Studying at the School of Economics of the University of Porto

WHERE IS IT?

Country/Nation
Portugal is the most westerly country in continental European. Its national borders, the oldest in Europe, were established during the second half of the 13th century. Five centuries ago, the Portuguese started globalisation. The main heritage of that process of maritime expansion is the cultural link with 7 Portuguese-speaking countries, which account for over 230 million people (thus ranking Portuguese as the fourth most spoken European language and sixth as the most spoken language on the planet).

“Unsung hero of R&D - Unknown to many, Portugal is a leader in some cutting-edge technology, from heating systems to electronic banking. ... In an unassuming way, Portugal has become a world leader in several other areas of cutting-edge technology, from electronic banking and automatic motorway tolling to interactive digital television and mobile phone payment systems (…)”
Financial Times (3/06/2003)
City/Region
Porto was founded in the Middle Ages. Late in the 1700s it became the location where the world famous Port wine reaches its stage of maturation - the south-bank cellars. Over 1 million inhabitants live in the Metropolitan area of Porto. The city has a dynamic cultural life animated by theatres, museums, art exhibitions, and live concerts.

WHO WE ARE

The “Universidade do Porto” is the largest university in Portugal. Over 27,000 students attend courses leading to 60 undergraduate degrees and 120 Master’s degrees. Over 100 Ph.D. programmes are also offered. 15 faculties and schools supported by 2200 staff members are grouped onto three different campuses: the city centre campus, the north Porto campus, which includes the School of Economics, and the west Porto campus, overlooking the river Douro.
Porto School of Economics (Faculdade de Economia do Porto)

154 staff members take care of 2636 undergraduate students and over 250 post-graduate students. The School of Economics is one of the most competitive in attracting the best students. Our school has also assured the top position in the ranking of first job rating by recent graduates among Portuguese Universities.

Three research centres operate in our school: the Macro-economic Studies and Forecasting research centre; the Industrial Economics, Labour and Firm research centre; and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Analysis research centre. All of them are responsible for organising conferences, promoting scientific interchange programmes and producing many research papers.
INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION
Apart from several undergraduate and postgraduate foreign students, the School of Economics currently receives 60 Erasmus students from 38 European Universities and American Universities. All Erasmus students undergo intensive Portuguese language training. However, the School of Economics offers over 25 different courses taught in English.
TESTIMONIALS

At FEP (nickname of Faculdade de Economia do Porto), we not only learn Economics, but we also learn to work in order to achieve our goals effectively. Our school values interaction between students and faculty staff. Studying at FEP is an undeniably outstanding experience.

(Li Shu, 4th year Economics Undergraduate Student)

When I joined FEP my goal was to get the qualification asap. However, I soon realised that 4 years are not enough to accomplish everything this school has to offer. FEP has a soul ... we can feel it in the large halls as well as in the 70-metre long classroom. I am proud to be a member of this Institution and to share the FEP student’s traditions.

(C. Hitomi Kumagai, 1st year Management Undergraduate Student)

Taking a degree in a foreign country is always a very enriching experience. “FEP” allows me to shape my skills and foster cultural interchange.

(Fernando André, 4th year Economics Undergraduate Student)

The School of Economics of the University of Porto is one of the most prestigious faculty's on a national scale, which makes it a privilege for me to be able to study here. In my opinion, the faculty has provided me with a variety of positive experiences. On an academic level, it offers interesting classes, taught by prestigious lecturers, which will prepare me for my professional life in national and international terms. On a personal level, as the Portuguese are such friendly people, I have had no problems in adjusting and getting to know the Portuguese culture (generally speaking and in an academic atmosphere), which has truly enriched me as a person.

(Orsolya Szlovenszky, 4th year Economics Undergraduate Student)

To be a student is to be an explorer. If we add the contact with a new and foreign culture, the whole experience becomes even more intense. A professional and personal metamorphosis happens. More than education, information is gathered from sleepless nights, tight schedules and the anxiety of evaluations. Knowledge is built between rights and wrongs. This is how FEP gets shape and meaning at this moment of my life. A challenging, though inspiring institution, FEP is capable of turning the single learning process into an extreme experience. More than mere knowledge acquisition, studying at FEP is a life lesson.

(Christian Morgental Falkembach, Postgraduate Student)

If I could say something about my experience at FEP I would say that FEP definitely changed my life! FEP is the place where my marketer eyes were born, FEP is the training ship that allowed me to try out new dimensions of science and life. Through its professors, through its students, through its people, FEP has built my knowledge and my character.

(Roxana Ciuperca, Postgraduate Student)
The FEP has a brand new computer room in a very nice building. I also believe it has a good economics degree. Finally, there really is a “FEP spirit”. The students seem very proud of their faculty and do not hesitate to show “their colours” (red and white) on their clothes.  
(Bertrand Dequen, Erasmus Student - France)

I would like to stress the fact that most of the teachers have been so helpful so far. Unfortunately I don't know Portuguese (I have already started studying the language) and there are even some teachers that give their tutorials only to me in English. I was amazed when I saw how much the Portuguese students love their university, they even sing songs about it. But now I know why they love their university so much. Another great thing about the Erasmus Programme is the opportunity to meet people from many different countries, which is especially useful for me because I study International Relations, as I already told you. I was astonished to find out how different we are in many aspects and at the same time how we perceive a lot of things in a similar way. I already have friends from Romania, Turkey, France, England, Finland, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Brazil and, of course, Portugal.  
(Nevena Ilieva, Erasmus Student - Bulgaria)

My first impression of Porto is that the people who live here are very open-minded and helpful. They welcome we Erasmus Students in a warm and friendly way. Even though it is a city, the ambience is very personal and makes you feel comfortable. One of the best traditions, however, are the “TUNAS”. Music connects the people and it’s very impressive to experience this passion in all the faculties.  
(Jessie Mair, Erasmus Student – Austria)

I have never had any problem. When I need something and ask someone, they always help me. Even in the street, sometimes they can’t speak English but they try. Therefore, I feel very lucky. When I go for a coffee near the Ribeira, I can not describe my happiness. It is a perfect place to be, it is so relaxing. If anyone asked me if I would like to come back to Oporto, I would choose it again. I am so happy to be here.  
(Py’nar” kurt, Erasmus Student - Turkey)

Coming from a Latin Country made the Portuguese language learning process easier. This fact boosted the opportunities of interactions with the local people. As I speak Portuguese, they become more interested in knowing more about my country too. So far, the outcome of my FEP experience has been truly positive, not only on the academic side, but also on a personal level. I advise everybody to go through the FEP experience.  
(Hahui Constantin-Emanuel, Erasmus Student - Romania)

Bertrand Dequen, Jessie Mair, Py’nar” kurt, Nevena Ilieva and Hahui C. Emanuel
The School of Economics of the University of Porto offers undergraduate degrees in Economics and Business Administration and a wide range of graduate courses. Its teaching staff of over 150 lecturers is highly qualified, and many of them hold doctorate degrees from well-ranked universities in Europe and the USA.

Our School is one of the leading schools in Portugal in its scientific field. Enrolling in our courses, either at undergraduate or graduate level, you will find your stay in Porto an opportunity to enhance both your academic background and your cultural experience in a pleasant atmosphere. We will do our best to make you feel welcome.

José da Silva Costa, Director
And have Fun!
Portugal is one of the oldest countries in the world. After its independence in 1143, Portugal kept its national boundaries since 1297, except for a short period when the country was under Spanish domination (from 1580 to 1640). Portugal became a Republic on the 5th of October, 1910, and is now a representative democracy.

Portugal is located on the southwest of Europe, on the west coast of the Iberian Peninsula and the Atlantic islands. It has easy access to Europe, to the East Coast of the United States and to Africa which has always contributed to turn Portugal towards the sea.

In 1415 the Portuguese started a long journey, which made of Portugal the first country to discover the route to India, Brazil, China and Japan by sea. After the explorations and conquests Portugal made on the African west coast, Bartolomeu Dias surpassed the Cape of Storms, thus renaming it Cape of Good Hope (1488) and making it possible for Vasco da Gama to get to India (1498).

Remains of this presence, which represent a Portuguese brand image, can still be found all over the world. The Portuguese language became one of the most spoken languages in the world. The Portuguese were thus privileged to be exposed to so many different civilizations. More than 200 million people in the world speak Portuguese, 10 million of which in Portugal, and more than 160 million in Brazil and the rest in Angola, Mozambique and other former Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia.
The vast archaeological, architectural and artistic heritage testifies 850 years of history and clash of cultures, as well as the presence in the territory of more ancient civilizations (Celts, Romans, Swabians, Visigoths and Arabs).

The natural advantages of a country known for its sun and owning a vast geographical diversity made of Portugal the chosen destination of tourists from all over the world. Although Portugal is located by the sea and has several rivers, the country also has a number of mountains, of which stand out the Serra da Estrela (1,993 metres) and the Serra do Pico, in the Azores (2,351 meters). These geographical elements make Portugal ideal for water sports, as well as mountain and winter sports. The wide variety of tourism and accommodation possibilities (from the traditional "pousadas" to "turismo de habitação", including farm tourism) offer the necessary conditions to spend leisure times in our country.

Being a Member-state of the European Union since 1986, Portugal has been through a solid economic growth. Half of the Portuguese population is active from an economic point of view. Lisbon and Porto are the most populated areas.

For centuries, Portugal has kept one of its most precious treasures: a high reputation for hospitality, which makes of any period a pleasant stay.
Porto is located in the North of Portugal, on the north bank of the river Douro. It's the second largest city in the country, in an urban area with more than 1.3 million inhabitants. Four main bridges (Arrábida, Freixo, Luiz I and Infante) and two railway bridges (S. João and D. Maria – this one, considered an historical monument, is no longer operational) make it possible to cross the river to the other bank (Vila Nova de Gaia). Porto is a city characterised for its granite, which makes it a city “with character”. Its climate is temperate, though quite damp.

Porto is settled since pre-historical times. It has since been inhabited by Romans, Iberians, Celts, Swabians, Visigoths and Moors (although the influence of the Moors is greater in the South).

In the national history Porto has always fought for its independence and love for freedom. Liberalism, liberty and patriotism are some of the values that have always been expensive to the inhabitants of Porto.
The name “tripeiros”, for which the inhabitants of Porto are known, arises from one of those proves of patriotism: in the 15th Century, the inhabitants of Porto gave away all their meet to supply the fleet that set sail from Porto, keeping only the tripes for themselves.

This is the origin of one of the most traditional dishes of the local cuisine, “tripas à moda do Porto”.

With a strong and dynamic bourgeoisie to which the city owes the epitaph of “City of Work”, Porto has always been the city of trade. Its main export product is the Port wine, which enabled the renovation of the city: new roads and buildings were built, which accounts for the richness of the bourgeoisie of the time.

The historical richness of the city is accounted for in the labyrinth of narrow and rough streets of the medieval times and in its monuments (the Cathedral, the "Palácio da Bolsa", as well as several churches, museums and private houses). In 1996 UNESCO considered Porto “World Heritage”. This decision was largely influenced by the undeniable historical and architectural richness, by the beauty of the city and by the urban and social renovation the city goes constantly through, especially in the oldest areas. This demonstrates the cultural and social vitality of the city, which is also proven by its several Universities, art academies, conservatories, museums and art galleries.
This enabled Porto to be considered in 2001 the European Capital of Culture, together with Rotterdam. As such, great projects have been implemented aiming at encouraging cultural dynamics and continuing the urban renovation Porto has been going through.

For all these reasons, Porto gained its place as a city of work, science, culture and leisure...
The Portuguese Educational System

Prior to Higher Education

The Portuguese educational system starts at the age of 3 with pre-school, which is not compulsory. This is followed by general education, starting at 6. General education is compulsory and lasts for 9 years. It is divided into three cycles of 4, 2 and 3 years respectively.

After these 9 years of school life, students should make a choice regarding their future, which starts with secondary education. At this stage, students must choose between "active life" (technological education) and "general studies". "Active life" joins in the same curriculum theoretical and practical education, aiming at preparing students for a specific job or activity. This lasts normally for 3 years, after which the students will receive a certificate for the job market. The "general studies" option is adequate for all those intending to proceed to higher education. This 3-year period is made of a group of subjects common to all fields of study, a group of subjects that is more specific to each field of study and a group of more technical subjects. It leads generally to the application to higher education.

Over these 3 years the grading system is similar to the one used in higher education – from 0 to 20, where 10 is the minimum passing grade.
The Portuguese Higher Education

Higher Education in Portugal is divided into University education and Polytechnic Education. Whereas University education is aimed at providing the development of professional activities, encouraging research and critical analysis, Polytechnic education provides higher education technical training in more practical terms. There are state and private Institutions of both types.

The degrees offered by the Portuguese Higher Education system are: in Universities, “Licenciado” (4-6 years), “Mestre” (1 ano + dissertation) and “Doutor” (3-6 years); in Polytechnical Institutes, “Bacharel” (3 years – after finishing the “Bacharelato”, students may proceed with their ”Licenciatura” studies, either at a Polytechnical Institute, or at a University, and obtain a degree corresponding to the first University degree) and ”Licenciatura” (in two phases, taking 2 further years). The new degree structure imposing a Bologna type Ma/Ba degree structure is under discussion and its application has not been scheduled, yet.

Access to Higher Education is always subject to the system of numerus clausus: a limited number of vacancies is determined for each Institution, which makes it necessary to implement a careful selection procedure. Every year each school determines the number of vacancies available and the selection criteria, as well as a minimum grade for applicants. This selection is made taking into account the grades obtained at secondary school, a national examination and specific examinations (according to the field of studies). Each Institution sets the examinations required.

Grading System and Grading Scales

In all graduate degrees students are assessed taking into account a grading scale, which ranges from 0 to 20 (where 10 is the minimum passing grade). Grades from 0 to 9 just show the level of insufficiency of the student. However, it is possible to take a written or oral exam when a grade is lower than 10 but higher than a certain mark (6, 7, 8 or 9) in order to improve that grade. The grading of students, especially those who have passed, is far from being homogeneous: some subjects in certain schools imply that results above a certain grade are not awarded. Thus most students get average grades.
Assessment of each subject is independent of the results obtained in other subjects – in spite of there being some cases where getting a pass in a certain subject is a pre-requisite for enrolment in another. Also, for undergraduate degree programmes the final grade of a degree corresponds to an average of all the grades a student obtained. After passing a certain subject students can take a new exam (or another form of assessment) as an attempt to get better results: the highest grade of the two is the one which will be registered for that subject. The assessment of the academic part of the studies is generally carried out without the participation of external examiners, but their presence is obligatory at the discussion of Masters and Doctoral dissertations.

The University of Porto

Mission Statement...

The University of Porto is a centre of education, research and development in the fields of culture, science, communication and technology, committed to the training of people, and to the respect for their rights and the active participation in the progress of their communities.

U.PORTO

The University of Porto (U.PORTO) was founded on the 22nd of March 1911. It was based on two higher education Institutions created in the 19th Century: the "Escola Médico-Cirúrgica" and the "Academia Politécnica". By that time the mathematician Gomes Teixeira was elected the first Rector.
In the beginning the U.PORTO integrated the Faculty of Exact Sciences (Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry and History and Natural Sciences), the Faculty of Medicine (with an affiliated School of Pharmacy) and the Faculty of Commerce, which, in practice has never been operational. The Faculty of Sciences integrated a School of Engineering.

Presently about 28,000 students (of which more than 3,500 at post-graduate level) study at the 15 schools that, with a high level of autonomy, are part of the University.

Offering more than 60 graduate courses in all major fields of study and more than 120 Master courses, the University employs more than 2,000 teachers (most of which hold a PhD) and 1,200 technical and administrative staff.

The University infrastructures are located in three different areas ("pólos"), including schools, university halls of residence and sports facilities. There are also other Institutes or University departments all over the city and in other cities nearby.

The University of Porto carries out high quality research in all fields of study and has 50 research units, 4 of which are associated laboratories, which were awarded the grade "Good" by the Foundation for Science and Technology.

The development of strong links with the community has been one of the major concerns of the University. So much so that the "Fundação Ciência e Desenvolvimento" has been created recently as a partnership of the U.PORTO and the town hall. This foundation is responsible for the management of cultural facilities that are vital to the city life: the Planetarium and the Teatro do Campo Alegre.

The commitment to internationalisation is another driving force in the development of the U.PORTO. Thus the University takes an active part in several university cooperation groups and networks and establishes cooperation protocols with Universities all over the world.
Other aspects which account for the international positioning of the U.PORTO is the increase of student flows within the scope of EU mobility programmes (in 2004/2005 more than 500 foreign students studied at the U.PORTO and 600 students of the U.PORTO spent a study period abroad), the exchange of teaching staff (around 100 teaching staff flows in 2004/2005) and researchers, the participation in inter-university research projects and the involvement of the Institution in cooperation projects, both with Brazil and the African countries.

Within the scope of its quality performance, the U.PORTO has been playing an active role in international activities related to the assessment and financing of higher education, which are both essential to determine national role models in these fields. Therefore, it is a priority for the U.PORTO to position itself as an Institution recognised internationally, aimed at providing training in the 2nd cycle (as according to the Bologna Declaration) and post-graduate training.

International Cooperation

A strong process of internationalisation started at the University of Porto in the 60s and 70s when young teachers left to some of the best foreign Universities to proceed with their PhD. A network of contacts was then easily set-up, which had a positive impact in the Internationalisation policy of the U.PORTO. This accounts for the active participation of the U.PORTO in a significant number of EU education, training and research programmes, such as ERASMUS, LINGUA, GRUNDTVIG, LEONARDO DA VINCI, TEMPUS, ALFA and several other activities within the scope of the Framework Programme. Some of these agreements, namely the LLLP/Erasmus agreements, also apply to the new Member States and to “candidate countries”.
The cooperation of the U.PORTO with other European universities is clear both in the groups in which the University takes part and in the awarding of common diplomas. The University takes part in several European Masters and has signed agreements so as to award PhDs in cooperation with other Universities.

The second area of strong internationalisation of the U.PORTO is directed towards Portuguese speaking countries, such as Brazil, Angola and Mozambique, besides some cooperation activities with São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, East Timor and Macao. Considering the importance of the internationalisation of the University of Porto towards the Portuguese speaking countries, in 1998 the University created a department for the coordination of the cooperation with these countries. This department monitors the international cooperation activities in this area, both based on existing cooperation and exchange protocols and on current projects financed by the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. The department coordinates the administrative procedures regarding the preparation and support of student and teaching staff mobility, as well as the awarding of research grants. In reply to the massive requests of information on the U.PORTO by students and teachers, this department seeks to provide immediate assistance and (should that be the case) forwards the requests to the corresponding Faculty.

The significant growth of the international activities required the adoption of specific measures regarding the coordination, as well as technical and administrative support. Therefore, in 1992 an office was created to support and monitor the programmes in which the U.PORTO is involved. This international office was later called Serviço de Relações Internacionais (SRI).
In 1999, further to the approval of the Strategic Development Plan 2000/2004, several principles and priorities were established regarding the internationalisation of the U.PORTO. These were mainly aimed at providing a premium service both to foreign students and teaching staff who intend to spend a study or teaching period at the U.PORTO, and to students and teaching staff of the U.PORTO who intend to spend a period abroad. Therefore, we intend to considerably improve the conditions to receive foreign students, researchers and teaching staff, as well as to maximise the range of opportunities available for U.PORTO students and teachers so that they can take advantage of an international experience.

Since the cooperation with its European counterparts is well established, the U.PORTO set as its objectives in the short run to encourage cooperation with other continents, such as Asia (cooperation protocols have been signed with Thai Universities), with the United States and with Canada. Within the scope of these agreements, more than one a dozen Thai PhD students finished or are finishing their degree at the U.PORTO. Therefore, a growing interest has been shown at the U.PORTO in the establishment of these Cooperation Programmes with those countries.

**Services and infrastructures of the U.PORTO**

U.PORTO offers all its students a range of services and infrastructures so as to provide them with a more comfortable stay. Usually, access of foreign students to these services is similar to the national students.

So as to provide students with the best possible service, before the departure of foreign students they are asked to fill in a questionnaire so that they can give their opinion on their stay as foreign students of the U.PORTO.
How to get to Porto

Located in the North of Portugal, Porto is quite easy to get to, either by plane or by land. It’s not common nowadays to get to Porto by sea, though there are tourism cruises in the river Douro that take advantage of the beautiful landscape of Porto.

It’s great to live in Porto...

Coming to Porto means living an extraordinary experience: the nice morning mist of a walk by the river on sunny days, which provides the city with a unique blue tone; a pleasant lunch in Praça da Ribeira, by the cube and the pigeons; a fantastic afternoon thanks to a walk by the historical area classified as world heritage and a nice time in the city parks; a drink in Foz by the sunset; a dinner in one of the many traditional city restaurants; and in the evening, hopping from bar to bar until you feel tired or ending the night in one of the city discos...
Although it is known as the “city of work” and for the quality of its University, Porto also has leisure times, thus increasing quality of life in the city.

Therefore, those who come to Porto once will wish to get back later...