



From mobility to opportunity: connecting international talent with regional ecosystems

*“Economic Impact of Erasmus+ Student Mobility” conference
Tróia, Portugal*

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UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO

Founded in 1973

University created inside a company (Telecommunications Study Centre - Portugal Telecom)

First bachelor degrees: Telecommunications and Electronics Engineering; Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Ceramics Engineering

Two-Higher Education systems in one Higher Education Institution

Departments instead faculties - promoting more and better collaborations within the HEI promoting interdisciplinary and transversal solutions for regional and global challenges

Proximity as a pillar for quality and successful academic journeys

University of Aveiro

17501 students

Dept. Mechanical Engineering

1200 students



DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Founded in 1994

Five *graduate specialisation programmes*: automation, industrial intelligence, welding: from 18 ECTS up to 54 ECTS

Three *bachelor programmes*: mechanical engineering; aerospace engineering; industrial automation engineering (180 ECTS)

Nine *master programmes*: mechanical engineering; robotics; aerospace engineering; additive manufacturing; product design and engineering;

Three *PhD programmes*: mechanical engineering; nanosciences & nanotechnology; biomedical engineering & energy systems

Eight *micro-credentials*: welding; robotics; programming in ROS; mobility; energy; additive manufacturing: from 2 ECTS up to 8 ECTS

Short-programmes as CTeSP courses are offered by Polytechnic Institutes



INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE

88 nationalities

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

. 14% international students

DEPARTMENT MECHANICAL ENG.

. Bachelor programmes: 5%

. Master programmes: 7%

. PhD programmes: 40%

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – DEDICATED INITIATIVES

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

- . Welcome session
- . Two coordinators per department: Internationalisation & Erasmus+ programme

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING LEVEL

- . Dedicated welcome and orientation sessions
- . Orientation sessions - academic culture in Portugal and at University of Aveiro & region's ecosystem & academy & region resources (Creative Science Park, IERA, UAIncubator)
- . Tutors & Mentors





BRIDGING ACADEMIA & INDUSTRY

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

- . Two annual fairs – companies; speed meetings; interviews
- . Extra-curricular internships in companies
- . Master programmes with last semester of 2nd year options: Dissertation, Project or Internship in companies
- . Training: preparation of CVs; preparation for interviews

DEPARTMENT MECHANICAL ENGINEERING LEVEL

- . Open Days with companies
- . Workshops with Mechanical Engineering Students Association
- . Trainings courses delivered by companies
- . Commercial presentations
- . Job fairs
- . Extra-curricular clubs: Engenius – UA Formula Student; Motochanics UA; Automec;

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES WITH REGIONAL IMPACT

START FOR FUTURE (SCE Cooperative) – born from two EIT HEI Initiative projects: TANDEM+ & EUAcceL

- . Training for students (all study cycles), talents, spin-offs, startups, academic staff
- . Training for students: tandem international teams
- . Online sessions
- . University of Aveiro: ideas – challenges identified in the region

ANNUAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS

- . One week duration
- . Portugal & The Netherlands
- . Identify challenges of the region



INITIATIVES AT PhD LEVEL

SEMINAR CURRICULAR UNIT

. **Objective:** develop an idea for an application to a funding programme

. **Idea:** Students identify a real challenge/opportunity aligned with smart specialisation priorities

. **Requirements:**

1. Project in collaboration with companies at regional or national level
2. International consortium or international consultants/advisors
3. Multidisciplinary team

DOCTORAL SCHOOL LEVEL – RECTORY



PhD PROGRAMME “DOCTORATE IN BUSINESS INNOVATION” (DBI)

1. PURPOSE – *WHY*

- . *Address labour-market skills shortages*
- . *Strengthen R&D (industry) capacity*
- . *Support industry competitiveness*

2. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES – *WHAT*

- . *Target group: employed professionals in companies/organisations*
- . *Research originates in company scientific-technological challenges*
- . *Company is (also) the research environment*
- . *Strong academia-industry environment & community*
- . *Agreement (formal structure of collaboration) between student- company – university*
- . *International community addressing regional challenges*

3. DELIVERY MODEL – *HOW*

- . 3-year (if) full-time structure
- . Year 1: mandatory curricular units & thesis development
- . Years 2-3: thesis & optional training (micro-credentials & workshops/training)
- . 3 annual immersive on-site weeks (November, March & July - Research Summit)
- . Flexible design for working professionals

4. GOVERNANCE & ECOSYSTEM - *WHERE (& UNDER WHICH SYSTEM)*

- . **Addressing needs:** Created in response to industry demand (2018/2019)
- . **Collaborative-based:** Co-designed by university & companies & interdisciplinary scientific committee & reference on Vitae RDF framework
- . **Collaboration:** Collaboration with Strascheg Center for Entrepreneurship/HM, Munich - Germany
- . **UBC:** Collaboration with company partners (SMEs + large companies)
- . **Management:** (Directly) Managed by University of Aveiro Doctoral School



UNIQUE PhD MODEL – DIFFERENTIATED ACTIONS

SUPPORT, MONITORING & ENGAGEMENT (ONGOING)

- *Good communication & channels*
- *Continuous academic-industry alignment through structured engagement with PhD candidates, alumni, and partner companies*
- *Integrated learning and co-creation moments embedded in the programme structure*
- *Additional systematic monitoring and evidence-based programme improvement*
- *Follow-up: impact assessment of PhD results*
- *Inclusive doctoral ecosystem and outreach strategy*

SUPPORT, MONITORING & ENGAGEMENT (FUTURE)

Data-oriented, impact-driven

- *Systematic longitudinal analysis of feedback data*

Operational

- *Additional structured mid-first-year progress review*
- *Dedicated meetings support during Immersive Weeks for patents and utility models*
- *Dedicated initial session on Portuguese academic culture*



O Programa UA Global Leader é uma iniciativa avançada de formação em liderança.

UA Global Leader

OBJECTIVE: development of emotional intelligence, management and leadership competences for a successful transition from university to the labour market.

TARGET-GROUP: PhD students/candidates; recent PhD graduates; Junior Researchers.

DURATION: April – June 2026 (1st Edition)

DELIVERY MODEL:

- . Presential sessions
- . Virtual sessions

OTHER INITIATIVES: Portuguese consortia for international mobility under Erasmus+: MIND, PEERS, AMIGO, ACC

WHAT WORKED (AND IS WORKING) WELL SO FAR ?

PROXIMITY as a strategy and as a pillar

COMMUNICATION as key-driver for impact

WELCOME & ORIENTATION SESSIONS as key-enablers for students' adaptation

ALUMNI as key-agents for academia-labour market (society) effective collaboration

EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROJECTS as drivers for “life” competences development & contact with companies

COMMUNITY sense of belonging

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

- . (ACADEMIC) RECOGNITION for longer mobility & programmes
- . (ACADEMIC) PROFILES adequacy

ERASMUS+ LEVEL

- . TRAINEESHIPS better communication & alignment with curricular plans
- . FINANCIAL SUPPORT aligned with life costs/region - context
- . ERASMUS+ REQUIREMENTS visits to regional ecosystems

EDUCATION

- . L&T STRATEGIES based on real world challenges
- . FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS recognition & support



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