says, it provides administrative and financial decision support for members of the ISCAP community who want to take on their own projects. I decided it was worth mentioning due to their webpage referencing that they support both local and international projects, which naturally would benefit the process of ISCAP's internationalization. (GAP, ISCAP, n.d.)

Finally, within ISCAP, we have the Student Association (AE), which is complementary to COMAP when it comes to International Student Integration. The AE can provide them with practical information about local services, transportation and student life tips; it represents the interests and advocates for both local and International Students; it organizes many social events, such as parties, sport related events, and cultural ones.

(AEISCAP, ISCAP, n.d.)

Conclusion

This Appendix provided us with a detailed yet focused observation of P. Porto, ISCAP, and most thematically important, GRI. We concluded that all 3 of these institutions and divisions are well-equipped towards the reception of International Students and projecting themselves abroad (internationalization), with hundreds of students going abroad and hundreds more incoming every year.

We learned about the history of each one of the 3 entities, and their roles and vision towards globalization and interculturality, and we discovered that one of the reasons why P. Porto, more specifically, ISCAP, is a major destination choice for International Students. Partly, due to the vast number of resources that are offered for them at ISCAP.

From our analysis of data regarding the history of ISCAP's international resource and initiatives development, such as adhering to global networks, the creation of departments

and research centers for internationalization, and sponsorships to fund those projects, the institution has grown exponentially, creating a diverse student body and spreading ISCAP's notoriety and global presence, although it always has room for improvement.

Appendix IV – Visual Identity Plan- GRI (Branding)

I made a written social media and general identity plan, which encompasses the color palette GRI should follow, along with social media post ideas, for both my internship, and for future work by anyone at GRI. I wanted to leave my mark and genuinely help in terms of marketing, design and GRI's development.

Visual Identity

Essentially, uses of different shades of blue, orange, black and white. Posts and logos should be formulated using these colors, which contrast and combine well.

Predominantly: Navy Blue, Light Blue, Orange, Black, White

Content Ideas (for present and future reference):

International Student and Teacher Spotlights

Cultural Celebrations

Global Research and Collaborations:

Study Abroad Opportunities

Language Learning Tips

GRI and ISCAP intercultural Events

International and National Day Celebrations

Interactive Quizzes and Polls

Tour of ISCAP and showcasing specific aspects

Day of an intern at GRI

CEI- Intercultural Studies Center Promotion

FAQ Sessions

Collaboration with the different ISCAP student associations

Appendix V – Recently Graduated Mobility Post

Appendix II's focus is the Recently Graduated Mobility post, which I formulated both the design itself and the copywrite. It was a fun task, where I tried to make appealing visuals with the provided stock assets of Canva (I aimed for a paper feel, with the destination stamps and ripped-out aesthetic). The copy here was exclusively made in Portuguese, considering the target audience were local students. The post can be found on GRI's Instagram page.

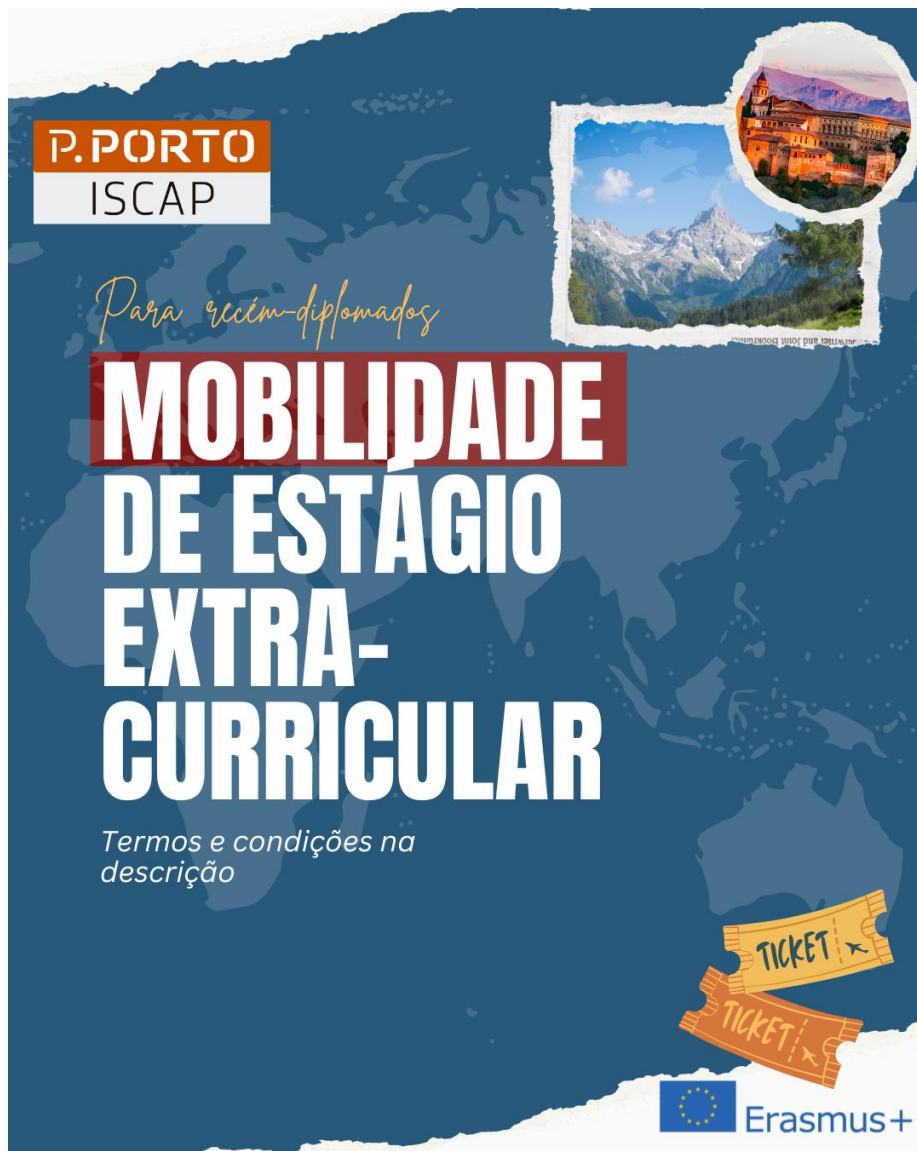


Figure 20- Recently Graduated Mobility Post for GRI (2024)

Appendix VI – Linguistic Proficiency Test Post

A post was also made for a linguistic proficiency in English test, also exclusively aimed at local students interested in performing mobility, to get their English speaking and understanding levels verified. The idea behind this post's design was making it clear the test was directed specifically for the English language, and I saw an opportunity to fit the color scheme of both English-speaking country flags, United States of America and Great Britain, to fit into the visuals. Additionally, I put a teacher and a student, wearing a very traditional graduation outfit, according to American standards (I saw my girlfriend wearing it during her college graduation in the States.), and try to illustrate the scenario of passing the Linguistic Proficiency test.



Figure 21- Language Proficiency Test Post (2024)

Appendix VII– Christmas Post

I made this Christmas post to celebrate the holiday. Although it is relatively simple in its design, I came up with a fun saying for the holiday, it was some of my first steps as a creative at GRI, “from GRI to thee”. Also, I thought of how to incorporate the Christmas colors into our defined social media color scheme.



Figure 22- Christmas Holiday Post (2023)

Appendix VIII- Human Fraternity Day Post

The Human Fraternity Day post was also a great learning opportunity, design wise. I wanted to make more holiday posts at the time, besides the ones where everyone already posts, such as Christmas or New Years. I quickly came to the realization that this holiday is a perfect fit for ISCAP's community, as we always look out for each other.



Figure 23- Slide 1 of the Human Fraternity Day Post (2024)



Figure 24- Slide 2 of the Human Fraternity Day Post (2024)



Figure 25- Slide 3 of the Human Fraternity Day Post (2024)

Appendix IX- International Women's Day Post

A very important holiday as well, I wanted to highlight the importance of women in ISCAP's community. To illustrate this special day, I chose a different variation of colors, with a softer palette, and an interesting illustration of a woman from Canva. The copy was in English, as an intermediary for everyone to understand, and I wrote a dedication to women of ISCAP.



Figure 26- International Women's Day Post (2024)

Appendix X- Mobility Reminder- Instagram Story

I elaborated a small reminder post for 24h Instagram stories, to remind students of applying for mobility, again, directed at local students exclusively, so I made it in Portuguese. The goal here was to diversify the type of content we create, so we vary from only posting actual posts, to trying out the stories feature of Instagram.



Figure 27- ERASMUS+ Mobility Reminder Instagram Story (2023)

Appendix XI- Christmas Instagram Story

I would describe the title of Appendix VIII as quite self-explanatory, the goal being to generate more interaction with the public for the Christmas holiday. In the center, I added a question so the audience could interact with the post.



Figure 28- Christmas Holiday Instagram Story (2023)

Appendix XII- GRI IW Program Prototype

Here we can observe a cut version of the final program for the International Week which I made. The reason it was scrapped was due to printing issues with that specific shade of blue, and wanting to go a different design direction, perhaps more formal or professional, I would say. I covered the IW email in Photoshop for data privacy as well, for the sake of showing it in this report.

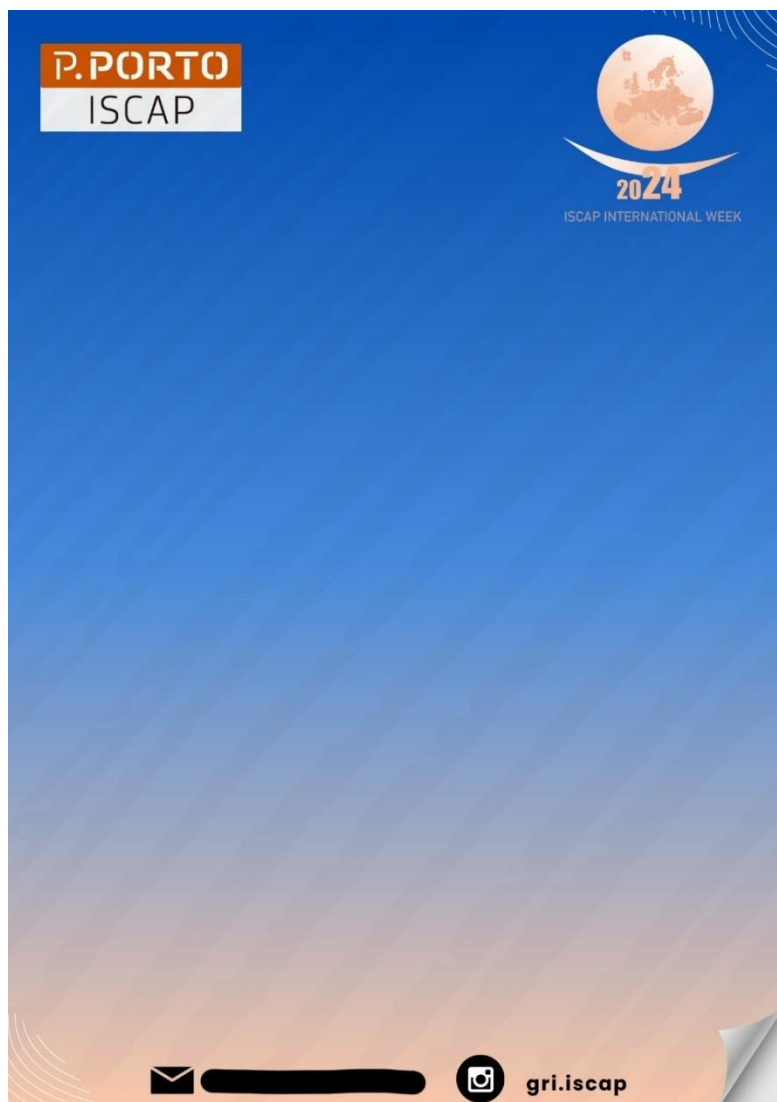


Figure 29- ISCAP International Week Program Design Prototype (2024)

Appendix XIII- GRI IW Program (Final Version)

This was the final product I came up with when designing the program for ISCAP's International Week, which ended up on the official website. My idea was to contrast 2 opposing gradients and have something in the back of the design related to the event, which I chose a globe to do so.

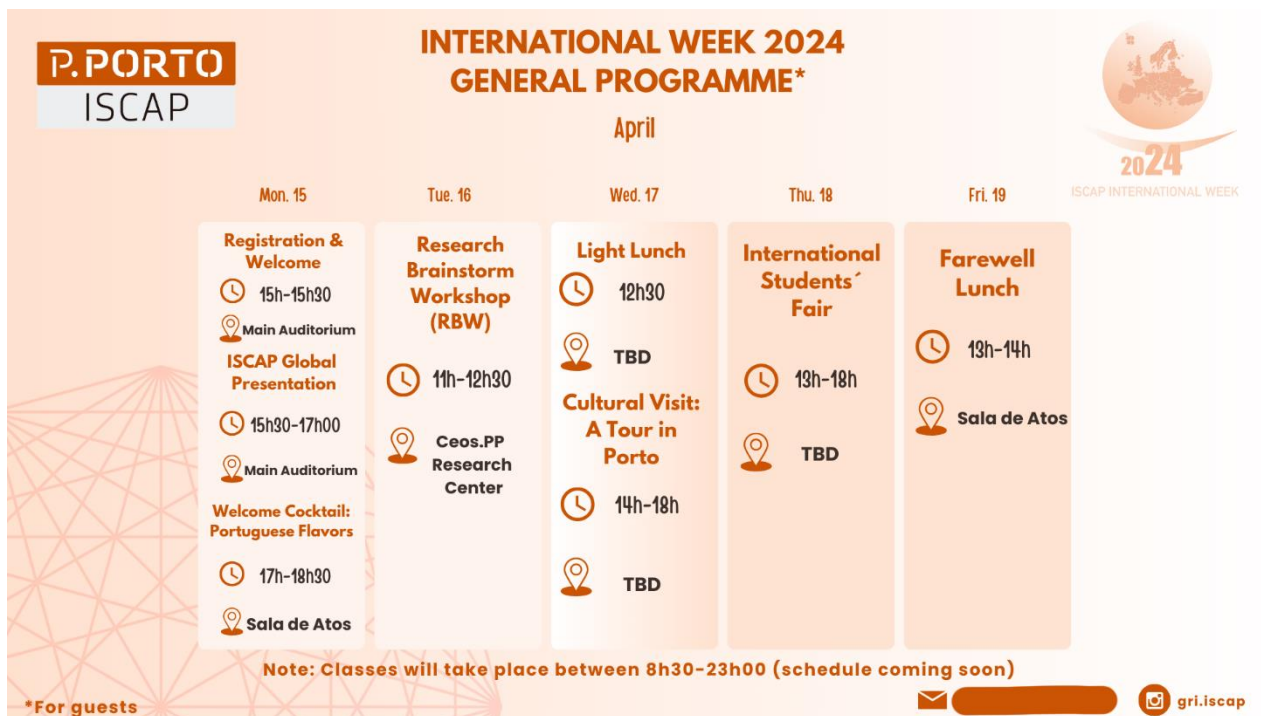


Figure 30- ISCAP International Week Program Finalized Design (2024)

Appendix XIV- Wine Caves + Boat Trip (IW)

These pictures which I took during the Wine Caves and Boat Trip tour which I gave to the incoming international staff during International Week on behalf of GRI show us some of the scenery and tourism activities one can do in Porto.



Figure 31- Porto Wine Cups at the Wine Caves



Figure 32- Boat Trip Scenic View

Appendix XV- Extracurricular Tour Guiding for GRI

This section includes 2 pictures I took as part of my volunteer work after my internship with GRI. This work was also done for GRI (tour guiding), and to protect mine and ISCAP's guests' privacy, I blurred their faces. There are more pictures of other tours, but I chose 2, as I thought that would suffice as an example of my extracurricular work.



Figure 33- ISCAP GRI Extracurricular Tour Guide 1



Figure 34- ISCAP GRI Extracurricular Tour Guide 2

Appendix XVI- Post-Internship Activities

Post-International Week

Right after the International Week event, which was very demanding of me and all the other interns, considering how long we worked on it and carefully prepared it, we had some downtime where the workload was a bit less heavy, and we felt a sense of pride, relief and inspiration for having worked so hard as a team.

I used this time vacancy to add Google Chrome browser extensions with all the useful links to all the intern computers in the office, so that they could always use them, to save time and to provide guidance on their tasks, as a token of gratitude. I added useful links, such as a direct one to Outlook email (to easily access any of the work emails we use on a daily basis) , another to the internal database of GRI, one for the database of International Week, some design tools like Canva (design platform and workspace, the one that I was suggested using throughout the whole internship by the staff, and that the interns would likely use as well), Unsplash and Freepik (Free websites with legal images for them to use in the designs), and finally a text formatting website: Text Cleaner (to deal with those pesky format issues that sometimes pop up in word or pdf).

I barely had any other tasks from then on, as I was preparing for my very first foreign BIP in Latvia, and my internship was close to its end. I was very grateful for Dr. Alexandra's flexibility at this time, as I needed to prepare, since it was my first time travelling abroad with ERASMUS. Fortunately, I was not going alone, I went with 2 colleagues from my degree. Together, we booked the plane flights and accommodation. It was a 2- week trip considering our travel days + actual BIP days.

We went through France for hours, as we booked for an airport which we thought was also in Paris, where we needed to take our connection flight to Latvia, but the airport we landed in was 300 km (186 miles, approximately) away. When we finally reached Latvia, I met lots of international students from a multitude of countries, including people from Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, and got to know other Portuguese attendees as well.

The BIP was about boosting research skills in the humanities, which I thought was very important for me, as it would help me write this report. I got to know the historical background of the University of Latvia and explore the country's culture. Not only did I attend the BIP, but I also participated in the 6th International Symposium for International Communication.

As a change of pace, instead of just hanging with my Portuguese group, I went with a large group of Romanian students very early on when exploring Latvia, and they took me in very quickly, we “clicked” instantly, and we became great friends. This opportunity led to an extensive cultural exchange. We had many fun moments, and experiences shared, which I won't forget. The Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, in collaboration with Tony Iosif (one of my Romanian friends I met there), even shared a picture of us together on social media, which I thought was very wholesome (see Annex XI).

When I returned from the Latvia BIP, back to GRI and Portugal, I was tasked with creating a post describing the general experience of the ISCAP students (including me, of course) and teachers who had participated in the BIP and making something visually appealing. I went for one of the signature colors we have, that would fit both the University of Latvia logo, and ISCAP's as well, not to mention the ERASMUS + logo: predominantly navy blue.

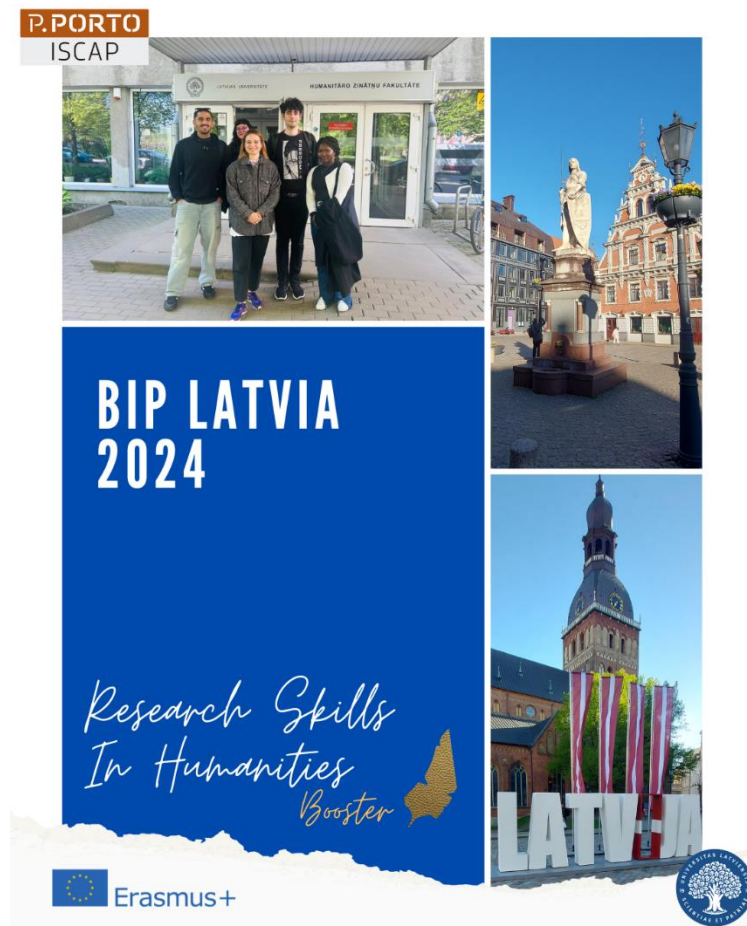


Figure 35- ERASMUS+ BIP in Latvia Post for GRI

As seen in Figure 35, I added a textured golden plume, to signify knowledge, as commonly seen in media, with portrayals of intellectuals writing with their oversized plume pen. I wanted to feature not only the ISCAP participants, but also showcase the beauty of the Latvian scenery. In the copywrite, I posted on GRI’s Instagram page, including a thorough description, both in Portuguese and English.

After the internship, I kept being involved with GRI, and ISCAP. I went to the library to write my report every day. I helped GRI by offering tour guides for international guests and was even invited to participate in an ISCAP BIP in Technical Communication.

First off, the tours were much smoother than previous ones. I got to interact with more people and was more confident in navigating the city with guests by myself as the sole guide. I always make sure to take pictures, for them to be saved in GRI’s databases, but

most importantly, to send them to the different guests. I have gotten positive feedback from my work experience when guiding tours, and although it is not something I want to do professionally, it was an interesting complementary task within my internship, voluntary work. I have included some pictures of different occasions where I went as a solo tour guide recently (see Appendix XV).

I also had the opportunity of participating in a Change Management Workshop, in collaboration between ISCAP and Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University. GRI was the department of ISCAP responsible for coordinating the event. In it, I interacted with many German students, and worked as a team to understand what leadership measures should we take in situations where a company deeply changes, such as a merge, to comprehend what happens from a logistical and human perspective, and what measures to take for a smooth transition. It was certainly an interesting event, and extremely relevant, as adaptability to changes within companies is a necessity in terms of a professional's skill set.

In Annex XII, we can observe me and the other participants of the workshop, taking a group picture with our newly earned certificates. GRI later made a post using the picture for social media, which I did not elaborate on myself, as I am no longer a worker in GRI.

Lastly, the most recent event was the BIP in Technical Communication, which I also did tours for, but was invited to participate as well, by Dr. Alexandra. In it, we did a wide array of tasks to develop the skill, including a redesign of GRI's webpage, as a final project. I found the initiative of including students in a university's development a wonderful initiative, as if things were "By students, for students". In my opinion, although yes, external professionals can be hired to do the job, taking students' perspectives into account and in some instances even involving them when creating resources for them should be something to consider.



Figure 36- ERASMUS+ BIP in Technical Writing Participants and Staff Group Picture (ISCAP, 2024)

In Figure 36, we can observe me and the participants of the BIP. This picture was later posted in ISCAP's social media page on Facebook, and I got to meet wonderful people and learn more about different cultures and share mine.

Appendix XVII- Skill Development and Personal Growth: A Retrospective

Working at GRI prepared me to take such a massive step in terms of travelling and getting on-field experience with intercultural education settings and adaptability. I felt like I started as someone who had no experience, thus not having very steady confidence in my work, to become a fully-fledged communicator, marketer, designer, scholar and creative person in general. One who takes confidence in his work and tries to help and inspire others while doing so. Another sentiment I would like to share is that my Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business was not just a pathway for students to these international work settings, but also a diverse array of hard and soft skill development towards being great leaders, with an open mind, independence and working as a team with others.

Social Media and Design

This internship provided me with my very first hands-on experience with social media and design in a work setting. Although I made a social media campaign and website redesign project as means to finish my bachelor's in business communication from ISCAP for a Non-Profit organization to help disabled children, this was a completely different setting, not a simulation. I felt a bit disappointed that I predominantly used Canva rather than Photoshop, since "everyone can use Canva", but I am not giving up and want to become a better Photoshop designer, and just like everything in life, it takes practice and consistency. I feel proud of my design improvement nonetheless, I polished my fundamentals like hierarchy, rhythm, color combinations, typography, and organization, reminding myself and the readers that an artist can make something good with the tools at his or her disposal. We are not dictated by our tools, but rather we let our creativity drive us. I can safely say I got myself a perspective on design and powerful insight and have been practicing my design skills to better myself as a creative, through Photoshop, in self-imposed challenges and building a design portfolio. I can safely say

that the GRI Internship experience provided me more confidence in my work, and the progress through each design piece throughout the internship is easily recognizable.

Leadership and Management

Becoming a leader was and still is one of my life goals, as someone who got bullied in school, and experienced many times where I was turned down for being a leader, perhaps due to being shy or introverted, over the years, I got to engage and show everyone I can be the leader I dream to be. From the management of intern teams, to leading tour guides, to helping organize the International Week, I have grown so much and learned very early on that “with great power comes great responsibility” (Lee, 1962), sometimes you even must be the best to get to such a predicament, “to get your hands dirty”, to have stressful times where you face a lot of pressure and workload. I felt like there were plenty of instances not just in the internship but also in these different personal projects I embarked on, where I shined as a leader.

Appendix XVIII- Email for ISCAP International Students

A description of the email that was sent to international students for them to participate in my survey as to gather data for the internship report and understand their feedback towards the university.

Dear International Colleagues and Ex-Colleagues,

My name is Nuno Ribeiro, an ISCAP student, currently writing my thesis to finish my Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business degree.

I am doing an internship at ISCAP, in the International Relations Office, and under supervision of Dr. Alexandra Albuquerque, Dr. Sara Pascoal, and Dr. Clara Sarmento.

My thesis pertains to ISCAP's notoriety as a destination institution for international students, thus, I am writing you this email to ask you to fill my form, as to gather important data regarding your experience and motivations when you studied at ISCAP, in Porto, Portugal.

How to Participate:

You can participate by clicking on this link.

(leading to my google forms)

Why Participate?

Your Voice Matters: I care about your experience and feedback, as I can try to understand your perspective as a foreign student at ISCAP, and help me finish my Masters' through it, and impacting the future of ISCAP's quality.

Quick and Easy: The survey takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Make a Difference: Your input will directly contribute to creating a better environment for current and future international students.

Deadline

Please complete the survey by June 15th.

What About My Data?

The survey is anonymous, untransmissible and your answers deleted when the thesis is fully written and delivered.

I will not write any identifiers regarding your identity, so you are safe.

It is a survey from one student (me) to another (you).

For more details, please check the informed consent within the survey itself.

For any questions, please reply to this email directly, or message me on Instagram (page address)

Best Regards,

Nuno Ribeiro.

Appendix XIX- Graphs of Survey Votes for Factor Importance When Selecting a Foreign University

Here is the data and proof of the collection of said data for this section of the survey.

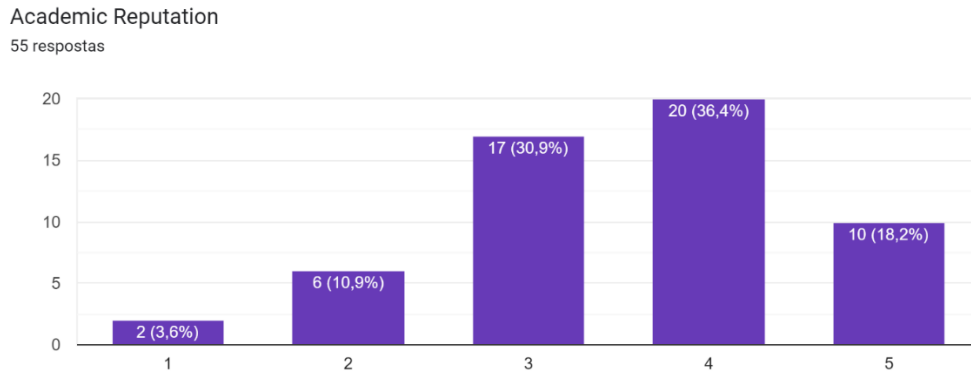


Figure 37- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding the Importance of Academic Reputation when Selecting a Foreign University

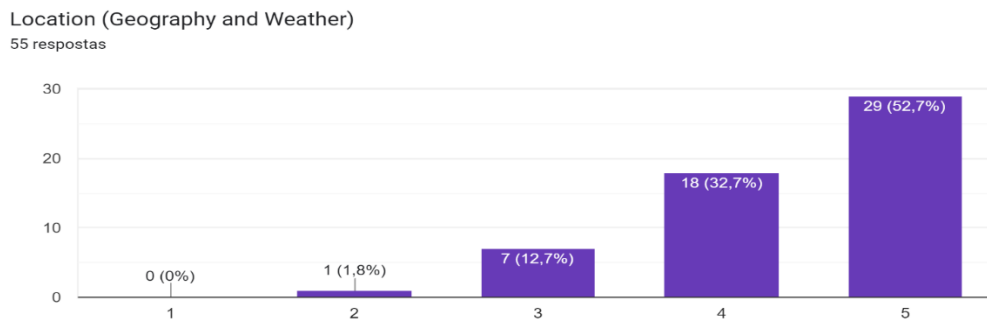


Figure 38- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding the Importance of Location (Geography and Weather) when Selecting a Foreign University

Available Courses

55 respostas

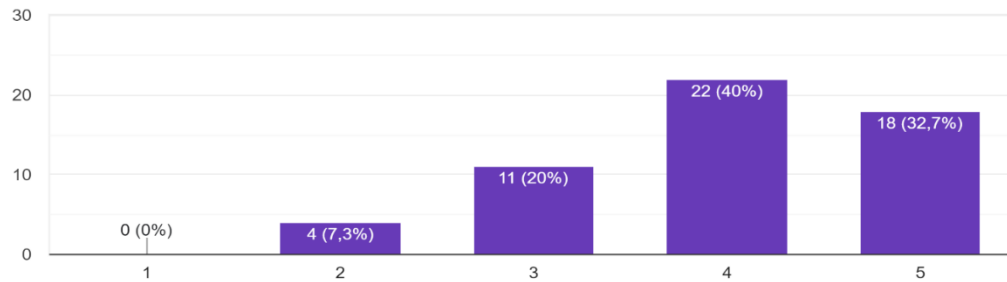


Figure 39- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding the Importance of Available Courses when Selecting a Foreign University

Opportunities for Cultural Immersion (Gastronomy, Holidays, Customs and Practices, etc..)

55 respostas

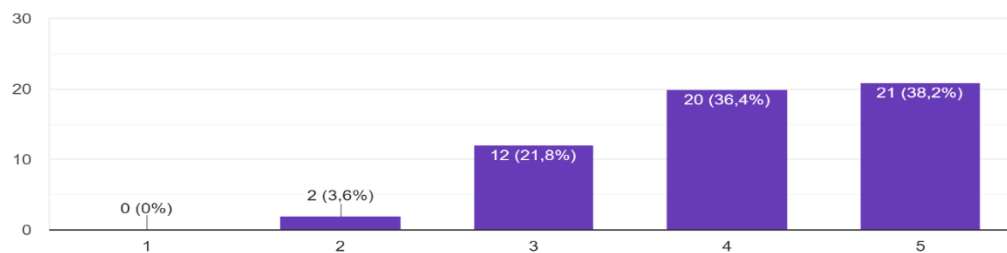


Figure 40- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding the Importance of Opportunities for Cultural Immersion when Selecting a Foreign University

Support Services for International Students (ex: International Office, Accommodation services, etc.)

55 respostas

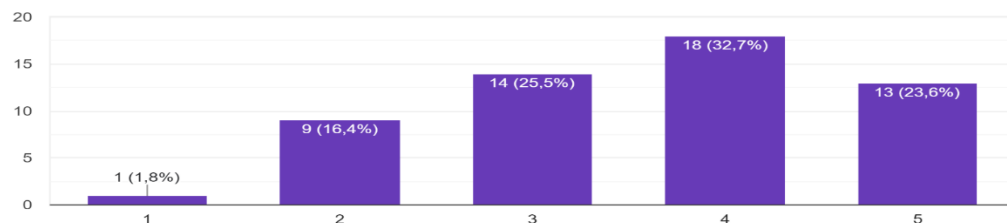


Figure 41- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding the Importance of Support Services when Selecting a Foreign University

Appendix XX- Graphs of Survey Votes for Factor Importance Anticipated Challenges at ISCAP

Here is the data and proof of the collection of said data for this section of the survey.

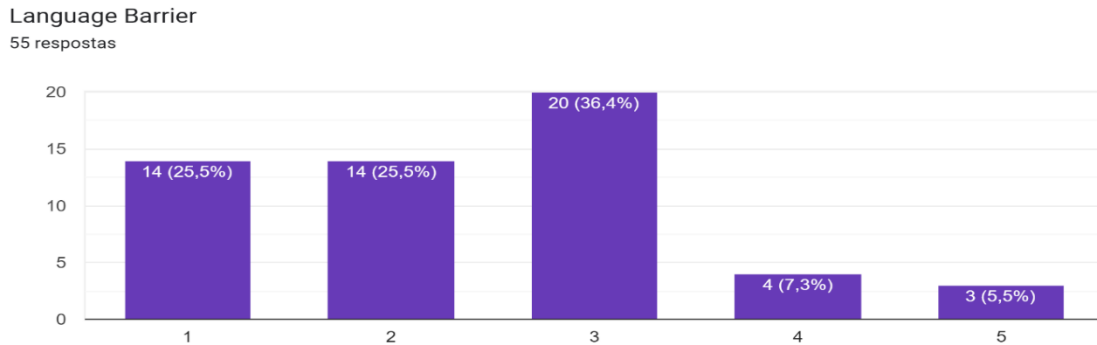


Figure 42- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding Language Barriers when Anticipating and Experiencing Challenges at ISCAP

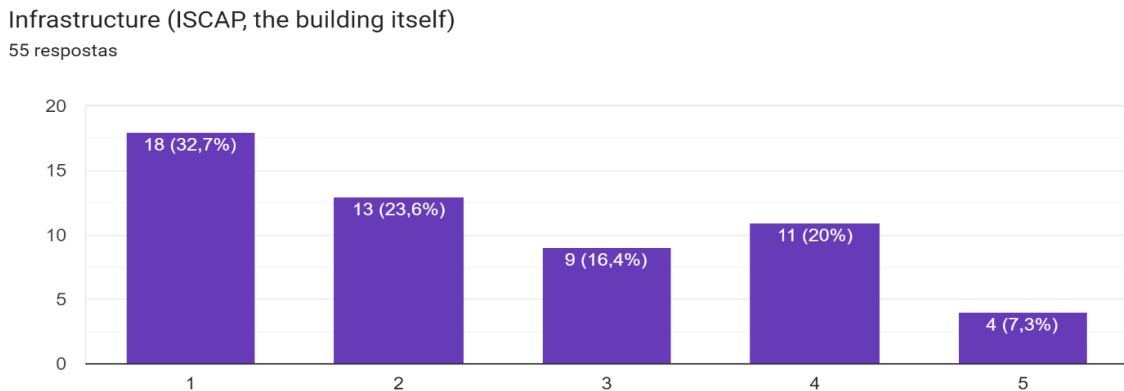


Figure 43- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding Infrastructure when Anticipating and Experiencing Challenges at ISCAP

Cultural Differences

55 respostas

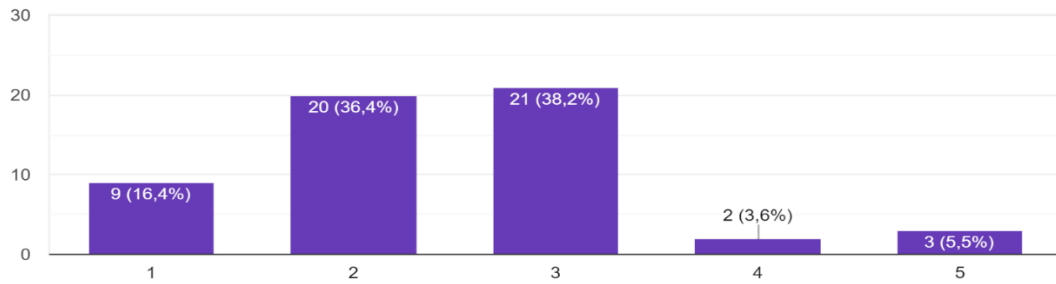


Figure 44- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding Cultural Differences when Anticipating and Experiencing Challenges at ISCAP

Accommodation/ Housing Issues

55 respostas

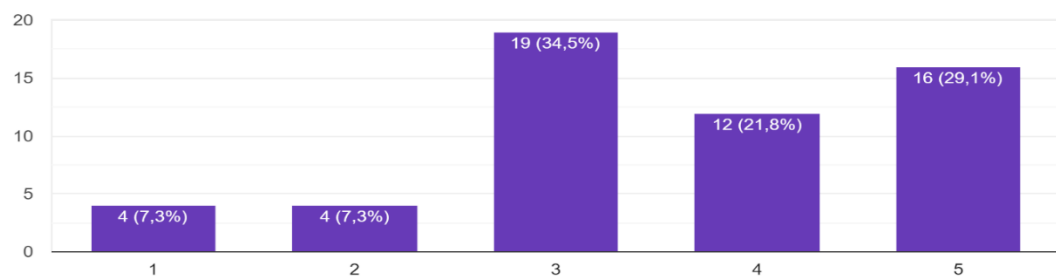


Figure 45- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding Accommodation when Anticipating and Experiencing Challenges at ISCAP

Social Difficulties (making friends, meeting people)

55 respostas

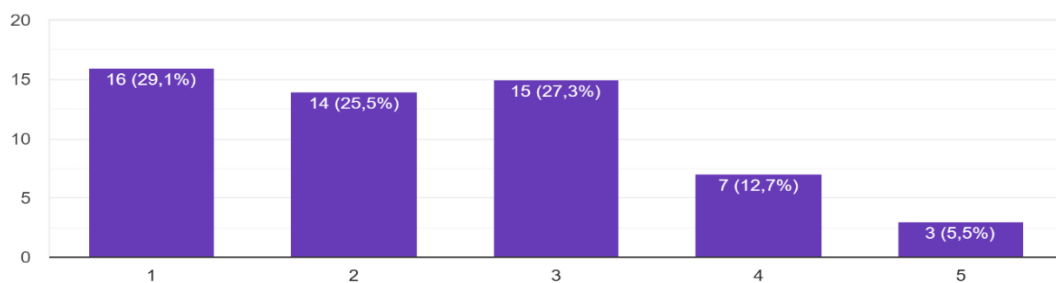


Figure 46- International Student Survey Graph Containing Votes from 1 to 5 regarding Language Barriers when Anticipating and Experiencing Challenges at ISCAP

Appendix XXI- International Student Positive Feedback of ISCAP

Student A: “Besides being a great asset in my curriculum variety-wise, I know I've learned more than I would in my other course back in Brazil.”

Student B: “I learned how much it is important to make most of the possibilities that you are given.”

Student C: “As a real vector in my life to see things differently. I feel that I can adapt myself better and faster. I wasn't scared of changes before, but I'm sure that I'm not scared anymore. It was one of my greatest experiences.”

Student D:” Experiencing different teaching methodologies and academic environments can broaden your understanding of your field of study. It can introduce you to new perspectives and approaches that might not be prevalent in your home institution.”

Student E: “Better confidence and self-reliance, it gave me an interesting theme to talk about in interviews.”

Student F: “It certainly expanded my views, being able to communicate with people from many different countries.”

Student G: “Exposing me to new teaching methods and academic perspectives while fostering confidence and independence”

Student H: “I'm glad I've experienced the Portuguese university system and, being now at the end of my studies, I wish I had known about it before. If I was in my bachelor's, I would want to continue my studies in Portugal.”

Student I: “Personally, it built my adaptability, intercultural communication skills, and global network, fostering both resilience and a broader worldview.”

Student J: “I became more open-minded to different cultures, etc. Also, this mobility challenged me to get out of my comfort zone and it helped to grow as a good and independent person.”

Appendix XXII- Subject A's Interview Transcript

Subject A- Slovenia, ERASMUS+ Student, Online Interview (Pilot Interview)

What year did you start studying at ISCAP? As in, how long ago?

In February. (2024)

Could you please describe your experience as an Erasmus student at ISCAP, in general?

At first it was a bit of a cultural shock... I would say, because everybody is late. The teachers are late, everybody is late. People in general... are all late, so, yeah, that was... the main difference.

What would you say were the biggest challenges during your stay at the institution? Was it the infrastructure, the language barrier or something else?

I didn't have any problems. So, I can't really say anything. Because everyone was so kind and everything... So yeah, that's awesome.

So how was your adjustment process as a student here, socially and in terms of teaching, especially compared to your home institution?

Well, I like the principle that everything here is more like practical knowledge, which I prefer. So, the teachers didn't look for theoretical stuff, but more like how we see and really do practical exams of stuff. In Slovenia, everything is more like... you need to learn the book completely, and here it was more like an understanding way, which gave me way more like open picture about the topics, for sure.

So, in your home institution, was it a university or also a polytechnic university?

University.

Do you feel that you adapted well or not, and if so, how much time did it take you to feel comfortable?

At first, it was a bit..., as I said, it was a cultural shock, like seeing the traditions were a bit shocking in school, because we didn't quite know, you know, the black coated guys and the red shirts (referring to Praxe) and we didn't quite understand those stuff. But otherwise, there were no barriers or anything, just more, like, a change of mindset about what's normal here and adapting to... another culture.

What factors would you say that made you feel this way, that it was an easy process? Was it like, okay, as you mentioned, everybody was kind it was easy to get into the study environment and everything. Do you feel that was the reason or anything to add?

Yeah. I think yeah. Because everyone made our process very simple, and they gave us support.

All right, so did you make any meaningful friendships with other students? And were they local or other Erasmus students?

I... did both. I'm still here. So, I have a lot of Portuguese like, from ISCAP properly, and then a lot of Erasmus students, also.

When you needed help with anything at ISCAP, did you utilize any of its resources? I'm talking about the international office, the academic divisions, or even your own teachers, and if so, can you give me your opinion on them? How was the help that they gave you? Did you feel satisfied?

I mean, the international office was a bit slow. We all had problems with getting our confirmations, like in scheduled time, but otherwise, I had, uh, how do you say... the Buddy the school gives you...

Oh, the buddy system from COMAP, right?

I think so, yeah, mostly, if I needed anything, I asked him... because he was very amazing.

Do you have a story or episode that was memorable at ISCAP? It can be something funny, personal or even just academic, something that was worth remembering?

Definitely. In HR, the first class we had, we played with Lego, ha-ha.

We played with Legos, and I was just like... the beginning of like, of that class was just pure amazing, it was just... I think I remember it's been forever since I played with Legos in school.

In what purpose did you play with Legos, by the way?

We had to build a tower, the highest tower. And then we had an assignment.

Some were managers, some were normal workers. So, it was about information transferring, related to teamwork and management.

As a participant in the Erasmus program, What benefits did you feel you attained from participating in it?

...I learned a lot about myself. I... am still learning. I think that I got the privilege to experience Portuguese culture, and to really get the insight of other... you know, it's different when you go on vacations, you're there for a week or two and you think you're adapting, like everything is new, but here I really got the insight of how others function, how I am as a person, when it comes to, you know, adapting to different situations.

Okay, so how did your stay at ISCAP contribute to your academic and personal growth? Could you expand a little bit more on that?

Ha-ha, well, I really don't have a good answer for this. I mean, it gave me a lot of knowledge in the practical way, that's for sure, but yeah, it's a different approach, so...I liked it better. It's not like it's innovative, but still, I think that the teachers are going with the time, and they're not just focusing on what was before or but actually they're giving relevance to future jobs.

So how did the intercultural contact specifically contribute to your growth?

I think that... expanding my open-mindedness to see how other people think, how, like, I was Talking to a Finnish guy, and... comparing the system to comparing, like everything just like to get, also some kind of an insight from other students.

Would you have any constructive criticism towards ISCAP, in general?

Yeah, I think that even though it's normal...for, them to be late, especially the teachers, it's not normal for us Erasmus students, because we had a lot of problems with this, and now I think we're at this stage where we just don't care anymore if we come late or anything. But we were kind of... I'm not just saying like...I think the Spanish people also didn't care that much, but us from other countries, we really care, we take it as... disrespect, if someone is late, so, we don't feel comfortable.

Do you keep in contact with anyone you met at ISCAP right now?

Everyone, yeah.

What is your perspective on cultural understanding and global citizenship, in general, as of now? And is it different from before you came to ISCAP?

When I came here, I never felt out of place, or kind of considered myself as an immigrant or something, because everyone was so kind, but I think that... I learned how to be more patient, even though in Slovenian culture, it's normal for like other to respect others, to

welcome everyone. So, I don't think there was a big difference before and after, because I knew I'm going somewhere and... not that I expected, but yeah, I'm always trying to be kind, so that's what I think.

Appendix XXIII- Subject B's Interview Transcript

Subject B- Germany, ERASMUS+ student, Online Interview

When did you study at ISCAP? When did you start, and when did you finish?

I came in... the winter semester of 2022, and I left in February 2023.

Can you please describe your experience as an Erasmus student at ISCAP in general?

Well...ha-ha, it was awesome. I would describe it like that, I don't know, I found it kind of super special, when I was there. Everyone was super welcoming, and everything was super good organized, in general, I never felt like there was a time where I thought "What am I going to do here?", it was a really good experience, I can't say anything bad.

What were the biggest challenges during your stay at the institution? Was it infrastructure, accommodation, or something else?

I think the biggest difficulties that I had was that some of the professors were a bit complicated, but from an organization point itself, I don't think that there were any problems. Maybe it's because my home university was super good, because I didn't have to prepare. I don't know if it was because of ISCAP or because of my own university, but the professors sometimes were a little bit, because of the language barrier, it was... a little bit difficult.

So, would they adapt the classes to be in English for you, in that case?

Yeah, everything in English. Because I was in a... in the special program, an English one. I don't know what it was called... there was a specific one in English creativity in business or something, everything in English, but it was a little bit difficult, because everyone was Portuguese, and then just a few ERASMUS students, and then sometimes

they were talking in Portuguese, we are in Portugal, it's normal. Sometimes they would forget to speak English, and then I was just like "guys...guys!".

Did you feel left out in those moments?

Yeah, a little bit of course, but... because I was the only ERASMUS student in there, I understand, because all the others didn't come, but then I was still like "guys... switch to English again!", ha-ha.

How was your adjustment process here, socially and in terms of teaching?

I think in ISCAP, it was super easy, because they had a lot of programs outside the university, like the whole first week, where you met all the people. From my experience they all spoke English, but I did not get to meet a lot of Portuguese students, because they were not that open sometimes, and then I felt there's nothing I can do, not much about it, so I just hung out with the international students.

Do you think the exclusivity of the Welcome Session for International Students, it automatically segregated you from the Portuguese students, putting you into that circle with only international students?

Kind of, yeah. But for example, because of the buddy program, I met a Portuguese buddy, a girl, and with her it was super easy to interact, but... for example, I didn't have any friends I knew or any friends from her. I also met a Portuguese guy from ISCAP, but they were... the only ones, and the other ones were a little bit shyer. But another time, I wanted to go to this "Cultural Speed Dating" I think it was? With Portuguese people? But I was sick there and wasn't able to attend, so I didn't catch any people.

Do you feel that in general you adapted well, or not? How much time did it take you to feel comfortable?

I think it didn't take me that long to adapt. I think in the first month it was already clear...kind of. Because in the first week, there was a lot going on, a lot of events that

you are going, and after that... there were less. So that's why I think that in the first week you got to adapt or otherwise it's going to be somewhat hard, if you know what I mean, so.

Because in my case, I got sick in the first month, so I even went to the hospital, and after that it was a little bit more difficult, because all the events had already happened. And I think for... me, it would have been nice if there, if it would be longer, because sometimes there would be an event during the month, organized by COMAP I think?

But I talked to a lot of people while I was there, because of my Portuguese friend, and he said that it was better in the previous semester, and that in my semester it was a little bit... it could have been better.

Did you make any meaningful friendships with other students? Were they local or foreign?

So, meaningful friendships I did yes... my best friend now, from Luxemburg, I met her at ISCAP, and that's the most meaningful experience ever because of her, and I also got my buddy from ISCAP, I chat with her every week, and I plan to visit her again in the summer. And another, he was at COMAP, not sure if he was or wanted to, but I was friends with him, well not anymore but, ha-ha. He was with me during my ERASMUS experience and especially supporting me during my hospital stay, so... he was the best, and there- I had a lot of people, 1 or 2 and a half years ago, so the number was reduced, but there's the ones I mentioned, which is nice.

When you needed help with anything at ISCAP, did you utilize any of its international student resources, such as COMAP, or the International Office?

When I had problems I, for example, in the course, when I was sick, I talked to the professor directly. I remember, we got this professor, and every student from every university got a professor like in my case, we were 5 people from my university, and we got like 1 professor that spoke German too, and he was super nice and was helping a lot. I felt like I could reach out to him, and then I would ask him what was going on, and I would talk to the professor, and everything was fine, and he cleared everything.

I also went to the International Office once to Ana Monteiro and it was super nice, she did everything, I never had problems with it.

For COMAP, I always had this one friend, and I would always ask him everything.

Do you have a story or episode from ISCAP that you consider memorable?

So, I have a few stories from ISCAP. First, I'm sorry but I have to say, it's so freaking cold there (in a comedic tone)! I don't know what's going on, I went there in winter, and I was freezing to death every time, I had so many clothes on, ha-ha. That looks crazy. First, they must do something with the heater, ha-ha, you know?

A memorable story... I don't have a specific story but I always liked classes with the other students, and they were all like... I don't know, kind of crazy, it was always so much fun, you know? What I love the most is the whole thing with the freshmen? And when they are wearing the red shirt! (Praxe). That impressed me the most, I was like, what was going on? And the Tuna! The Tunas were the best thing ever. They were always there, always playing, and it was crazy! That's what I can say right now, maybe more stories later, but I don't remember, ha-ha.

As a participant in the ERASMUS program, what would you say you attained from participating in it?

I think benefits, I would say it helped me a lot to... develop my character. So, before... I was not shy, but I didn't want to go to university alone, and now I don't have a problem going to class alone. Also, my English developed so much, because of the classes. I had German classes here and then I was "forced" to speak English, that was super helpful. And the benefits of working in an intercultural environment. It helps with your work, and now I am working with international people, and you know, they might have different cultural backgrounds, for example, in Portugal, it was a little bit crazy that professors sometimes arrived late. In Germany that would never happen, but it's normal in Portuguese culture and that helped me to get to understand how to navigate situations in a different culture. And, maybe at a deeper level, to understand the whole Europe-European thing, and it's super important and nice that there are different cultures that are all special, and all that kind of stuff helps your mindset for the world, I think.

In your culture, is it normal to be on time or earlier?

I would say a little bit earlier, but it doesn't come from me, I now come a little late, maybe that's my Portuguese part coming through, ha-ha. In Germany you are either punctual or a little earlier.

How did your stay at ISCAP contribute to your personal and academic growth?

It helped my maturity, also, my adaptability. Also for your work, for example, when I am doing a work trip now, I will be fine, there are people that will help you, remember that, and because of some classes that I took, it's a little different from classes in Germany, but you get through it, because you adapt and you see they are doing it that way, and there's nothing wrong with it, and then you do it yourself. And I think that's something that obviously helps you in your work, and for adapting, and you know that you will bring your experience. So, it was never bad when we said something about Germany, and what's going on there. It's a nice learning experience because sometimes in Germany you must follow, control and do the things they tell you, and they were super nice (referring to Portugal) because they never gave you the impression that what you are doing is wrong.

Do you have any constructive criticism towards ISCAP? You already mentioned the better spread international student events, but is there anything else?

I think, maybe that's the German in me... in the beginning, it was a little bit difficult. You didn't hear from ISCAP until about one or two weeks before academic activities. And then we were like- what are we doing, where are we going... and I think that's just a German thing, we want to be informed. Also, another thing about the International Office, because at the end of Erasmus you need a paper signed, and that was... a little bit unclear, you know, when or where. And, although it was not my experience, some students tried to exchange courses, and everyone was like "hey what are we doing now?", "where do we have to go?", and it was not clear.

Secretaria Online at the time was in Portuguese, and I didn't know how to navigate, apart from that, I don't have anything else.

In the winter it was freezing, outside it was not that cold, but inside buildings it was super cold, my flat was the same, and at ISCAP when we were in classrooms with big windows, no one opened them because we were freezing. I don't remember if there were heaters.

Also, I had a little bit of problems at ISCAP because I never knew where the rooms are. Even though there were some signs (referring to arrows), those were not wrong but sometimes the numbers of the classroom were missing, and it would be on the other side.

So maybe it would be nice for International Students to have a guide or something, ha-ha.

What is your current view on Global Citizenship and Cross-Cultural Understanding?

(I gave the interviewee a brief explanation and definition of both key terms)

I think you described it perfectly. With global citizenship you can be a citizen everywhere. For example, in Germany, there are a lot of Portuguese people, you could easily move and live here. For Europeans in other European countries there are cultural similarities, however, if it's between Asia or America for example, it gets more complicated because their understanding is not that big anymore, even though we can go and get used to the different countries.

In terms of global citizenship, before your ISCAP experience, how was your perception of it and how did it change to what your understanding is now?

I think... I'm a little bit different now. I have a lot of experience not only going out of the country but also working with a lot of international people, as I am a driving instructor. I have a lot of experience and work with a lot of different cultures and people. I already know a lot of people who came to Germany, and it was never a problem for me, but for when I went to ISCAP, I never thought I would be the one to move somewhere in another country. Because now I am like "I belong to Germany, I am German", and with my experience I had at ISCAP, I am more open to it. I would move to Portugal! If there is an opportunity, I would go there because I know I can adapt there. You don't have to be like the people who live there, just don't be rude, if you know what I mean.

Do you feel the ISCAP experience helped you have even more Cross-Cultural understanding?

Yes, for sure, because it was another experience, I worked with them, but I never lived in a country that long.

Appendix XXIV- Subject C's Interview Transcript

Subject C- Romania, Erasmus+ ISCAP Intern, In Loco Interview

What was your purpose of coming to ISCAP? To study something or for internship affairs?

Because of my internship, at GRI, I came for that with a scholarship with Erasmus.

When did you start working at ISCAP?

On the first of July (2024, so about 2-3 months from the time of the interview).

Can you describe your experience as an ERASMUS student at ISCAP?

Sure, it was a new experience, very new, very exciting... I have learned new things, and so far, I quite liked it!

What would you say were your biggest challenges during your stay at the institution?

The biggest challenge I guess is the language barrier because... not everyone knows English or not everyone is open to speaking English to new people.

How was your adjustment process socially and in the internship itself, in a teaching sense?

As for teaching, the way I was explained on how I should do things was...ok, because my boss is a very good teacher, she explained everything. Socially, it was hard because since I came during a holiday, and almost all students were out so I couldn't meet anyone, but still, I made a few friends, so it was still a good experience, still fun.

Did you participate in a BIP before?

Yes, I didn't participate like being there studying, I just helped a bit, such as going out with the group. It was part of my internship experience.

How do you compare your ISCAP experience to one of your education institutions back home?

I mean, you cannot really compare it. There are not so many common aspects since I finished high school in 2015, so it was a long time ago, and it was high school, so it was totally different. But since I have a job, I understand how things work a bit, so I couldn't say it was totally different for me.

Do you feel that so far you have adapted well or not? And how much time did it take you to become more comfortable?

At least in my opinion, I feel like I have adapted. To be honest, I think that... maybe 2 weeks... 2-3 weeks after arriving I was more relaxed and not as anxious as I was in the first week.

What do you think made you feel more comfortable? You mentioned you have housemates locally in our conversation before the interview, did that help and are they Erasmus+ students?

There is 1 from ISCAP and 2 not from ISCAP, and they are nice, thanks to this common ground we became friends.

For ISCAP itself, for the 1-2 weeks you were adapting, did people at your job help you do so?

Yes, my boss helped me, she was the one who mostly taught me, and my work colleague also helped me out and told me how to do things, and every time I asked a question, they helped me out.

Was there any factor that facilitated or hindered your adaptation process? Besides the fact you came during the holiday that you mentioned.

I feel like I needed a bit of time to accommodate, also the fact that there were not many students around also played a little part in the accommodation period.

Did you make any meaningful friendships so far, and were they local or also Erasmus+?

Well, you are one of them, ha-ha. Also, my other intern colleague from my internship, also a local. And... I made another friend, a house mate. We became friends, and she is very nice.

Do you think after your experience at ISCAP you will keep in contact with any of the people you met?

Yes! Although I don't think there are many, you know? I did not make a lot of "shallow" friendships I would say. At least occasionally, it's totally plausible to contact.

When you needed help with anything at ISCAP, did you use any of its resources for international students? For example, GRI, academic division, COMAP, etc...

I used every resource I could get. I used the people at GRI, I used my friends, including you and my other intern colleague. When I was trying to find accommodation, I even contacted COMAP, and honestly, I feel like I used all of them, I reached out to all of them.

Can you give me your opinion on each resource?

For GRI, it was fine, they did their part, especially considering one of the secretaries was missing at this time. For the academic division, I didn't go there. For COMAP, I contacted them on Instagram, asking them for...a link, or something with accommodation, and they gave me a list and that was it.

Do you have a memorable story from your time at ISCAP? It can be something funny, personal, or just academic.

I don't know, maybe, nothing comes to mind lately. I liked the local food, especially the francesinha, my favorite so far! And the sangria.

As a participant in the ERASMUS+ program, what benefits did you feel you attained from your experience from participating in it?

I consider factors such as being able to travel for cheaper due to my scholarship, another one is because it will help me on my resume, I knew that it would be a new experience that will help me develop myself and find myself and be a better person.

How did your stay and work at ISCAP contribute to your personal growth and how?

I mean, I became more familiar with Excel, as I mostly worked in Excel and since it was most of the time in Portuguese, I learned a few words as well, so...I guess that?

Do you have any constructive criticism towards ISCAP?

To be more involved personally, for example, when there is a chance of having lunch together or something, to ask. Because coming from me, it would be weird, since it's not like I know the place or it's not my...my place to ask (as a guest or newcomer), so if I am not asked by someone from within, I would not have the courage to.

Do you think this constitutes a cultural difference?

I mean...not all Romanians prefer this, but most of them do, so maybe, I guess you could say it's a cultural difference.

What did you think about global citizenship and intercultural contact in general before your ISCAP trip? Do you feel you already experienced it in Romania?

Of course there are some differences, but since I came here last year as a tourist, there weren't as many new things as I had anticipated, but still, there are plenty of new things and different things in Romania, and it's always best to experience them in real life than just hear about them.

Do you think this experience promoted you being better able to adapt to intercultural scenarios and people? And do you feel more interested and open in learning about other cultures, or do you feel the same in that regard?

I would say that it has made me more curious about other cultures, and it has shown me how nice it is.

Appendix XXV- Subject A, B and C Interview Analysis

Although Subject A and C's interviews started off a little awkward, they got more and more comfortable during the duration of the interview, which helped them become more talkative over time, giving longer answers and slightly changing their demeanor.

I believe the fact that A and B's interviews were online gave them more easement and reassurance to speak a little more comfortably when in comparison to C, who since we were surrounded by people at a local park constantly walking by and the fact that it was very direct in terms of proximity between me and C, it could've made things a bit more awkward, considering the relatively less detailed answers when in comparison to A and B's insight, but that could also be due to C not getting to socialize with other students as much, due to arriving during academic holidays. Another aspect to keep in mind is that the questions about cross-cultural understanding and global citizenship were a bit confusing at first in the pilot interview (subject A) and it was one of the key changes throughout later interviews, with B and C. Otherwise, I felt the structure was easy to follow and direct.

Subject A- Analysis and Review

Moving on to the individual analysis of each participant's interviews, subject A started studying at ISCAP in February 2024, so approximately a 4 month stay, at the time of the interview, and came from Slovenia. When it comes to challenges faced, A did not have much to report, as everyone was kind, and the support provided by ISCAP was adequate.

The interviewee felt a cultural shock at first (regarding academic traditions, for example, Praxe) regarding their adaptation period, and no other barriers were worth mentioning, as it was mostly a matter of getting used to a different environment, in fact, A stated it was an easy process, due to the welcoming nature of the people that crossed paths with A at ISCAP, and the different resources. On the topic of friendships, the interviewee mentioned that both local and international bonds were formed, but especially

international ones, with other foreign students, keeping contact with all friends at the time of the interview.

Regarding the resources for International Students provided by ISCAP, from subject A's point of view, GRI was a bit slow, and there were some difficulties related to confirmations or even schedule times. On the other hand, A proclaimed COMAP as being a fantastic resource, mainly due to the Buddy System.

A's personal story showed that the student appreciates the creative learning approach ISCAP provides to both local and international students, as classes are shared by both.

Moving on to the benefits felt: from an Erasmus+ perspective, A expressed gratitude towards experiencing Portuguese culture and being able to adapt to different cultures and situations, and from a ISCAP experience perspective, A appreciated the practical knowledge taught, and even mentioned classes and teacher education provided are extremely relevant for a real future job. The interviewee gave their opinion on intercultural contact, saying it contributed to becoming more open-minded and curious about intercultural interactions.

For constructive criticism, A expressed disappointment when it came to Portuguese teachers being late, as although it is culturally acceptable in Portugal, it should be a withheld practice when it comes to Erasmus students, as it is a cultural shock and disrespectful from their interpretation, a rude gesture. Although this is something ISCAP cannot control, as it is more of a personal responsibility for each teacher, higher consideration can be given to international students from a decency standpoint by local teachers.

Finally, for A's perspective on cultural understanding and global citizenship, A mentioned that they never felt like an immigrant or out of place when arriving at ISCAP and Portugal, as everyone was kind and A reciprocated that kindness, which led to A becoming a more patient person throughout the experience, they knew they were going somewhere and had a purpose.

Subject B- Analysis and Review

Next up, subject B, from Germany, stated they arrived at ISCAP in the winter semester of 2022, and left by February 2023 (so a total of around 6 months, give or take).

First off, B reported their experience at ISCAP was special, and quite enjoyable, as everything was organized, and people were welcoming. The main recalled challenges were complicated professors, in a sense that the language barriers made it sometimes difficult for B to communicate with certain teachers.

Subject B claimed to have come from a very prestigious university from Germany previously in terms of quality, and although there were no problems at ISCAP related to organization, sometimes B would compare the high standards of their home university to ISCAP, which for the most part was on par with each other.

To add on to the language barrier problem, something B admitted was that sometimes their colleagues in class would alternate between Portuguese and English, which could hinder the socialization aspect of B's ISCAP experience. This highlights the need for intercultural awareness and competence in the academic community from a bilateral perspective of both teachers and students trying to integrate international students and staff in an open-minded way. I personally experienced this as well, not as much in my Masters' as it is literally based off of Intercultural Studies, and we were rightfully taught how to better handle intercultural scenarios, but rather in the Business Communication Degree, as the class was mostly composed of Portuguese local students and most of the time the native language was used rather than English when socializing, eventually, students would realize this and get back to speaking English, trying to integrate the foreign student(s).

Resuming our analysis, when it comes to B's adjustment process, they felt like it was easy, due to the vast extra-curricular programs such as the Orientation Week, where B got to meet a lot of people who spoke English (international students) but not as much local Portuguese students, predominantly due to the exclusivity of these types of events being for international students. B explained they met 3 major friends at ISCAP: a girls from COMAP's buddy program, who became their buddy; a boy also related to COMAP,

and their current best friend, an international student from Luxembourg. Still, B declared that most people they became acquainted with were mostly other international students.

The interviewee also stated that not being able to attend some of the events such as “Cultural Speed Dating”, which I helped the 2023/2024 edition and already previously explained what the event entails, was a huge hinderance to the socialization aspect of B’s stay. The reason they felt this way was due to most of the international student events being clumped up in the first month or two, and not really having many other event opportunities to socialize with the community throughout the year, as if, if you missed those first few events, you might not make as many friends and increase the chances of feeling left out, for international students. The suggestion I made of spreading the events out throughout the year and increase their frequency, as well as involving the local Portuguese student community as well, will help foster a truly intercultural environment rather than a pseudo-intercultural or even multicultural one. By pseudo-intercultural, I mean a community where yes, there is good intercultural contact among international students, but not among both locals and internationals as a community.

On the topic of international student resources and seeking help when needed, B felt that when in need, they opted to reach out directly to teachers, and B specifically mentioned one who spoke German, their native language, making them feel comfortable to reach out, and the teacher was very receptive towards helping.

Regarding GRI, B mentioned that Ana Monteiro, the IN Officer of GRI, whom I have worked with, was not only pleasant but also extremely efficient, so there were no problems with the international office of ISCAP. As for COMAP, B had friends there and they would ask them (the boy and the girl we talked about) any questions necessary when in doubt.

Subject B’s personal story emphasized their interest in local academic Portuguese traditions (Tuna and Praxe, for example), and how fun it was to interact with classmates, not to mention, how cold it was during the winter semester, not just at ISCAP but in general (This constitutes a common complaint, as Portuguese infrastructure tends to be old in age, and that leads to less modernized infrastructure with no air conditioning and poor insulation, ISCAP is a modern building though, and it has heaters all around as well as fans and air conditioning.).

When talking about the Erasmus+ experience benefits, B highlighted their “character development”, for instance, them becoming more confident, and honing their English-speaking skills. The interviewee also stated that the intercultural contact which was part of the general experience helped them develop more openness towards working with more international people, and to understand the common ground among European cultures.

To be more specific, on the topic of the attained benefits of the ISCAP experience, B detailed their adaptability and maturity growth, especially towards cultural differences between Germany and Portugal, for example, the teaching styles, and they appreciated that in Portuguese higher education, or at least at ISCAP, it was slightly more lenient and forgiving.

The constructive criticism towards the institution given on B’s part pertains to poor communication from ISCAP’s part in terms of agility, as they claimed that they had to wait 1 to 2 weeks to get any information when beginning their studies at ISCAP, as for Germans, according to B, it is imperative to stay informed.

For GRI, at the end of mobility, international students need a paper signed, and both B and other international students were confused and even thought the instructions were unclear, and the same happened with course changes.

Secretaria Online, the student management platform at the time, was in Portuguese as well, which made it hard for B to navigate (As I mentioned, it was revamped to Domus, which has English support and translation.).

A final comment in the realm of criticism was the difficulty of finding the correct classrooms at ISCAP, as the arrows present in the corridors seemed confusing. (We already addressed this issue with a suggestion I made in this chapter.).

Finally, I asked the reformulated question about cross-cultural understanding and global citizenship, which B replied saying that globalization and international initiatives like Erasmus+ allows people to move and travel more easily among nations, facilitating global citizenship, however, making such a big decision can be harder to adapt when moving between continents where cultural gaps are more prevalent, rather than the same one, where they might be less significant and even have cultural commonalities.

B's perception on the topic evolved over time, as they got used to travelling and working with international people, as B is a driving instructor in Germany, and such interactions are commonplace in that environment, but even so, B still felt even more well-adapted to handle such situations.

ISCAP helped B become more open to travelling, and even potentially moving to Portugal one day, it also helped them with achieving greater insight and development in the field of cross-cultural understanding. If you are respectful, you can adapt anywhere, B stated.

Subject C- Analysis and Review

The third and final interview with subject C showed that they came to Portugal, and to ISCAP to do an internship through Erasmus+ at GRI, and they arrived on the 1st of July 2024, totaling nearly 3 months of internship and stay at Porto at the time of the interview, nearing the finalization of their Erasmus+ trip.

C reported that they enjoyed the experience, describing it as likeable, as it was something new which encouraged learning. The biggest challenge the subject faced was the language barrier, as not everyone spoke English, and to be more specific, not everyone was willing to speak English to new people.

For the adjustment process, C described that their boss and work colleagues (permanent staff) explained work tasks well, however, when it came to socializing, it was quite difficult as the interviewee came during an academic holiday, so there weren't many students to engage with. Nonetheless, C reinforced it was a good experience, and that a few friends were still made.

When I asked if this was C's very first Erasmus+ experience, they answered yes, and besides coming to Portugal and the internship, they helped organize and even participate in a BIP's tourism trip around Porto, also from Erasmus+, through GRI.

At that time, as I believe it was already a post-internship event for me, and I had volunteered to help be a tour guide in that same BIP, for the participating international students' wine caves and boat trip experience. That's where I met subject C, and we became friends, leading me to ask for this interview.

When I questioned C about comparing ISCAP to their previous academic experiences back in Romania, they said it was difficult to compare, as their studies were concluded in 2015, by finishing high school.

On the topic of adaptation, the interviewee feels they adapted well, and after 2-3 weeks after arriving, their anxieties and nervousness were eased. Living with 3 other international students, 1 of them from ISCAP and the rest from other universities, made things easier and they became friends due to this common ground. Still, C needed some time to accommodate.

Along with their housemates, C befriended me, as well as another intern colleague, whom I have also worked with. Although it was a relatively small circle, C intends to keep in contact with ISCAP friends occasionally.

Subject C expressed that they used most of ISCAP's international student resources, and here is what they had to say for each one they used: overall, for most situations, the main resources used were GRI, COMAP and their friends (from ISCAP), describing GRI as quite satisfactory, and COMAP as helpful as well.

The subject highlighted their appreciation for local Portuguese cuisine as a memorable part of their experience.

When it comes to ERASMUS+ benefits that C experienced on their trip, they described the cheaper travel opportunity thanks to their scholarship, curriculum enhancing and contribution to self-development. As for work and ISCAP experience benefits, C said it was mostly working with Excel, so technically the development of software usage skills, not to mention learning a few Portuguese words, as Excel was in Portuguese.

The constructive criticism offered towards ISCAP on C's behalf would be to foster a more welcoming work environment, such as spending breaks, or at least just lunch break together to improve socialization. Although this is more of a personal matter rather than an organizational one, each staff member's individual contribution to the creation of such space will help newcomers, both local and especially international students feel more welcome. This may be a cultural difference between Portugal and Romania, considering that in Romania, most people already do this. C said that it should be the local workers taking the initiative and inviting the newcomer interns to eat with or spend breaks

together, and that they felt uncomfortable to be the one to ask to go together, as C does not know their surroundings well, which is natural, being a foreign visitor.

All in all, C's experience was good, despite the justified difficulties in socialization mostly due to coming during the summer academic holiday, and the trip fostered their curiosity and appreciation for different cultures.

Appendix XXVI- New ISCAP Resources for Internationalization and International Student Inclusion

The Center for Academic, Social and Administrative Support for International Students (AASA), and especially for Portuguese Speaking African Country descent students.

This initiative was created with the intent of solving the issue of 10% of quitting of international students, which those African students represent a good portion of the community (mainly outside of the Erasmus+ program) (Jornal de Notícias, 2024).

The AASA aims to use a multitude of people within ISCAP and resources to provide a more catered and meaningful aid to these students (ISCAP, 2024).

Reading this news article and checking out AASA's ISCAP webpage sparked my curiosity for what is being done to help these students. Thus, I got in touch with Martina Nunes, a finalist of the Bachelor of Business Communication, who chose to promote a project called Iscapian (of ISCAP) Commission for Students from Portuguese Speaking Countries (CIPALP). CIPALP was present in the International Students' Fair, or at least its creators and people who came up with the idea: Martina Nunes, and Larissa Manjate.

I asked Martina to participate on a Google Meets call with me, where I essentially performed an informal interview to get to know what the project is all about, and what would its goals be. She eagerly accepted, as she genuinely wants to help the community and promote the project, which I am grateful.

In it, she told me that CIPALP is a project that has been conceptualized for 2 years as of the time of the meeting, and now, it is being evaluated for approval by AASA.

Martina described CIPALP's goal as integrating and helping CPLP students, especially the same target audience as AASA. She explained that she felt as if those students were sometimes lonely or lost, with difficulties making friends or finding activities to get involved in, at ISCAP. Each one of these students may have different reasons for feeling that way, as it could be for social, academic or even personal reasons, and of course, this doesn't apply to everyone. Nonetheless, CIPALP wants to stand up for them, and promote an even more inclusive environment for them (Not to mention, through CIPALP they get

to meet students originating from the same countries as them, so they might be able to relate.).

Some of the ways CIPALP aims to aid these students is to provide a better platform for them to talk about their experiences, to promote events related to their culture (for example, besides the International Student Fair which CIPALP was present (the founding members), Martina told me that last year, they had a cultural event as well, a get-together.)

Martina related she wants to expand the project further once and if it gets approved and continue to develop content for their social media page on Instagram. They want to diversify the content posted, but in a somewhat similar style to what is already present: student presentations, breaking stereotypes, event dissemination, etc...

The goal is to give back to the community and for CIPALP to continue to prosper after the founders finish their studies, like Juniscap for example, in terms of continuity.

AASA and CIPALP are strong proof that ISCAP, both from an administrative and student perspective, continues to try and assures that international students' needs are met, every single year, and consequently, ISCAP 's global notoriety continues expanding.

Annex I – Geographical View of P. Porto Campi

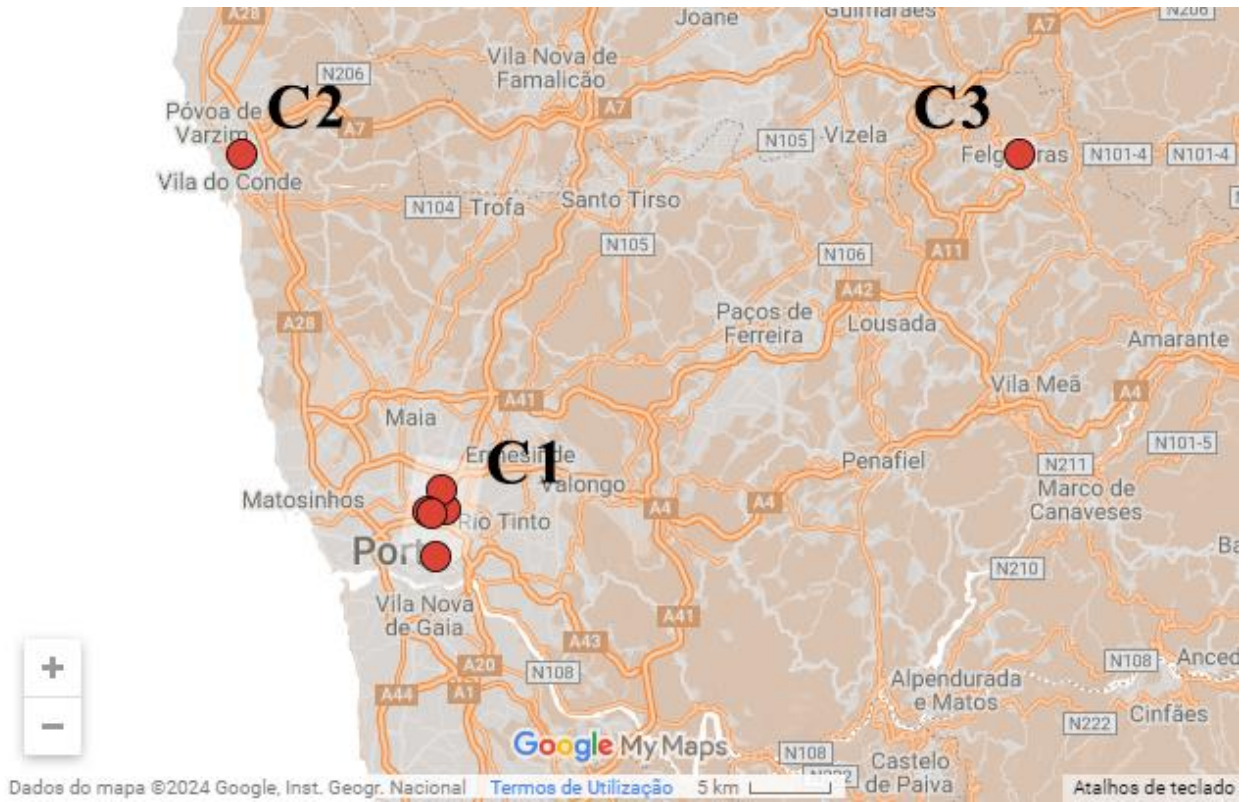


Figure 47- Geographical View of the P. Porto Campi (Google Maps, 2024)

Annex II – Infrastructural Culture Evolution- ISCAP’s Spiral

The 2 presented figures showcase how, despite the change of buildings, the traditional spiral stairway had a recognizable influence on the current layout of ISCAP. The major difference is that in the current spiral, it has ramps rather than stairs, for further accessibility and practicality.



Figure 48- Old ISCAP Building’s Snail (“Cone”) (ISCAP, 2012)



Figure 49- Current ISCAP Snail (“Cone”) (ISCAP GRI, n.d.)

Annex III – Athena Mobility Advertisement

The following figure showcases the advertisement I was requested to post on GRI’s social media. The original advertisement can be observed on the office’s Instagram page.



Figure 50- Athena Mobility Fair Post (ISCAP GRI, 2024)

Annex IV– Forms for Teaching Staff (International Week)

Here is a brief description of the form, keeping in mind that this form is related to selecting a subject and host teacher, directed at international lecturers:

Section 1- Bio Data and Contact Information:

Name, Surname, Home Institution, Country, Position, Email Address.

Section 2- Selecting a Teaching Proposal (Host Teacher + Subject)

Selection (can be multiple, in case the subject is not available), Requests for the Lecture, Bio note (Self-Presentation).

Section 3- Brainstorm Session

Brainstorm Session Attendance, Idea to Present at Meeting if participating (optional).

Section 4- Tick-able Options

I am aware that travel, accommodation and meals (outside the official program) will be covered by me.

I am aware that if I am accepted, I can come under the framework of ERASMUS STA Mobility.

I herewith declare that I am proficient in English (at least B2 level).

(GRI, 2024)

Annex V– Forms for International Week Registration

Here is a brief description of the form for the purpose mentioned:

Section 1- Bio Data and Contact Information:

Name, Surname, Phone Number, Email, Home Institution, Seniority.

Section 2- Flight Information

Flight number, Arrival Time, Date of Arrival, Date of Departure.

Section 3- Social and Cultural Program Attendance

Registration, ISCAP Global Presentation, Welcome Cocktail, Light Lunch, Cultural Visit (Boat Cruise + Wine Cellars), Nr. Of Accompanying People on Farewell Lunch, Can we add you to the WhatsApp group.

Section 4- Data Protection

Consent for Personal Information to be Processed by ISCAP P. Porto, Consent for Name, Title, Email Address and Name of University to be displayed in the participant list and disclosed to other participants and ISCAP staff involved, Food Restrictions.

(GRI, 2024)

Annex VI – International Week TV Display (GRI, 2024)

These slides were displayed on the TVs all over the inside of ISCAP, for the duration of the International Week event. They were made by my intern colleagues and staff at GRI.



Figure 51- Slide 1 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Figure 52- Slide 2 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Tuesday, 16th April

<p>Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpretation II Marc De Smet 08h30-11h30 Room: LAB1</p> <p>Workshop: "How to Apply in 2024?" Jean Dewaerheid 9h30-11h30 Room: 226 18h30-20h00 Room: 116</p> <p>Research Brainstorm Workshop (RBW) 10h00-12h00 CEOS.PP</p> <p>Accounting Management Katarzyna Jermakowi 11h30-13h00 Room: 221-2 14h00-15h30 Room: 221-2</p> <p>Touristic and City Marketing Massimiliano Freddi 14h00-15h30 Room: 011 17h00-18h00 Room: 102 18h30-20h00 Room: 204</p>	<p>Creativity and Innovation in Marketing Joseph Kaswengi 15h30-17h00 Room: 011 17h00-18h30 Room: 011</p> <p>International Entrepreneurship Menno De Lind van Wijngaarden 18h30-20h00 Room: 130</p> <p>Accounting and Advanced Public Finance Silke Griemert 18h30-20h00 Room: 221-1</p> <p>Publicity and Publicity Project Management Elviss Brauns 18h30-21h30 Room: 113</p> <p>Human Resource Development and Management II Seminars Meri Vehkaperä 18h30-20h00 Room: 223-1</p>	<p>Digital Communication Eeva Puhakaiaen 18h30-20h00 Room: 222</p> <p>Digital Business Law Jelena Damjanovic 21h30-23h00 Room: 104</p>
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Figure 53- Slide 3 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Wednesday, 17th April

<p>Organizational Management Menno van Wijngaarden 8h30-10h00 Room: 221-2</p> <p>Business Ethics Daniel Horgos 10h00-13h00 Room: 213</p> <p>Employability and Individual Professional Transitions Selsela Arya-Zeyarmal 10h00-13h00 Room: 202</p>	<p>Workshop: "How to Apply in 2024?" Jean Dewaerheid 10h00-13h00 Room: 126 18h30-20h00 Room: 126</p> <p>Simulation and Decision Making Maria del Mar Martos 10h00-13h00 Room: 122 19h00-23h00 Room: 232</p> <p>Workshop: "Personal Brand Development" Hanna Tattari and Jenni Brisk 18h30-22h30 Room: LAB3</p>
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Figure 54- Slide 4 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Thursday, 18th April

<p>Integrated Marketing Communication Massimiliano Freddi</p> <p>Information Behavior Srdjan Damjanovic</p> <p>Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpretation II Marc De Smet</p> <p>Commercial English Marta Świerżewska-Prokopczukcz</p> <p>Business English Marta Świerżewska-Prokopczukcz</p> <p>International Students' Fair (Open to all students)</p>	<p>10h00-11h30 Room: 204</p> <p>10h00-11h30 Room: 9</p> <p>10h00-13h00 Room: LAB1</p> <p>11h30-13h00 Room: 111 17h00-18h30 Room: 111</p> <p>14h00-15h30 Room: 104</p> <p>14h00-18h00 Student's Union (AEISCAP)</p>	<p>Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility Regina Spukiene</p> <p>Español María Mercedes Rojas de Gracias</p> <p>Law and Documentation Jelena Damjanovic</p> <p>Inbound Marketing Artur Strezeleki</p> <p>Strategic Management and Marketing Kackper Zagata</p>	<p>14h00-15h30 Room: 232</p> <p>15h30-17h00 Room: 107 20h00-21h30 Room: 111</p> <p>15h30-17h00 Room: 232</p> <p>17h00-18h30 Room: 209 18h30-20h00 Room: 209</p> <p>18h30-20h00 Room: 132</p>	<p>International Entrepreneurship Menno De Lind van Wijngaarden</p> <p>18h30-20h00 Room: 130</p>
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Figure 55- Slide 5 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Friday, 19th April

<p>Organizational Management Menno De Lind van Wijngaarden</p> <p>8h30h-10h00 Room: 121-1</p>	<p>Information Behavior Srdjan Damjanovic</p> <p>14h00-15h30 Room: 9</p>	<p>Emociones Inclusivas: Transformando el clima organizacional con la diversidad intelectual Eva Sottomayor</p> <p>18h30-20h00 Room:221-1</p>
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Figure 56- Slide 6 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Figure 57- Slide 7 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Figure 58- Slide 8 of the ISCAP International Week TV Display (ISCAP GRI, 2024)

Annex VII– Schedule and Sponsors

Here we can observe essentially the same content as the TV Display, but in a different format. Also made by my internship colleagues and staff.



Figure 59- Slide 1 of the ISCAP International Week Schedule and Sponsors (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Figure 60- Slide 2 of the ISCAP International Week Schedule and Sponsors (ISCAP GRI, 2024)

Annex VIII- ISCAP Global Presentation

In this section, I would like to showcase the ISCAP Global Presentation PowerPoint for the International Week, presented to incoming international lectures. Starting off with the first slide, which I did, and the second, made by my colleague interns. I did not include the office presentations here, as I thought it would be very extensive and just wanted to demonstrate how me and my colleague interns worked together for this presentation. Considering most of the actual presentation with the ISCAP departments that I did not include was not made by me, I still decided to put this piece of work in annex, rather than appendix.



Figure 61- Slide 1 of the ISCAP Global Presentation (2024)

Presentation Road Map

- GAMC: Planning, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement;
- GEE: Internship and Employability Office;
- GAIE: Support Office for Innovation in Education;
- Business Simulation Project
- Communication and PR Office
- Alumni Office – Viviana Meirinhos



Figure 62- Slide 2 of the ISCAP Global Presentation (ISCAP GRI, 2024)

Annex IX- Welcome Cocktail: Tunas and Sponsor Food

These pictures, belonging to GRI, highlight the performance on both the Male and Female Tuna's behalf, and the Sponsor Meals present at the Welcome Cocktail, an event that was part of the International Week for incoming teaching staff.



Figure 63- Tuna de Contabilidade do Porto Performing at the Welcome Cocktail Event (ISCAP GRI, 2024)



Figure 64- Tuna Feminina do ISCAP Performing at the Welcome Cocktail Event (ISCAP GRI, 2024)

Annex X- Farewell Lunch (IW)

The following picture, authorship of GRI, showcases the Farewell Lunch event, which I, the rest of GRI staff and intern team participated as well.



Figure 65- Farewell Lunch International Week Event (ISCAP GRI, 2024)

Annex XI- Me and Romanian Friends during Latvian BIP

Through the official page of the Faculty of Economic Sciences of the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Tony Iosif, my friend whom I have met during my Latvian BIP (Erasmus+), talks about his experiences and naturally, our friendship, during the trip.

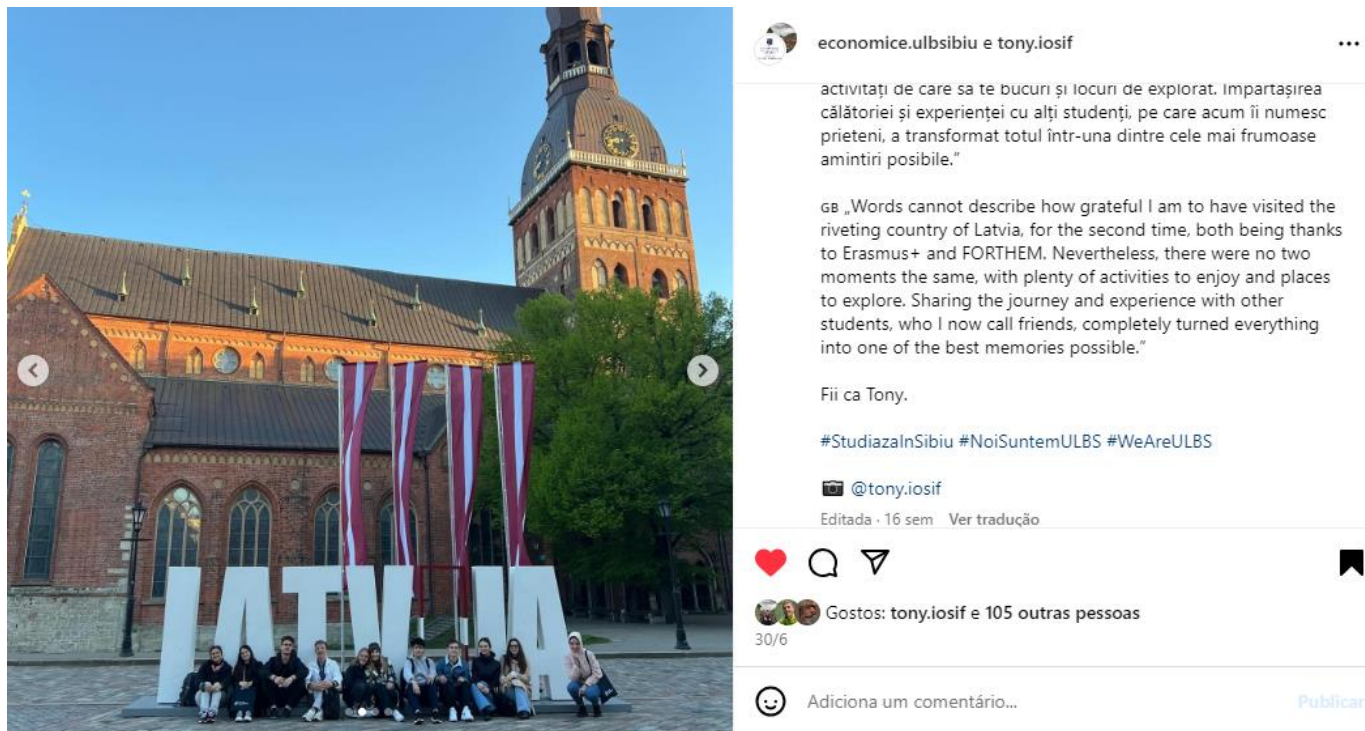


Figure 66- ERASMUS+ Latvian BIP Instagram Post (Iosif; Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, 2024)

Annex XII- Change Management Workshop Post

I have participated in a Change Management Workshop at ISCAP, where I collaborated with both local Portuguese and German students and Staff. Annex X highlights the Instagram post made by GRI, with a picture of everyone holding their certificates, at the end of the event. It was a great opportunity for cultural exchange and interaction, and I am grateful I got the opportunity to participate and learn more about the subject.

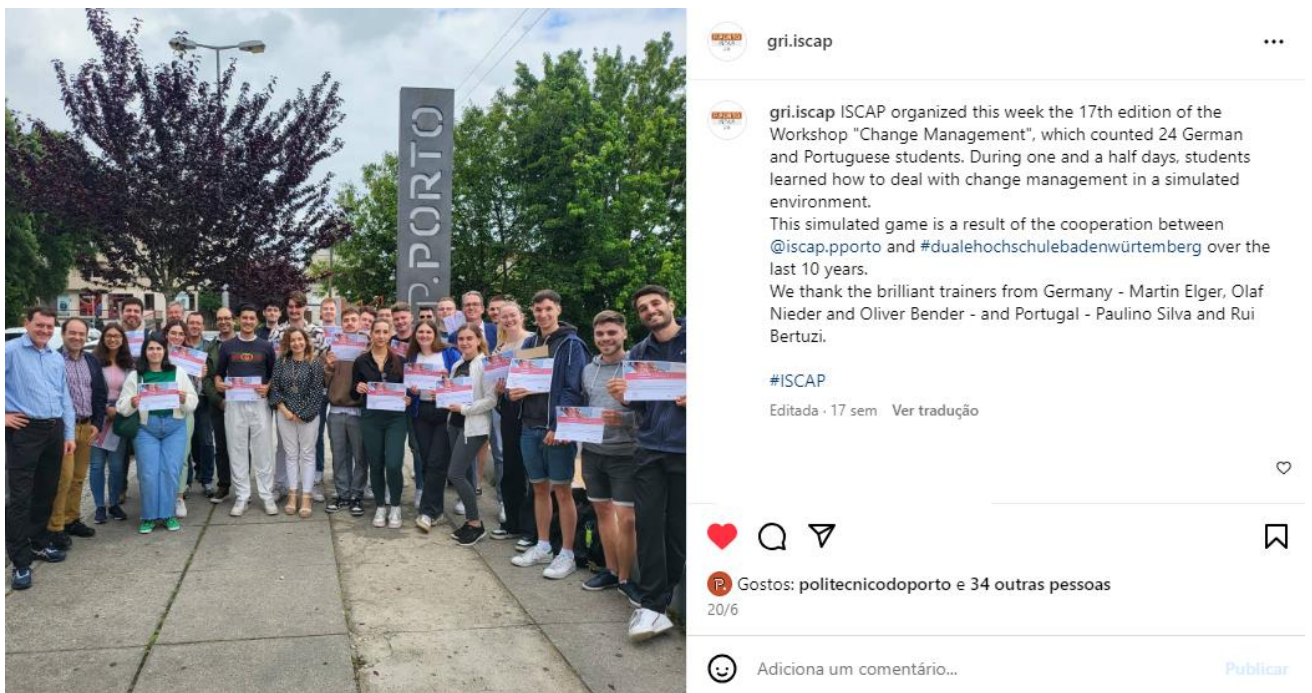


Figure 67- ISCAP Change Management Workshop Instagram Post (ISCAP GRI, 2024)

Annex XIII- Porto as the 2024 Top Destination for ERASMUS+

An article published on the 29th of April 2024 on ISCAP's website, by an unknown author, describing how Porto was elected the nr.1 ERASMUS destination of 2024.

The article states that the Erasmus Generation Meeting, the biggest European student meeting occurring in Seville, Spain in April, declared Porto the victor for this year.



Publicado em: 29 Abril 2024

PORTO ELEITO O MELHOR DESTINO DE ERASMUS NA SEMANA DE REALIZAÇÃO DA ISCAP INTERNATIONAL WEEK 2024

Na semana em que o ISCAP dinamizou a 17ª edição da International Week, a cidade do Porto foi eleita a melhor cidade para a realização de mobilidade ERASMUS, ficando à frente das restantes cidades finalistas: Istambul (Turquia), Nicósia (Chipre), Sófia (Bulgária) e Sevilha (Espanha).

Entre os dias 15 e 19 de abril de 2024, o **Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto (ISCAP)** dinamizou a sua **17ª edição da International Week**. Este evento científico, pedagógico, social e intercultural teve como objetivo a cooperação entre o ISCAP e as diferentes instituições de ensino superior internacionais.

Durante uma semana, centenas de estudantes portugueses tiveram a oportunidade de ter aulas com professores provenientes de diferentes pontos do globo e de diferentes áreas de atuação. A Semana Internacional do ISCAP promove, ainda, momentos de networking e fortalecimento de relações de cooperação entre as diversas instituições de ensino.

No dia de arranque da Semana Internacional do ISCAP, a **Erasmus Student Network Porto (ESN)** partilhou através das redes sociais que o Porto foi distinguido como o **melhor destino de Erasmus de 2024**. Esta distinção foi recebida na maior conferência estudantil europeia, **Erasmus Generation Meeting (EGM)**, a qual decorreu em Sevilha, Espanha, entre os dias 4 e 7 de abril de 2024.

A cidade Invicta alcançou o primeiro lugar do pódio, tendo ficado à frente das cidades de Istambul (Turquia), Nicósia (Chipre), Sófia (Bulgária) e Sevilha (Espanha), também finalistas nesta competição. Parabéns PORTO, uma cidade de vivências únicas!

A ESN, em parceria com a Comissão Europeia, organiza o concurso que premeia o melhor destino de mobilidade do ano. O objetivo do concurso passa por descobrir os melhores métodos de apoio à mobilidade e também destacar o papel que as diversas associações estudantis desempenham na melhoria das cidades para receber os estudantes internacionais.

Todos os anos o ISCAP recebe mais de 600 pessoas em mobilidade Erasmus, entre colaboradores, professores e estudantes, alcançando o título de escola mais internacional do Politécnico do Porto.

Figure 68- Article about Porto being elected the biggest ERASMUS+ destination of 2024 (ISCAP, 2024)