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# Expanding horizons: experiences of internationalization through Brazil-Portugal exchange programs<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Internationalization in Higher Education is an essential strategy for academic, scientific and cultural development, promoting cooperation between institutions from different countries. This study reports on the experiences of academic mobility of researchers from Brazil and Portugal in the area of Physical Education, highlighting the impacts on faculty training and scientific production. The partnership between the Research Laboratory in Physical Education Pedagogical Practices (LAPRAPEF/UDESC) and the Center for Research, Training, Innovation and Intervention in Sports (CIFI2D/FADEUP) allowed for academic exchanges, joint research and scientific publications. During the exchange period of 2022/2023 and 2024/2025, there was participation in scientific events, lectures, interaction with advanced technologies and methodological deepening in qualitative research. Among the challenges faced, the educational differences between Brazil and Portugal, access to technologies, and bureaucratic and financial limitations stand out. However, the opportunities include the expansion of research networks, strengthening of the internationalization of Physical Education and faculty qualification. Academic cooperation allowed for significant exchanges, contributing to the training of researchers and the advancement of studies on teaching and teacher training. This experience reinforces the importance of international partnerships for innovations and the strengthening of Physical Education in the global context.

**Keywords:** internationalization; academic cooperation; training.

## 1 Introduction

Internationalization has become one of the main strategies to promote educational, scientific, and cultural development between countries, configuring itself as a comprehensive phenomenon that can be implemented through different strategies

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and initiatives (Paula *et al.*, 2023). The internationalization of Higher Education is marked by its great extension and diversity of interpretations, seen as a tool to fulfill various objectives, such as professional and personal improvement, establishment of citizens, preparation for the job market, strengthening of higher education institutions, scientific advancement of a nation, region or the world, sustainable development and the creation of regional areas of Higher Education, among other purposes (Morosini; Corte, 2021).

This article presents an approach to internationalization through the reporting of academic experiences of international mobility between researchers from Brazil and Portugal connected to the area of Physical Education. We start from the premise that the internationalization of Higher Education is a process of integration with an international and intercultural dimension, supported by collaborative networks that involve both developed socioeconomic blocks and those that value cultural diversity, differences, and the different historical periods. This process strengthens the national scientific and technological capacity, connecting it to the local context and enhancing its role as a radiator of sustainable development (Morosini, 2017). Professor Luciane Stallivieri, Ph.D., when talking about internationalization in Higher Education in a published interview, highlights that "[...] an international experience modifies their understanding of the world" (Nez; Araldi, 2023, p. 11).

Internationalization, recognized as the fourth pillar of the university, promotes international cooperation and enables programs that enable students to take part in internships abroad for a certain period of time (Ekuni, 2019). The internationalization of Higher Education is not restricted only to academic mobility, but involves the construction of research networks, institutional partnerships, and exchanges that promote the circulation of knowledge and experiences between different sociocultural contexts. This dynamic favors the expansion of the academic and professional perspectives of those involved, while contributing to the democratization of knowledge and the reduction of asymmetries in access to formative opportunities.

Thus, by establishing connections between higher education institutions from different countries, internationalization strengthens academic cooperation, boosting the development of joint research and innovative initiatives focused at both the qualification of teacher training and the improvement of pedagogical practices in higher education. Regarding international cooperation, it is noteworthy that the objectives

guiding this text refer to the complex task of promoting the leveling of living conditions through education and modernization of production systems that seek to match international standards. The cooperation process implies deep and complex social and economic transformations that produce significant effects in the political sphere and, to this end, consider the cultural and sociological bases of the nations involved (Carvalho; Araújo, 2020).

International cooperation is, therefore, the channel through which a nation remains connected with prevailing economic and social patterns and the main scientific and knowledge trends underway, their applications and benefits. In a broader sense, international cooperation means governments and institutions working together to develop and formulate potential problem-solving programs (Sato, 2010).

In this text, cooperation crosses geographical barriers so that it is possible to recognize innovative scenarios in the area of Physical Education. To this end, we focused on reflecting on the experiences of internationalization based on the experiences of researchers, in the connection between Brazil and Portugal. In this way, we listed in the sequence of the work the reports of the formative experiences, the challenges arising from sociocultural and academic differences, as well as the partnerships and dialogues provided by the international mobility process. Finally, we highlight that, from this enterprise of epistemological and sociocultural exchange, new projects and scientific productions could be articulated, strengthening the importance and need to expand the connection established between the institutions and research groups involved.

## **2 Description of the methodology**

This study is configured as a report of an educational path, based on the trajectories of two doctoral students enrolled to the Graduate Program in Human Movement Sciences (PPGCMH), of the State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC), and to the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Human Sciences (PPGICH), of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), throughout two periods of mobility during the doctorate at the School of Sports of the University of Porto (FADEUP). It is noteworthy that both doctoral students are linked to the Research Laboratory in Pedagogical Practices of Physical Education (LAPRAPEF). Mussi, Flores and Almeida (2021) emphasize that the experience report constitutes a legitimate form of

expression of formative processes, contributing to the production of knowledge. Based on this perspective, the methodological approach adopted in this manuscript is qualitative and descriptive, centered on the analysis of academic trajectories, the obstacles faced, and the possibilities expanded through international cooperation.

Regarding the information gathered, these were extracted from reflective records prepared by the doctoral students, the advisor from abroad and from interactions established in scientific contexts, such as participation in congresses and involvement in activities connected to institutional collaborations. The organization of this data allowed us to examine the effects of mobility on the strengthening of collaborative networks, the intensification of internationalization processes in the area of Physical Education and the diversification of scientific debates.

The actions performed during the periods abroad involved both the monitoring of disciplines and insertion in orientation meetings, which favored direct contact with different theoretical-methodological approaches. This process of immersion in foreign academic environments contributed significantly to the expansion of the scientific repertoire and to the problematization of the research practices performed in Brazil, promoting a more critical and comparative look at the local reality.

Another relevant aspect concerns the subjective dimension of these formative experiences, marked by cultural displacements, linguistic challenges and adaptation to different institutional dynamics. Such elements, often neglected in more objective analyses, prove to be fundamental to understanding the effects of mobility on the formation of more autonomous researchers, sensitive to epistemological plurality and capable of dialoguing in multicultural contexts. The experience with otherness was an indispensable aspect of learning.

It is also worth noting, the role of the institutions of origin in encouraging and recognizing these international experiences. The existence of institutional support policies, even if still incipient, was decisive to make mobility feasible and consolidate partnership relations between graduate programs. These articulations contribute not only to the strengthening of individual trajectories, but also to the construction of collective paths aimed at the critical internationalization of research and social commitment of the university.

Thus, this experience report intends to present a description of the experiences lived; therefore, it does not present data from a research project. As it is a descriptive

text, "it should be noted that this type of text does not require approval by a research ethics committee, however, it needs to follow the current legislation regarding ethical precepts" (Casarin; Porto, 2021, p. 1). Therefore, we reinforce that the ethical precepts were respected by the authors in the experiences and in the writing of the text presented.

### **3 Internationalization experiences: academic aspects, impacts on training and cultural dimension**

The Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) evaluates the internationalization of graduate programs based on the form and content of the offered training through collaborative research, dissemination of intellectual production, mobility of professors and students, in addition to collaboration and institutional conditions of support offered. Internationalization is perceived and evaluated from the following perspectives: a) Governance and institutional commitment to internationalization; b) International cooperation and visibility; c) International academic mobility; d) Internationalized intellectual production; e) Internationalization of the curriculum; f) Internationalization at home; g) Internationalization actions with non-academic sector (CAPES, 2025a).

For the area 21, Physical Education, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy (CAPES, 2025b), the internationalization of graduate programs is evaluated through 4 indicators: a) research; b) intellectual production; c) mobility and academic performance; d) institutional conditions. In the meantime, the Graduate Program in Human Movement Sciences (PPGCMH), of the State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC), focuses on organizing its actions and indicators to meet the evaluative principles and foster the student training process and professors performance.

Thus, the international cooperation between researchers from the Research Laboratory in Pedagogical Practices of Physical Education (LAPRAPEF), related to PPGCMH, of UDESC, and to the Center for Research, Training, Innovation and Intervention in Sport (CIFI2D), of the School of Sports of the University of Porto (FADEUP), is consolidated in the academic-scientific sphere, through: (i) execution of academic mobility (technical visits, lectures, participation in events as guests), both by professors and students, whether in Brazil or in Portugal; (ii) conducting research in

partnership with researchers representing the two institutions; publications of articles in scientific journals and in book chapters or organized works. For CAPES (2025a, p. 69),

Academic mobility is one of the most visible pillars of internationalization. It encompasses actions that promote the exchange of graduate students, professors, researchers, managers and technical staff between different countries, promoting a greater connection between education systems.

In addition, academic mobility is characterized as one of the axes of internationalization and it enhances motivating reasons that change over time and present institutional interests, such as development, international standards, quality improvement, training, development of faculty and students, strategic alliances, knowledge production, among others, and personal, such as broadening horizons, status, financial incentives, expansion of worldview and skills (Machado, 2023). From this, the present report will materialize in the experiences and impacts experienced on the most recent academic mobility between these groups from UDESC and FADEUP. Although such initiatives strengthen academic cooperation, it is necessary to reflect on possible institutional and cultural barriers that may limit the replicability or reach of these experiences.

The centrality, given to internationalization in Higher Education, has occurred more effectively since the end of the 1980s, making it an integral part of the academic scenario and contributing to its presence and strengthening in national and institutional policies, as well as becoming the focus of the vast majority of strategic planning, especially in graduate studies (Laus, 2012). Thus, before moving on to the specific experiences, it is important to describe the scenario that permeates the process of institutional partnership established.

It should be noted, first, that one of the strategic projects in UDESC Professional Development Plan (UDESC, 2021) is the 'Strengthening undergraduate and graduate studies, mobility and Internationalization', to encourage internationalization actions that foster the recognition of UDESC on the world stage and contribute to a broader academic, personal, professional and cultural training. In order to contribute to the development of this project, the current Strategic Planning of the PPGCMH established as a Global Goal the:

[...] expansion of student participation in scientific events in Brazil and abroad, academic mobility of students for internship abroad, reception of foreign students, academic mobility of professors abroad and receiving visiting foreign professors (UDESC, 2023, p. 6).

The PPGCMH thus recognizes that internationalization in graduate studies is extremely important, as it expands the frontiers of knowledge, strengthens the quality of academic training and positions the Program in the global scientific scenario. As there is no single and/or right way to the internationalization process, it "[...] presents itself as a means for the broad improvement of higher education, understood as a generator of new knowledge, science, technology, and innovation, but, mainly, of values and citizenship and not as an end in itself" (Laus, 2021, p. 24). Thus, in order to expand internationalization, through academic mobility, the PPGCMH (2023) seeks to expand the participation of students in internships and scientific events abroad, receive international guests for internal activities in the Program and increase the participation of professors in work missions abroad (technical visits, short and long-term internships, participation in events, projects and joint publications). Based on the established Global Goal, the PPGCMH Coordination began to intensify communications, incentives and support for these actions, which motivated the search for the development of the activities presented in this report.

In addition to encouraging and supporting internationalization actions, strategies to publicize the actions have been fundamental for achieving the objectives set out in the strategic planning, among them, we highlight the presentation of the activities and their impact through the dissemination of infographics on the Program's Instagram profile, which are saved in highlights to be accessed frequently and end up motivating new interested parties. As the most solemn moment of these strategies, the PPGCMH, during the 'PPGCMH Higher Education Forum', started to hold round tables with the theme: 'Internationalization experiences in the training of future masters and doctors', which involve reports of sandwich doctorate activities, technical visits and scientific events. In 2024, the experience of the first period of academic mobility was reported on a round table that highlighted technical visits to foreign institutions. In 2025, a new participation is planned with reports on the experiences during the second period of academic mobility.

Considering the presented context, the execution of academic-scientific mobility in Portugal is justified as it is a country with a high Human Development Index (HDI),

that is, 0.864 (Melo, 2023), with several relevant Higher Education Institutions in the scope of scientific production. In view of this, we begin by contextualizing the characteristics of the University of Porto, the main institution where academic mobility took place. Officially founded in 1911, shortly after the establishment of the Republic in Portugal, the university has a consolidated trajectory in teaching and research. Under a solid foundation of almost 115 years of evolution and notoriety, we present some current data, of which we highlight that it currently has 14 schools, 47 research centers and 311 undergraduate courses, in addition to master's and doctoral degrees (UPorto, 2024).

The university is ranked 2nd best in Portugal, 17th in Ibero-America, 113th-114th in Europe, and 278th-279th in the world, according to the 2025 edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject. University of Porto stood out in the main international rankings of higher education. In the 2024 edition of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, it was recognized as the best university among the 15 higher education institutions ranked in Portugal. In the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) - Shanghai Ranking, the institution maintained, between 2007 and 2022, its best ranking between positions 301-400 in the world, remaining in this range for 11 consecutive years (2011-2021). In 2023, it reached the position among the top 300 global universities, consolidating itself as the leader among Portuguese universities. In the 2024 edition of the Shanghai Ranking, the University of Porto ranked 1st-2nd in Portugal, 3rd-7th in Ibero-America, 76th-109th in Europe and 201st-300th in the world, reaffirming its academic and scientific excellence at the international level.

It is reinforced that University of Porto presents internationalization as one of its main strategic axes, as it allows both the development of existing collaborations and the establishment of innovative cooperation activities, through the creation of active connections with institutions around the world, including the State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC). In this context, it should be noted that, in the 2017/2018 period, Brazilian students corresponded to 32% of the total of 37,198 students involved in international mobility programs in universities and polytechnic institutes in Portugal (Bastos; Lobo, 2022).

FADEUP, in turn, presents in its infrastructure, a set of laboratories with consolidated lines of research, in addition to a wide bibliographic collection, which

provides access to bibliographic references and databases of international journals, as well as to programs for qualitative data analysis, which has not been commonly available in Brazilian Higher Education Institutions. FADEUP's doctorate program presents consolidated lines of research, which result in the development of advanced research in the area of Physical Education.

Thus, the experiences reported in this manuscript aimed to expand academic-scientific knowledge and skills, based on technical visits and participation in scientific events abroad to specially strengthen consolidated partnerships between the State University of Santa Catarina (Brazil) and University of Porto (Portugal). In our mobility experience, the goal was to foster academic-scientific cooperation between Brazilian and Portuguese institutions; exchange experiences on the process of training and professional development of Physical Education teachers in Brazil and Portugal; deepen knowledge about professors professional development, through readings and discussions with the Portuguese host professor; improve the conduct of qualitative research procedures, such as, for example, of narrative-biographical nature; expand the knowledge of qualitative software that helps in data analysis.

Considering the presented context, the following reports of the internationalization experiences are highlighted and detailed: academic mobility 2022/2023; academic mobility 2024/2025; and participation in a scientific event.

During the first period of academic mobility, from December 2022 to February 2023, it was possible to participate in disciplines of the master's and doctoral course in Sports Sciences, as well as to live with the routines of meetings and orientations of FADEUP's CIFI2D (Photo 1). An initial matter of cultural estrangement was the very organization of the academic calendar, which, in Brazil, the end of the academic semesters and year occurs in December, while in Portugal, the beginning of the academic year usually occurs in September, ending in mid-July of each year.

Therefore, during the period of mobility, there were initially exams to complete the first semester, then the Christmas recess, so that, in January, the activities resumed, starting the following semester in February, in which it was possible to participate in the inaugural classes. This discrepancy highlights the need for more structured adaptation strategies, raising questions on how different academic models impact the effectiveness of international mobility.

Photo 1 – School of Sports of the University of Porto



Source: Authors, 2025.

Regarding the application demands and initial process of international mobility, it is also worth noting the importance of the work of the International Relations Office of the University of Porto, through which it was possible to clarify doubts and obtain guidance on the applications on the two occasions in which we carried out the mobility. In addition, we participated in a mandatory meeting prior to the period of international stay, in which we received instructions on various issues, from student housing demands and commuting to the university, to student health, formative aspects, such as academic routines, calendar and specificities of each educational center.

In addition to the introduction by the International Relations Office, part of the rectorate of University of Porto, the first demand to conduct the mobility was the presentation to the School, in which the bond between the researchers was established. We highlight the care with the welcome provided to international students, both in mobility, as well as the effective guidance and support on the onboarding and adaptation of exchange students to the university's academic daily life. In this way, we received instructions on the projects developed at the School of Sports, the sporting and cultural opportunities and the relationship with other international mobility students and researchers, a process guided by human formation and appreciation of interculturality.

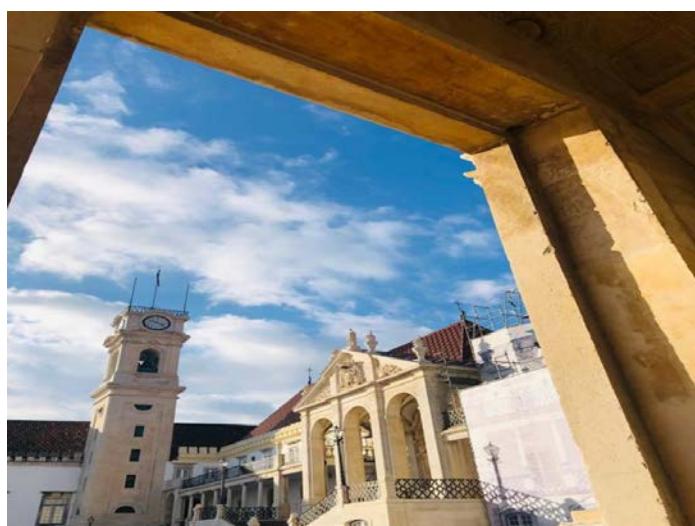
Among the formative aspects, we would like to highlight the opportunity to give a lecture at the inaugural class of the semester for students of the master's course, in

the line of Teaching Physical Education, for Basic and Secondary Education (EEFEBS), in which we will address the challenges of teaching Physical Education in basic education in Brazil and the demands required in the training of teachers for this area of teaching, as well as the different views on the body culture of movement in Brazil, distinct from the focus on the teaching of sport and technical skills and abilities commonly undertaken in Portuguese schools.

One of the focuses of the mobility was the discussion on methodological aspects of one of the doctoral theses, in which, through the knowledge and experience of the host professor, it was possible to resize the proposal for collecting information from the research project, inserting the technique of biographical-narrative analysis, with the use of personal artifacts and field notes as a measuring instrument. The methodological change to this technique, in turn, qualified and gave greater robustness to the thesis and to the gathering and, consequently, to the results to be presented.

Another important experience of academic mobility, in the first period of mobility, was the participation in the XIX Congress of Sports Sciences and Physical Education of Portuguese-speaking Countries, held in the city of Coimbra. The School of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, of University of Coimbra, promoted the event from January 26 to 28, 2023 (Photo 2). During the event, scientific papers related to research done within the scope of LAPRAPEF were presented, in different thematic symposia on School Physical Education, Leisure Practices and Quality of Life and Gender Studies.

Photo 2 – University of Coimbra, headquarters of the XIX Congress of Sports Sciences and Physical Education of Portuguese-speaking Countries



Source: Authors, 2025.

It should be noted that the University of Coimbra, considered the Alma Mater of Portuguese-speaking universities, was founded in 1290 and is one of the oldest higher education institutions in Europe. In recognition of its historical and academic relevance, it was included in the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2013. Its most recent academic unit, the School of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, had the honor of organizing this event of great importance, as part of the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of its creation (Congress of Sports Sciences and Physical Education of Portuguese-speaking Countries, 2023). In addition, it was possible to participate in conferences and strengthen contact with leading researchers in the field of Physical Education, in different Portuguese-speaking countries, such as Mozambique, Angola, Brazil and Portugal.

Participation in scientific events is extremely important for the advancement of academic knowledge and the strengthening of international and national collaboration. These gatherings provide a unique platform for exchanging ideas, discussing understandings and findings, and updating on the latest trends. It should be noted that events like these play an important role in disseminating scientific knowledge to society at large. By bringing together experts and professionals in the field, they contribute to the continuous training of participants and dissemination of information that can positively impact the development of public policies, educational practices and intervention strategies in the areas of sports and Physical Education.

Therefore, the importance of scientific events goes beyond the exchange of information between researchers, being an essential tool for building a more collaborative and innovative future in the areas of knowledge. In the case of the aforementioned congress, the interaction between professionals from different Portuguese-speaking countries proved to be valuable not only at the scientific level, but also in strengthening cultural and academic ties between different nations, creating an environment of learning and mutual collaboration.

In the second period of academic mobility, the focus was on promoting advances in interinstitutional academic cooperation for the preparation of doctoral scientific papers, within the scope of qualitative research on teacher training. During the period of one month, between December 2024 and January 2025, we deepened the methodological debate and intellectual contributions to the construction of research and analysis of empirical material, based on the use of technologies such as the

NVIVO software and references for thematic analysis of teaching in the university context.

It is worth highlighting that, during this second moment, a meeting also took place with a professor connected to the Center for Educational Research and Intervention (CIIE), of the School of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto (FPCEUP), to investigate processes of analysis of objects, artifacts, photographs, and memories that were used in the research methodology (narrative-biographical technique). Regarding the process of analysis of the objects, methodological approaches were considered that allow an in-depth understanding of the data obtained during the research interviews.

Although it was characterized by a short period of stay abroad, the experience proved to be highly productive, promoting the strengthening of academic and scientific cooperation networks. In addition to enabling the participation in orientation meetings, the immersion allowed the deepening of the dialogue with researchers from the institution and access to ongoing investigations at CIFID, broadening perspectives on the topics addressed and favoring future interinstitutional collaborations. Photo 3 records part of the activities developed in the scope of academic mobility, evidencing the insertion in school spaces and observation of pedagogical practice in Physical Education in the Portuguese context.

**Photo 3 – School in Vila Nova de Gaia**



Source: Authors, 2025.

During this mobility, it was also possible to carry out a visit focused on observing the local school reality and Physical Education classes in their structural and formative aspects. To do so, we were in a primary and secondary school in the city of Vila Nova de Gaia. During the visit, we observed the school Physical Education classes taught to secondary school students by FADEUP master's student trainees. The professor responsible for our supervision also performed the role of internship advisor, providing a training environment for the pedagogical practice of future teachers. At the same time, we had the opportunity to dialogue with some Physical Education teachers at the school, which allowed us to better understand the daily teaching routine, the challenges faced and the recurrent practices in this educational space.

In addition to the activities related to the research, it was possible to present a class to the students of the master's course in the line of Teaching Physical Education in Basic and Secondary Education (EEFEBS), in the curricular unit of Curriculum Development in Physical Education, in which we addressed the curricular organization of Physical Education in Brazil, in the context of basic education, and we foster the debate on common challenges and specificities of teaching in Brazil and Portugal, in addition to valuing our profession. We also highlight the importance of the debate on democracy and the profile of resistance that teachers from both countries need to have as a political and epistemological conduct.

Considering the two mobilities carried out, it is noteworthy that, at first, the financial costs were mostly borne by the researchers, with only a fifth of the expenses covered by a PPGCMH grant, intended for one of the doctoral students. In the second moment, it was possible to obtain funding through participation in a Public Notice to Support Mobility for Researchers from Santa Catarina, promoted for the first time in the state of Santa Catarina by the Foundation for the Support of Research and Innovation of the State of Santa Catarina (FAPESC). This public notice represented a significant advance in the promotion of academic mobility, enabling the expansion of opportunities for exchange and scientific collaboration for researchers in the state. Precisely because we opted for the notice for a short duration of up to 30 days, the period of stay was reduced in this second international mobility 2024/2025.

#### **4 Challenges and opportunities in discussion**

Academic cooperation between institutions from different countries faces challenges inherent to the particularities of the educational context involved. In the case of the partnership between LAPRAPEF and CIFID, the differences between the education systems and the perspectives on Physical Education, in Brazil and Portugal, require a deep understanding of the local realities in order to incorporate them into the methodological options. Considering that internationalization in Higher Education seeks to promote the debate on the ways in which experiences in foreign contexts contribute to the formative processes of the academic community (Brandalise; Heinze, 2022). Therefore, we can affirm that the important thing is to acquire the ability to look beyond the visible, the apparent reality, to enter into the understanding of context and acquiring the ability to mobilize the methodological resources and interpretations appropriate to each social and formative reality. The internationalization of teacher training not only expands professional perspectives, but also favors the construction of a more critical, inclusive education aligned with contemporary global challenges (Mariano; Peres; Silva, 2025).

Bureaucratic and financial barriers emerge as one of the most significant challenges. Obtaining funding and resolving administrative procedures are factors that often limit the feasibility of mobility programs, directly impacting the possibility of expanding and continuing these academic experiences. In addition, the scarcity of institutional policies that facilitate access to public notices, scholarships and international cooperation agreements further aggravates this scenario. Often, students and professors come up against the lack of clear information or deadlines that are incompatible with academic and personal realities, contributing to the exclusion of subjects who could benefit from these opportunities. In this context, rethinking the mechanisms of support and flexibility of processes is essential for the democratization of academic mobility.

The academic-scientific cooperation between LAPRAPEF and CIFID is an opportunity to expand research networks and publications, promoting the exchange of knowledge and experiences between researchers from the institutions involved. In addition, the internationalization of research is strengthened through participation in scientific events and direct contact with international research groups, contributing to

greater visibility of the work developed and enabling the consolidation of future collaborations.

In this scenario, it is noteworthy that, in June 2024, there was the participation in an academic event in Brazil of a professor who exchanged during the mobility period and the host professor who welcomed the researchers at the University of Porto, as researchers invited as speakers, at the III Brazilian Symposium on Supervised Curricular Internship (III SBECS) and at the I International Congress on Physical Education Teacher Training for Basic Education (I CIFPEF), at UDESC.

These events, organized by the group of researchers from LAPRAPEF, in connection with PPGCMH, from UDESC, are relevant spaces for the academic and scientific debate on professor training in Physical Education, promoting knowledge exchanges and strengthening interinstitutional cooperation networks. The participation of professors revealed the importance of international collaboration, configuring itself as a relevant space for academic and scientific exchanges and debates on Physical Education, promoting these exchanges of knowledge and strengthening cooperation networks.

With regard to academic mobility, the importance of methodological and technological training, access to advanced laboratories and specialized programs, such as the NVIVO software, which provided significant support for the improvement of qualitative research, expanding the analytical and interpretative possibilities of the studies developed, is also highlighted. Cultural and academic exchange also stands out as a relevant aspect, since the contact with researchers and students from different Portuguese-speaking countries allowed the broadening of perspectives on teaching and research in the area of Physical Education, favoring a broader understanding of the various educational realities.

The exchange of experiences on professor training and professional development generated significant contributions to the improvement of curricula and pedagogical practices, directly impacting teacher qualification and the advancement of academic discussions in the area. This type of international cooperation reinforces the importance of Physical Education in the global academic context and strengthens research networks. To this end, it is highlighted that the experiences lived during the mobility periods were essential for the consolidation of partnerships, agreements and exchanges (Berwig; Carraro, 2023). In addition, the relevance of the academic-

professional connection networks is highlighted, which are constituted throughout these processes (Carvalho; Silva, 2022).

The internationalization of Higher Education, especially when materialized through solid institutional partnerships and academic mobility experiences, is capable of promoting an education that is more sensitive to the cultural and epistemological specificities of different contexts. At the same time that it enhances the construction of collaborative and intercultural knowledge, it challenges the subjects involved (students, professors and institutions) to revisit their practices, conceptions and modes of action. It is in this interweaving of experiences, knowledge and perspectives that formative spaces are consolidated, in which cooperation transcends punctual exchange to constitute a continuous process of mutual learning. Thus, the teaching perspective welcomes students in international mobility, strengthening formative dimensions, revealing the impacts, and learning that emerge from this intercultural encounter.

Internationalization in Higher Education, driven by postgraduate student mobility programs, represents an added value not only for students in mobility, but also for the institution that hosts them, with special emphasis on the professor responsible for the supervision abroad. Welcoming graduate students in mobility implies not only contributing to their intercultural training but also benefiting from this experience of interaction that takes on different colors and flavors, due to the fact that students come from different cultural, academic and professional contexts.

As a professor welcoming mobility students, it is noteworthy that these exchanges allow me to expand my repertoire, learning not only about other cultures, but also reinforcing my sensitivity to different forms of communication, which makes my action capable of embracing diversity and even broader differences. In this specific mobility, the mobility students taught classes to students of the master's degree in Physical Education Teaching for Basic and Secondary Education, enriching the curriculum of the master's students with new cultural references and expanding their understanding of curriculum development in Brazil.

In the field of research, the presence of postgraduate mobility students offers valuable opportunities for learning and mutual development, especially with regard to academic collaboration, the enrichment of research projects and development of mentoring skills. When students come to share their PhD projects, the tutor plays a

relevant role in support and guidance, while also learning from the process of knowledge co-creation.

This experience, associated with previous ones from students of one of the partner institutions, allowed the development of international collaboration networks, boosting participation in applications for projects and congresses, as well as strengthening the relationship with other institutions. These mobilities, in which I participate directly in the supervision or in coadjuvation with other colleagues from the school, have been going on for about two decades and have been fundamental to establish partnerships in publications co-authored with academics from different regions, expanding, for all stakeholders, the visibility and impact of the research done.

In addition, interaction with international students promotes the development of cultural sensitivity and a broader global vision. Discussions on different issues and challenges require in-depth reflection on the cultural, social and political implications of the topics addressed. This contact has enriched my understanding of global diversity, encouraging me to rethink academic issues in a broader and more globalized perspective, preparing me to act in an increasingly global and interdependent world.

In short, the orientation of graduate mobility students represents a unique opportunity for professional and personal development. The mentor acquires new intercultural skills, expands his/her international collaboration network and innovates in his/her pedagogical practices. The human dimension of this experience is equally significant, materializing in lasting friendships and a richer and more comprehensive worldview. However, it is important to recognize the challenges inherent in this process, such as linguistic and cultural differences, and the need for effective strategies to overcome them, ensuring a successful mobility experience for all involved.

## 5 Final considerations

Considering the reflections presented throughout this work, it is possible to affirm that the internationalization of Higher Education is an essential process for the expansion of knowledge networks and strengthening of academic cooperation between institutions from different countries. The experience reported in this study, involving the partnership between LAPRAPEF/UDESC and CIFI2D/FADEUP,

highlights the positive impacts that academic mobility can provide both for the researchers involved and for the participating institutions.

The experience of academic mobility has given us the opportunity to expand our research references, in addition to our human training. The relationship of scientific dialogues and exchanges showed that it is not just a search for knowledge abroad, but the construction of knowledge with peers in which the exchanges were mutual and the shared advances in the relationship of our differences and similarities were very significant. On the other hand, the differences treated as specificities and the contextualized knowledge were in accordance with our realities and different epistemological trajectories.

Internationalization, in this context, proved to be an important means for the exchange of knowledge, contributing to the broadening of academic and professional perspectives, development of joint research and democratization of access to knowledge. The experience in different sociocultural scenarios allowed not only the formation of collaborative networks, but also a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to the training of Physical Education teachers in Brazil and Portugal.

However, it is important to highlight that internationalization also presents challenges that need to be faced. Bureaucratic and financial difficulties, lack of access to certain technologies, and differences in educational systems are factors that require adaptations and strategic planning so that academic cooperation can be expanded and consolidated. In this sense, institutional and governmental initiatives focused on fostering academic mobility and scientific collaboration are essential to strengthen these processes and ensure their continuity.

In summary, the challenges and opportunities allowed: (i) to contact different academic traditions and incorporate new theoretical and methodological approaches in teaching and research in Physical Education; (ii) to build collaboration networks as a result of the interaction between researchers and students from both countries, thus strengthening international partnerships in favor of joint projects, publications and future academic mobilities; (iii) experience different educational contexts, favoring adaptation to different realities and stimulating critical reflection on teaching and research practices, with an impact on professional identity; (iv) cultural exchange with

a reflection on sensitivity to issues of diversity, inclusion and equity in the training and teaching of Physical Education.

Finally, it is emphasized that the internationalization experiences described in this manuscript brought significant contributions to the training of the researchers involved and to the production of knowledge in the area of Physical Education. The continuity of these academic partnerships and the expansion of cooperation networks are fundamental aspects to ensure that internationalization continues to be a tool for academic, scientific and sociocultural development, contributing to the training of teachers and researchers who are increasingly prepared for contemporary challenges.

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