



UEM INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

Mayckel da Silva Barreto*
Marcio Pascoal Cassandre**
Renato Leão Rego***

The Nursing undergraduate course at the State University of Maringá (UEM) was created in 1979, being the third course of this kind linked to a public university in the state of Paraná. In 2002 the journal *Ciência, Cuidado e Saúde* (nowadays Qualis B1) was created, and in 2004 the Graduate Program in Nursing (PSE, today with CAPES Concept 5) was established. This trajectory of accumulated experiences and technical-scientific development in the field of teaching, research and outreach has projected the UEM Department of Nursing (DEN) in a loco-regional and national context and, more recently, has led to its international interaction.

The internationalization process of universities, beyond making possible the integration of its academic staff to the global scientific community with the incorporation of international and intercultural dimensions, also favors competitive processes of modernization and innovation⁽¹⁻²⁾. Higher education, with the factors of globalization and technological advancement, has expanded based on aspects such as democratization and internationalization, because, in the current context, there is no longer room for training professionals and citizens focused exclusively on local insertion, since contemporary experiences - whether personal or professional - require the development of intercultural competencies to face global challenges⁽³⁾.

Therefore, DEN has made various actions to promote its internationalization process. The fact that the department currently has a teacher linked to the university's International Cooperation Office (ECI), working specifically in the academic mobility sector, has contributed to that process. It not only promotes a greater insertion of the department in institutional discussions about internationalization but also has the potential to stimulate the participation of DEN in different activities promoted by the Office.

Moreover, in the undergraduate level, the nursing course is one of the four courses at UEM accredited by the MERCOSUL's Regional Accreditation System for Undergraduate Courses (ARCU-SUL), which is the result of an agreement between the Ministries of Education of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, ratified by the MERCOSUL's Common Market Council. Such accreditation allowed DEN to submit a proposal to the XII Convocatória do Programa MARCA in partnership with two Bolivian and two Colombian universities. The joint proposal was awarded with funding for successful academic and faculty mobility *inbound* and *outbound* during the triennium 2022-2024.

In 2022 two undergraduate nursing students were selected by the Canadian Mitacs Globalink Program and will develop research activities at the Universities of Regina and Toronto in 2023. The Mitacs Program is part of a non-profit research organization created in 1999, which offers internships in various fields of knowledge at 70 different Canadian universities. The goal of the program is to build a bridge between Canada and emerging international research talents.

Regarding the inbound mobility, the undergraduate course has already received international students from Spain (2000) and Bolivia (2022) for short stays, and for full degrees, through the Undergraduate Student Agreement Program (PEC-G), international students from Guinea-Bissau

*Nurse. Doctor in Nursing. Professor, Department of Nursing, Academic Mobility Sector of the International Cooperation Office (ECI), State University of Maringá (UEM). Maringá, Paraná, Brasil. E-mail: msbarreto@uem.br

**Administrator. Doctor in Business Administration. Professor, Department of Business Administration, Adviser, International Cooperation Office (ECI), State University of Maringá (UEM). Maringá, Paraná, Brasil. E-mail: mpcassandre@uem.br

***Architect and Urbanist. Doctor in Architecture. Professor, Department of Architecture and Urbanism, Coordinator, International Cooperation Office (ECI), State University of Maringá (UEM). Maringá, Paraná, Brasil. E-mail: rrego@uem.br

(2007) and São Tomé and Príncipe (2019) as well as Immigrants and Refugees Edict from Venezuela (2022) have been accepted.

At the graduate level, the PSE has already had five students who developed doctoral research, with national and international funding in countries such as Germany, Canada, Portugal, and Spain. In addition, some faculty members have carried out research and postdoctoral activities in centers of excellence in Japan, Spain, France, the United States, and Portugal. Recently a PSE teacher was awarded a technical visit to the Nursing Department at the University of Antofagasta, Chile, through the Zicosur Network. In return, a professor from that institution visited UEM, and his local activities - lectures, technical visits, contact with students and researchers - promoted what is currently understood as Internationalization at Home: a way to offer international and intercultural experience at the UEM campus in a comprehensive and inclusive way. With this exchange, the two institutions became closer, which led to the proposition of an Inter-institutional Cooperation Program (PCI), in which the PSE will promote the training of eight professors at the doctoral level at the Chilean university. Furthermore, the PSE has a continuous flow of calls for international students to join the master's or doctorate programs.

The advances in the internationalization of PSE are relevant and necessary for the continued development of the program. This is important due to the growing demand for internationalization in Brazilian graduate courses, in the most diverse areas, particularly since the 2000s. Over the last national evaluations of graduate courses, the degree of internationalization is understood as a *sine qua non* condition for its excellence level – which means, according to the CAPES evaluation, grades 6 and 7 and, therefore, lead the ranking⁽⁴⁾.

In the area of research, DEN's faculty members have developed polycentric research projects with international partnerships with universities such as Duke University; Universidad de Huelva; Universidad Pública de Navarra; Universidad de Toledo; Pontificia Universidad Javeriana; Universidade do Porto; Instituto Politécnico de Leiria, among others. This has made possible the publication of several articles in international journals, especially those of Anglo-Saxon origin.

The meaning of the internationalization of research and knowledge production is closely associated with the training of professionals with ethical-political commitment and the endorsement of health as a public right to all. Reaffirming internationalization also means backing the quality of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) as well as learning from the health systems from other countries. In addition, the exchange of technologies can help to overcome still existing limitations of health care, and regarding interculturality, it helps to promote humanized care that is sensitive to ethnic and cultural issues.

Finally, another relevant aspect for the internationalization of the nursing department is the growing qualification of its journal Science, Care and Health, which currently has an important editorial board made up of international researchers, authors, and readers from several countries, and now prepares to apply for indexation in the *Scopus* database, which will bring more international visibility and insertion.

This active and growing internationalization process of DEN/UEM faces challenges and obstacles in the institutional and macro-political context. On the one hand, it is necessary to integrate public policies and funding actions aimed at internationalization. In this regard, the Paraná State Secretary of Science, Technology and Higher Education (SETI) recently published a funding edict destined exclusively for the consolidation process of the internationalization of the Higher Education Institutions of the State of Paraná, representing a breakthrough in overcoming the financial challenge that permeates the internationalization process.

On the other hand, it is noticeable that, sometimes, practical internationalization actions rely on individual goodwill. This is because the university still has no specific compensation in academic career advancement regarding internationalization. Finding ways to stimulate a broad, democratic, and inclusive internationalization is a constant challenge to be jointly overcome by stakeholders at DEN and UEM.

UEM's internationalization actions are guided by the Institutional Development Plan, the Internationalization Policy, the Language Policy, and the Internationalization Lab Action Plan carried

out by UEM between 2019 and 2022 in partnership with the American Council on Education (ACE), CAPES, and Fulbright Brazil. Among these actions, ECI has encouraged COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) activities, the offer of courses in other languages, and the discussion about the internationalization of the curriculum. Several programs and departments at UEM are engaged in more than sixty international collaboration agreements and effective international partnerships with institutions from twenty countries in four continents. DEN and PSE are among them, developing skills for global challenges. This internationalization process is already in progress, by leaps and bounds.

REFERENCES

1. Knight J. Updating the definition of internationalization. *Int High Educ.* 2003; 33(6):2-3.
2. Soares CC, Neto CSL, Onofre EG, Carneiro GR. The internationalization process of the higher education institution: Paraíba State University in focus. *Res Soc Dev.* 2020; 9(2): e20921887. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v9i2.1887>.
3. Oliveira JX, Vestena DV, Costa CRR, Traveso LD, Bichueti RS. Internationalization of universities: study on scientific production. *Gest Desenvolv.* 2020; 17(1): 196-217. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.25112/rgd.v17i1.2020>
4. Paiva FM, Brito SHA. The role of CAPES evaluation in Aval. *Rev. Aval. Educ. Super.* 2019; 24(02):493-512. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-40772019000200009>