

Inclusion and Equity in Higher Education: Case of a Higher Education Institution in Portugal

Authors : Mariana Fernandes

Abstract : Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo (IPVC) has adopted a policy of inclusion and equity and the promotion of health and academic well-being, reinforcing measures already implemented in previous years, but also with the inclusion of new inclusion and equity policies that allow access, throughout all students, to Higher Education (ES). The Inclusive School project, the Plan for Equality, the IPVC's own Regulations for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and the support guaranteed by the Health and Wellbeing Office, Academic Services, and teaching staff are some of the examples of the varied strategies that IPVC undertakes to guarantee effective conditions so that students with disabilities can enter ES and experience a positive academic experience. This study's main objective is to reflect and disseminate the inclusion practices that IPVC practices with regard to Students with SEN. To this, a consultation and documentary analysis of internal documentation was carried out, consultation of the IPVC Quality Management System (QMS) process and, also, using the report referring to the ENEE questionnaire implemented in the year 2023, this report which presents the opinion of IPVC students with SEN, whether with support throughout the ENEE application submission process, with response deadlines, with the Individual Support Plan, as well as with physical and technological accessibility and communication. The results obtained show IPVC's effective commitment to this topic, in addition to the entire circuit created to guarantee equitable access for these students from the moment they join IPVC, a circuit that involves various human resources and(s) its sensitivity to this topic, it also promoted, through the Health and Wellbeing Office, the restructuring of the IPVC ENEE Regulation itself based on the needs and challenges felt in monitoring these students, the innovation of the services themselves of health and consequent awareness of all surrounding resources and services (from the Management, to the teaching staff and academic services). Currently, there is already an Individual Pedagogical Support Plan (PIAP), frequent meetings with the Reception Group, Psychology consultations - both clinically and educationally - and a growing concern in listening to the student community to improve the process. Based on these results, it is concluded that IPVC is an institution sensitive to promoting a positive, equitable, and, above all, inclusive higher education path.

Keywords : special educational needs, inclusion, equity, equality

Conference Title : ICISE 2024 : International Conference on Inclusive and Special Education

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : August 05-06, 2024