

# Portugal

## Demographics for Portugal

Population:	10,566,212 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$188.7 billion
Currency (inc code):	Euro (EUR)
Language(s):	Portuguese (official), Mirandese (official - -but locally used)
Internet country code:	.pt

## Primary and secondary education

In Portugal, children enroll in the first elementary grade by the time they are six. This may be preceded by one to three years in kindergarten. After four elementary grades, students go to preparatory school for two years, before entering high school. High school comprises two cycles of three years each: the first one ends at the ninth grade, fulfilling the national compulsory education requirement. Up till this moment, education is generalist.

Secondary education begins with the second high school cycle. In the tenth grade, students choose a specific direction for their studies. The regular path comprises three years in general courses (for those who intend to attend college) and technical courses (for those who intend to work at the end of the twelfth grade) in four areas: economics and administration, sciences, social sciences and arts.

Students may also choose professional schools, which qualify people for lower skilled jobs. Counseling is available in every public school to help students choose their options and tracks. The Ministry of Education defines the elementary and secondary education curricula for all public schools.

### **Higher education**

High school graduates may either enter the labor market or continue their studies. Professional schools are an option, but most students who choose to study further go to college to get a *bacharelato* (three year degree offered by an institute) or a *licenciatura* (four to six years degree, provided by a university). Both these degrees constitute undergraduate studies, but only *licenciaturas* allow for access to post-graduate level courses, such as Master's degrees.

Enrollment in a public college typically requires a minimum grade in one or several national exams. Some private universities also use interviews as selection criteria.

Undergraduate studies may be followed by a Master's or Doctoral degree. Master degrees require at least one year of coursework and another for dissertation, whereas doctoral programs include a minimum two years of coursework and a maximum of four years to complete a dissertation.

Standard policy for admission in Master's and Doctorates is to require a minimum grade of 14 (out of 20) in the *licenciatura*. However, Management Masters and Doctorates are now beginning to demand standardized tests such as the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) and letters of recommendation with applications. MBAs may also require an English test such as the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

All undergraduate degree curricula must be validated by the Government, even if they are offered by private institutions.

The Foundation of Portuguese Universities (FUP) carries out independent evaluations of the undergraduate courses, every five years. The foundation evaluates several programs in various areas each year, by analyzing criteria such as faculty quality or atmosphere, depending on the area. Each program of each school is then given a qualitative grade in each criteria (from D – mediocre to A – excellent), from which a global report is built.

Undergraduate degrees function within semesters; Master's and doctoral programs may vary between bimesters (eight weeks each), quarters (12 weeks each) and semesters (around 16 weeks each). In most schools, classes begin in September/October and end in June/July. The duration of classes differs significantly from program to program: it may last from as little as 50 minutes to as much as 110. It is the number of courses with approval (and the respective accumulation of credits) that determines students' progress through the program. The number of classes a student takes each semester fluctuates significantly, even within equivalent programs in different schools.

### **Management education**

All management education degrees (be they *bacharelatos* or *licenciaturas*) are provided by state-accredited institutes or universities. Universities in Portugal are organized in *faculdades*, organic units corresponding to subject areas. The

units responsible for management education are, traditionally, the schools of economics and management.

Like in other areas, management programs range from three to five years, depending on the type of degree. Curricular differences between schools include internships, admission criteria, type of evaluation and number of elective courses.

Graduate business education includes postgraduate level, Master's and Doctoral programs. Postgraduate level programs aim at specialization within a certain functional management area and range from three months to a year. These programs do not lead to a degree and are undertaken mainly for professional development reasons.

A Master's degree in management may assume many shapes. The most common type is the MBA Master in business administration, a program in general management. In Portugal, in order for an MBA to lead to a degree, students must produce a dissertation otherwise, it is only considered a post-graduate level program. It is common for young professionals who come from other areas rather than management to take MBAs as a way to redirect their careers. Executive MBAs target more experienced managers and are usually financed by the students' companies.

MBAs might be undertaken in a full-time basis (one year) or in a part-time basis. Part-time differs from school to school: it might be two mornings a week, over the weekend or several nights a week. The schedule also varies a lot: the program is conducted in bimesters in some schools and in quarters in others.

More specialized variants of the MBA, (MBA in logistics, MBA in marketing, MBA in human resources, etc.) exist in some institutions and there are other types of Master's degrees, namely specialized Master's (such as MSc in marketing or MSc in finance), even though there are not many programs available. They usually involve one year of coursework and a maximum of two years for dissertation.

Doctoral programs in management are designed to prepare students for conducting highly skilled academic research in one of the different areas of management. Such programs typically require two years of coursework, after which the research work leading to a thesis is carried out, for three years.

Students are selected for the Doctoral programs on the basis of their undergraduate performance, recommendation letters and a statement of purpose. As part of their coursework, students are required to study and review papers, write research essays, and pass a set of written exams for each course.

After the coursework, students go through a comprehensive field examination in the area of their choice and develop the subject of their research work, leading to a dissertation. The student has at most three years after having successfully passed the comprehensive exam to submit and defend the dissertation before a jury composed of the thesis committee and invited academics. If the presentation is successful, the student is awarded the doctoral degree.

### *Faculty*

Management specific programs only began to become popular the 1980s. In Portugal, management programs derived from both economics and finance areas.

Faculty continues to come mainly from the business world, but the best Portuguese business schools have already begun to hire Doctorates, mainly from abroad.

New Doctorates are usually hired into tenure-track positions at the rank of assistant professor and are normally considered for tenure and promotion to associate professor after about six to eight years. Consideration for promotion to full professor normally occurs after another six years.

Faculty models are pretty much the same in all state schools: generally full-time tenure-track faculty are expected to conduct research, teach and provide service to the school. The mission of the school determines the relative emphasis on each of these responsibilities. Business faculties also include practicing managers and retired executives. Some are hired as part-time or adjunct faculty members and teach one or two courses a semester, while others have been hired into full-time faculty positions. In private-owned institutions, faculty models differ significantly, and the average number of Doctorates falls.

### *Students*

The number of high-school graduates has decreased 30 percent in the past ten years, as a reflection of the decrease in the population.

Each year, high school graduates apply for over 47,000 vacancies in public universities and institutes. In 2000, over 373,745 students were enrolled in college, of which 255,008 were in state-owned universities. There were 64,697 students in management related programs. Between 1991 and 1997, the percentage of 18 to 21 year-olds in college rose by 10 percent.

### *Accreditation*

The only Portuguese school internationally accredited is the Faculdade de Economia da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, a school of economics and business administration. The school was EQUIS accredited in June 2004, by the European Foundation for Management Development.

National evaluation is conducted by a public, independent organization – the Fundação das Universidades Portuguesas (FUP) – but only for undergraduate degrees.

The following figures should be interpreted bearing in mind the low population density of Portugal (only 10 million inhabitants):

- Estimated number of institutions with undergraduate business degree programs: 50.

- Estimated number of institutions with business Master's degree programs: 20.
- Estimated number of institutions with business Doctoral degree programs: 5.

### **Issues facing business schools**

Business schools in Portugal are faced with a number of issues that are also relevant on an international basis. Funding is amongst the most important, with a number of questions raised by the Bologna process and its consequences for state support. The need to find other sources of funding and become less dependent on the State, led to a number of alternatives, including executive education and systematic fund raising.

Changes in funding come together with higher market dynamism, with schools competing on several grounds. Competition for undergraduate and graduate students, for executive education and for recent PhDs is now the rule rather than exception. Business schools improved the quality and the professionalism of their staff and articulated marketing strategies more carefully. In this sense, the notion that there is a market for students, executives and faculty is now widely shared.

Finally, the international exposure of the business education market is confronting Portuguese business schools with international competition. Until now, foreign business schools have not established a significant presence in Portugal. But competition for top graduate students is a process involving top international business schools. Hence the need to reinforce the quality and visibility of national schools, namely through efforts of accreditation, with Faculdade de Economia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa being the first to gain an international accreditation in 2004.

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