

The Museum Studies Master Programme at University of Porto; Promoting and embracing challenges, evolving dynamics

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The contribution aims to share information about the Museum Studies Master Programme (MMUS), developed at the University of Porto (U.PORTO), Portugal, more specifically, at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FLUP), Department of Heritage Studies (DCTP). The framework of its origin, as a Diploma Course in Museology, in 1992 (Aviso de 24.04.92), is presented, as well as its evolution and main restructuring phases till nowadays MA structure (Deliberação n.º 1459/2004; Deliberação n.º 2978/2009; Despacho n.º 8240/2014), promoting, facing and embracing the challenges of adjustment and evolvement, to satisfy the aspirations and needs of students/museum professionals, in terms of competences and skills to, competently and creatively, develop their mission and multidisciplinary tasks.

The objective of the MMUS is, overall, to specialize graduates or equivalent in its field, providing them with skills to pursue the professional activity and/or scientific research. More specifically, aims to: (i) promote in students a motivation and aptitude for intellectual inquiry, critical assessment, creative innovation and a commitment compared to a continuous learning throughout life; (ii) equip students with knowledge, skills and professional values appropriate to the needs of a rapidly changing sector as is the museum sector; (iii) provide a second cycle qualification in museology recognized by the academia and the profession; (iv) prepare students for further academic research in the field of museology; and (v) provide a learning environment which can be not only inclusive but also critical, creative and of constant challenge. MMUS's spirit fits the spirit of public service embodied in statutes, promoting education in a scientific discipline relevant to the region and the country, promoting research and creating the multiple cultural dimensions of development mentioned herein.

Since the first edition of a Museum Studies Programme, 1994-96, it has been assumed that the call for submissions for the first year would open only every two years, and the programme would be developed on Mondays and Tuesdays, to promote and allow an easier inclusion of museum professionals seeking for updating and lifelong education, as well as to benefit from the museum context to develop activities with the students. Overall, around 380 students have participated, coming from different scientific area, professional and geographic backgrounds, even from abroad from Portugal (Spain, Cape Verde and Brazil).

The distribution of graduates by industry sectors activities points to three main areas: scientific and technical activities; education; cultural and artistic activities, sports and recreational. Increasing the number of graduates with a profile anchored in the social sciences and humanities is clearly framed in strategic areas defined primarily in terms of its training, research, internationalization and economic and social development, namely through goals such as:

- Attract and retain more and better students, fostering partnerships able to generate synergies and multiplier effects in the process of attracting new audiences;
- Continuously improve the quality of teaching/learning, including increasing the conditions of application of the principles recommended by the Bologna model;
- Improving employability levels ensuring effective connection to the economic and social fabric;
- Promote effective multidisciplinary, qualifying students with comprehensive skills;
- Promoting education/distance learning, increasing the use of e-learning and considering the emergence of new teaching materials;
- Encourage development and ensure excellent conditions for research and innovation, to increase the number and quality of research conducted and extend the terms of research funding;
- Promote internationalization by promoting mobility in and out of students, teachers and researchers;

- Participate actively in economic and social development of the region and the country;
- Promote scientific and cultural dissemination.

The MMUS promotes the active participation of academic staff and students in decision-making processes, by means of the analysis of the data generated by pedagogic questionnaires filled-in by students, focusing on multiple components of the teaching-learning process, and by the inclusion of both professors and students in its Scientific and Monitoring Committees.

As crucial strategy, the MMUS seeks a strong and growing networking relationship with other study cycles, internal and external to the University of Porto, with other (inter)national faculties/universities, with (inter)national museums/cultural institutions/professionals/governmental bodies, and with the public and private sector business networks. Those relationships will be presented, as well as others previewed, and some of the dynamics in result and beneficial impacts, considering the development of ideas for the future, ideas that demonstrate and take into consideration the fluid, dynamic, and all-encompassing nature of Museology.

Within this approach the curricular unity of Information and Communication Technologies at Museums focus the whole picture encompassing Memory Institutions, ICT Companies, Governments, Education, R&D Institutions and prosumers, either collective or personal. It considers:

1. ICT applied to Cultural Heritage: understand and supervise museums in the context of Information Society; know the theoretical and methodological principles applied to the study, analysis and evaluation of service, information and collections management sustained on ICT;
2. ICT development and impact on institutions: identify and understand the application of ICT, standards and guidelines in museum context, acquire the ability to evaluate the main impact areas, to anticipate and plan ICT's organizational needs, to evaluate, apply and enhance their use and prevent the impact of obsolescence;
3. Networks and projects within the cultural heritage: identify and explore projects focused on innovation and ICT applied to museums and collections

management, production of standards as well as examples of good practices and networking;

4. ICT solutions applied to Museums: learn, compare, select and explore software and hardware, according to international standards and best practices.

This approach is based on an epistemological point of view that points to a trans and interdisciplinary Information Science (IS), as developed at U.PORTO. This is the result of an integrated dynamic based on the technical and practical legacy of Archival Science, Library Science (Librarianship/Documentation) and Museology, essential to the systematic, problematic and scientific study of the Information as an object and, particularly, the concept of Information System, which overcomes the anachronistic reductionism of concepts such as “fonds” and collection.

The triad *information – document/artefact – communication* has been straightened in the digital context and should be considered in the interdisciplinary frame of the Information and Communication Sciences and related with inter-scientific domains as Information Systems and Cognitive Sciences, among others, pointing to shared topics as:

- ICT development and impact on heritage institutions
- Services & Collections Management
- Information & “Documentation”
- Digital content (co)production, management & (re)use
- Digital Assets Management & Digital Repositories
- Conceptual Models & Requirements Specification
- Metadata and Authority Control
- Schemas & Standards
- Rights, Inclusion & Accessibility
- Interoperability
- Front-Ends, Multimedia & Interactive Technologies

References

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