

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF NURSING EDUCATION: THE DOCTORAL IN REGIME OF INTERNATIONAL CO-TUTORING

Globalization, i.e., the process of increasing the integration of economies and societies around the world, through trade and financial transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people and the dissemination of knowledge, make imperative the internationalization of education.¹ The development of a knowledge economy has made intellectual capital a valuable asset, and nursing, as a knowledge discipline, has been following this process with the mobility of experts, the training of students, and research projects sharing.

It is interesting to note that both in Brazil and Portugal, it dates back to the 1920s and 1930s the international collaboration at nurses' level with the support of the US Rockefeller Foundation. The collaboration is aimed at technical and scientific advice for qualified nurses training, intervening in the hospital and in the community, through the creation of innovative Nursing Schools, and the international mobility of nurses, for postgraduate training. It is in this context that in 1923 the Nursing School of the National Department of Public Health, currently the Anna Nery Nursing School, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,² and in Portugal, the Technical Nursing School, currently one of the Nursing Schools in Lisbon, in 1940.³

In Portugal, the mobility of students and teachers has grown exponentially thanks to the ERASMUS program, one of the most successful programs in the European Union, which for three decades has supported the mobility of students and nursing professors in the European context, enabling a network of knowledge among the several institutions of higher education, encouraging creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship spirit, and being a mean for the scientific development of nursing.

This program was potentialized by the Bologna Process, whose declaration was signed in 1999, aiming at the creation of an area of higher education with the establishment of a system of transferable and cumulative credits (European Credit Transfer System - ECTS), common to European countries, to promote the broader mobility of students, and with the adoption of a system based on three cycles of study: 1st cycle, Bachelor's Degree, lasting from six to eight semesters (180 to 240 ECTS); 2nd cycle, Master's Degree, lasting between three and four semesters (90 to 120 ECTS), and the 3rd cycle, Doctorate's Degree, lasting from six to eight semesters (180 to 240 ECTS).⁴

Communication and flexibility among the institutions involved are key aspects to the student mobility success, since there is tradition and culture of their own that will be confronted with another tradition, other values, and even other paths of academic development.

In Portugal, the insertion of nursing education in higher education is more recent than in Brazil. Until 2007, nurses had to attend a university to obtain a Master's Degree, and this degree in nursing was only offered at The Catholic University of Portugal since 1991 and at the University of Porto, at the Abel Salazar Institute of Biomedical Sciences since 1993.⁵

The Doctoral Program in Nursing Sciences of the Abel Salazar Institute of Biomedical Sciences was created in 2001 and operates in partnership with the Nursing School of Porto.

Since 2009, its curricular organization has been adapted to the rules of the Bologna Process, carrying 240 ECTS, which corresponds to 4 full-time years. In the first year, the probative year, the frequency of curricular units up to 30 ECTS is optional, with the responsibility of presenting the research project at the end of that year, in a public exam called probative annual exam.

The international doctoral co-tutoring regime is a modality of doctorate that implies a regular enrollment in two universities, one in the country of origin of the candidate and another in a foreign higher education institution, leading to double degree by the institutions involved. From the co-tutoring

agreement, previously approved for mobility, it must be clear the student's pathway in each university, being mandatory for the student to complete their academic course for at least nine months at the partner institution, with identification of the supervisors in the respective institutions and explanation of all the details regarding the work to be carried out, the essay and discussion of the thesis. This mobility partnership is possible when the two foreign universities are counterparts, with doctoral programs previously recognized, and with reciprocity principles.⁶

One of the greatest difficulties in this process is the compatibility of the programs, regulations and legislation of institutions and countries, including the academic calendar, different in Portugal and Brazil, for example.⁷ One example of this challenge is the fact that only one student has obtained the doctorate degree in co-tutoring, in the doctoral program in Nursing Sciences of the University of Porto, among the 102 graduated students who have concluded it until today.

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