

General description of UM

[Universidade do Minho](#) is a public university with administrative and financial autonomy. It was founded in 1973 and started its academic activity in 1975/76. Universidade do Minho is one of the so-called "New Universities" that deeply changed higher education in Portugal.

It is located in the region of Minho, known for its significant economic activity and for the youth of its population. Universidade do Minho has played the role of development agent in the region. The University's courses are strongly targeted at the labour market. Universidade do Minho works closely with employers, to ensure that students are equipped with the skills necessary to their future professional performance.

Whilst Universidade do Minho is a young University, it enjoys a very high reputation for its research and educational performance. A student population of over 15,000 together with more than 1,000 teaching staff and almost 600 technical and administration staff make the Universidade do Minho one of the biggest Portuguese universities.

The university administration is situated in Braga and most of the teaching and scientific activities are carried out in two sites: the campus of Gualtar, in Braga, and the *campus* of Azurém, in Guimarães. Science, economics, education, management, arts, law and medical sciences courses are predominantly taught in Braga, while architecture and most of the technological courses are offered in Guimarães. Universidade do Minho also offers a wide range of post-graduation courses in all its areas of study.

Students who come to Universidade do Minho can count on high quality courses and teaching standards due to highly motivated staff, careful monitoring, and the introduction of innovative teaching methods and curriculum development in line with the labour market demands.

Universidade do Minho is organised, since its foundation, according to a so-called *matrix management model*. This model is based on the interaction between the projects and the resource units. The projects are: teaching, research and services to society and the resource units at Universidade do Minho are: Schools, Cultural Units and Support Services. This organisational structure provides a very flexible framework for scientific interdisciplinarity and, when it functions well, increases the effective use of available resources and, in itself, ensures the efficiency of the institutions.

The University is organised in Schools/Institutes, each one embracing a number of departments, as follows:

- **School of Sciences:** Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Mathematics, Mathematics for Science and Technology, Physics;
- **School of Economics and Management:** Economics, Management, International Relations and Public Administration;
- **School of Engineering:** Biological Engineering, Civil Engineering, Industrial Electronics, Informatics, Information Systems, Mechanical Engineering, Polymer Engineering, Production and Systems Engineering Textile Engineering;

- **Institute of Social Sciences:** Communication Studies, History, Sociology and Anthropology;
- **Institute of Education and Psychology:** Curriculum and Education Technology, Methodologies in Education, Pedagogy, Psychology, Sociology of Education and Educational Administration;
- **Institute of Arts and Human Sciences:** English and North-American Studies, French Studies, German Studies, Portuguese Studies, Spanish and Hispano-American Studies, Russian, Chinese and Japanese Studies, Philosophy and Culture Studies;
- **Institute of Child Studies:** Artistic Expressions and Physical Education, Child Education Sciences, Integrated Sciences, and Maternal Language;
- **School of Law;**
- **School of Health Sciences;**
- **School of Nursing**
- **Autonomous Department of Architecture.**

The degree courses at *Universidade do Minho* have a 3, 4 or 5-year duration, depending on the area of study and the transformation into the Bologna-system model (about 80 % of the degree courses have been transformed). Lectures and practical classes make up the classes, and they can be of a term or a year. In most degree courses, in the last two years, students can specialise by choosing optional areas of study.

Classes are taught in Portuguese, but exams may be held in another language, depending on a previous agreement between the student and each teacher.

There is a variety of assessment methods used at *Universidade do Minho*. The written examination at the end of each semester is the most common but class presentations, projects, oral examinations, seminars and reports are also used. Class attendance by the student can also be an important element for evaluation in some areas of study.

Most degree courses include a placement in a company in the final year. This way, teaching methods such as lectures, seminars and (laboratory) practice, which are still the essential ingredients of most courses, are complemented with more participative activity-based styles of learning.

This form of *hands on* experience often leads students, upon completion of their course, to full-time employment at their placement companies.

Universidade do Minho encourages students to exploit their learning potential to the full so as to equip themselves to respond to the changing needs of the world. Students graduate with a broad understanding of their area of academic study and personal skills relevant to the labour market, such as computer and communication skills.