



Information 11/ 2019-2020

1. As a reaction to Information 09/2019-2020, sent by the Rector to the entire academic community, we received some demonstration of incomprehension, in some cases, and disagreement, in others, regarding the non-alteration of the administrative schedule, namely, in concerning the tuition fees' deadlines and payment methods.
2. Some of those reactions, understandably emotional, but unacceptably offensive, accuse us of insensitiveness and even, be amazed!, of inhumanity, for not reducing the value of the tuition fees and above all for not canceling their payment, as they say is our obligation, because they understand that we must bear the consequences of the measures taken by the Portuguese Government of closing the economic activity considered as non-essential. Measures that, unfortunately, affect and harm the income of people and families but also of institutions and companies. Measures, hard and difficult to bear, but necessary to prevent and contain the spread of the coronavirus: Essential measures to protect Public Health.
3. The Portuguese Government, aware of the effects that such measures would have, on employment and people's income, decided on a set of State supports, widely publicized and with clear objectives, to mitigate such effects and counteract, as much as possible, the degradation of the country's economy.
4. Foundation Fernando Pessoa, whose activity, entirely private, was also strongly affected by the situation of this COVID 19 pandemic, does not receive any funds or subsidies from the Portuguese State, to pay monthly, and always on time, the salaries of its employees, teachers and non-teaching staff, and all other University's fixed operating expenses.
5. Therefore, the Foundation, in order to fulfill its obligations and honor its commitments to all those who work in it, neither can reduce nor, much less, suspend or cancel the payment of tuition fees. It is, in fact, a painful impossibility and not, "lack of sensitiveness", "lack of solidarity", "unacceptable incomprehension", "inhumanity" and other accusations and offenses that are being unfounded, and unjustifiably directed, as if UFP were responsible for the pandemic and its harmful consequences and had to replace the Portuguese State in fulfilling the constitutional obligations, which are its own, to support people, families, institutions and companies, preventing the country's economy from crashing.
6. The Board of UFP's Students Association (AEUFP), echoing the concerns of some students, who addressed it, asked the Rector, politely and without gratuitous charges, what help could be provided to students with more economic fragility, to prevent them from suspending attendance and cancelling the inscription. Parts of the answer given to the president of the AEUFP Board are listed below:

"Good morning, Rita.

Thank you for your mail.

As you can imagine, at UFP, we are well aware of the difficult situation that the whole country is going through, due to the measures taken by the Portuguese President of the Republic, by the Parliament and by the Government, to fight the pandemic caused by the coronavirus. The Government also ordered that education institutions, in this case, higher education institutions, replace their face-to-face teaching activities with distance teaching activities, thus minimizing the closure of the institutions and ensuring the continuation of the school year, with the minimum of disturbance for the students.



UFP, as you know, is, at this moment, in a distance learning regime and Faculties' directors and teachers have been improving the means and the teaching methods of the theoretical and theoretical and practical subjects and creating conditions for learning and self-study that guarantee the necessary knowledge and skills assessments, so that the school year can be completed in the best possible way.

The school schedule, although adapted to the circumstances, is being fulfilled, keeping the university operating in all its administrative and pedagogical services, thus having to guarantee the salaries of all the people who work here and the payment of the current operating expenses.

The expenses that we have, namely with salaries, have not decreased and will not decrease, although the revenues can be affected, if the measures decreed by the Portuguese Government, of support to the companies, to keep the jobs; to individual workers and to families, are not met.

Despite the constraints, which we also face, we are available to attend to cases of evident economic fragility, namely scholarship students who, however, continue to receive the scholarships, and others in duly proven difficulties, not to suspend or reduce the payment of the tuition fees, but to grant a possible moratorium to settle it, if this does not jeopardize the operating of the university and our responsibility to pay salaries to teachers and staff.

We remember, however, that the first line of support that students and their families should look for are the Portuguese Government's measures decreed and duly publicized.

I am grateful for AEUFP's collaboration, to clarify whoever addresses it and to maintain the necessary serenity, to overcome the difficult moment that our country is experiencing."

7. We thank all our students for their attention to this information and their understanding for the deliberations that we are obliged to maintain, in this context of uncertainty and anxiety, which we all know can only be relieved by the effective and rapid compliance with the measures, decreed and assumed by the Portuguese Government, to support the economy, people and families.

Porto, March 26 2020.

UFP's Rectory Board