



UNIVERSIDADE
BEIRA INTERIOR



Advocacy Establishment for Students
through Ombudsman Position




Universidade do Minho

Talks with other university ombudsperson

Luis Lourenço
Student Ombudsman of UBI

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Origins

Legal Regime of Higher Education Institutions (RJIES) - Law n. 62/2007

- Each HEI should have an office of student ombudsman
- Intervention should be developed in conjunction with
 - Students' Union
 - pedagogical councils
 - university departments

2



Origins

Legal Regime of Higher Education Institutions (RJIES) - Law n. 62/2007

- 185 articles
- Only one about Student ombudsman

Artigo 25.º

Provedor do estudante

Em cada instituição de ensino superior existe, nos termos fixados pelos seus estatutos, um provedor do estudante, cuja acção se desenvolve em articulação com as associações de estudantes e com os órgãos e serviços da instituição, designadamente com os conselhos pedagógicos, bem como com as suas unidades orgânicas.

3



Implementation

-Different institutions

-Different solutions

- In terms of competences
- In terms of how ombudsman is chosen
- In terms of ombudsman profile

4



Competences

UBI Statutes say little more than RJIES

- The student Ombudsman is an independent body whose main function is the defense and promotion of the rights and legitimate interests of students within the University.
- The Ombudsman analyses students' complaints ... and make the necessary and appropriate recommendations ... in order to prevent and repair the irregularities or injustices occurred and to improve the procedures.
- The Ombudsman's activity is developed in articulation with the Pedagogical Councils, the Student Association and with the Social Action Services.

5



Competences

UBI Ombudsman Regulation (approved by the General Council)

- Defines Competences:
 - a) Receive and appreciate students' complains;
 - b) For each case, write a report with advice and recommendations for the adequate service or department;
 - c) Provide information to services and departments;
 - d) Prepare a report o activities a the end of each semester;
 - e) Propose changes on regulations and procedures.

6



Profile

- The law does not say anything about “who” can be chosen ?
 - Inside de HEI / Outside?
 - Professor /Student / non-academic?

At UBI, there was some discussion.

2008 – students did not want a Professor
(Fear regarding impartiality)

2014 – can be anyone.

7



Selection

- First ombudsman in 2009
From outside the University
- 2014 a more complex procedure
 - Application submitted to the students' representatives
 - Selection based on a letter of intent and on an interview
 - The name is then proposed to the General Council

8



Personal View

Reasons for my Willingness

- Purpose of an HEI
 - It exists because of the students, and for the students
 - Continuous improvement (anyone's responsibility)
- These ideas always oriented my activity
 - Professor
 - Management Department Head
 - Faculty President
 - Senate member
 - Member of the statutory assembly
 - Member of General Council

9



Personal View

What defines a Student ombudsman?

Adaptability, Availability, Communication,
Dialogue, Patience, Creativity, Firmness,
Common Sense, Objectivity, Discretion,
Visibility, Persistence, Proactivity, Influence,
Autonomy, Solitude, Informality, Credibility,
Independence, Freedom, Confidentiality

10



Personal View

Some characteristics are necessary

Common Sense,
Influence,
Autonomy,
Informality,
Credibility,
Independence,
Freedom

11



Personal View Objectives

- Visibility
Make the office of student ombudsman known among students
 - Flyers
 - Page
 - availability
- Make it unnecessary,
Continuous improvement
 - Advices and recommendations

12



Activity

From the Statutes

The main function is the defense and promotion of the rights and legitimate interests of students

- Two major types of activities:
 - Receive the complaints / requests of information / other, and treat them adequately
(*This is the most important and the more time consuming part of the Ombudsman activity*)
 - Act proactively in order to prevent future problems

13



Activity

Fundamental Principles

- a) Confidentiality;
- b) Contradictory;
- c) Informality

Every case => a process

Try to solve as soon as possible

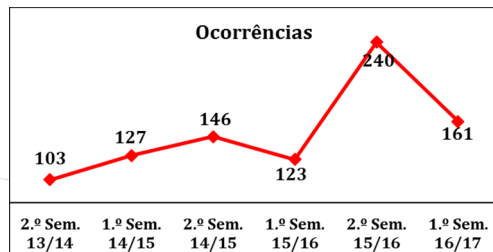
14



Activity

From February 2014

900 cases



105

Other

498

Information requests

297

Complains

15



Evaluation

Time to answer

Time	Total	Information Requests	Complain	Other
Less than 1 day	76,11%	81,45%	79,71%	48,48%
Less than 3 days	83,63%	88,71%	86,96%	57,58%
Less than 1 week	88,94%	91,13%	91,30%	75,76%
Less than 2 weeks	92,92%	95,16%	92,75%	84,85%
Less than 1 month	97,35%	100,00%	97,10%	87,88%

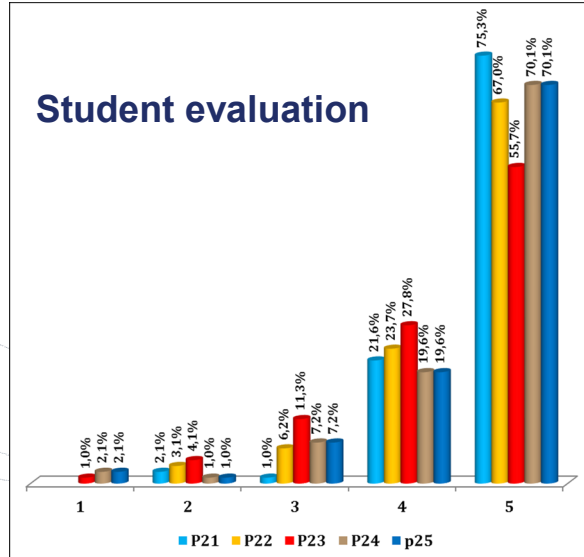
Note: Cumulative percentage

16



Evaluation

Student evaluation



17



Thank You

18