

## Study Tour Brazil

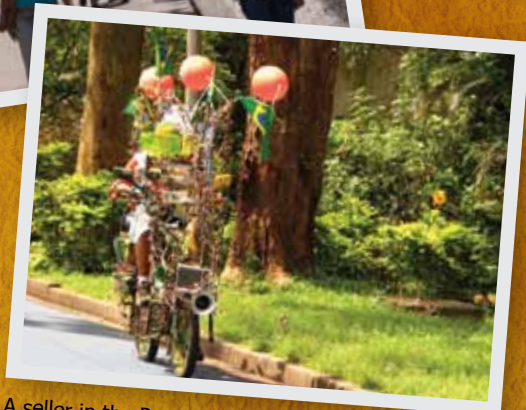
March 2011







A street  
carnival in  
Rio de Janeiro



A seller in the Parque Ibirapuera, São Paulo

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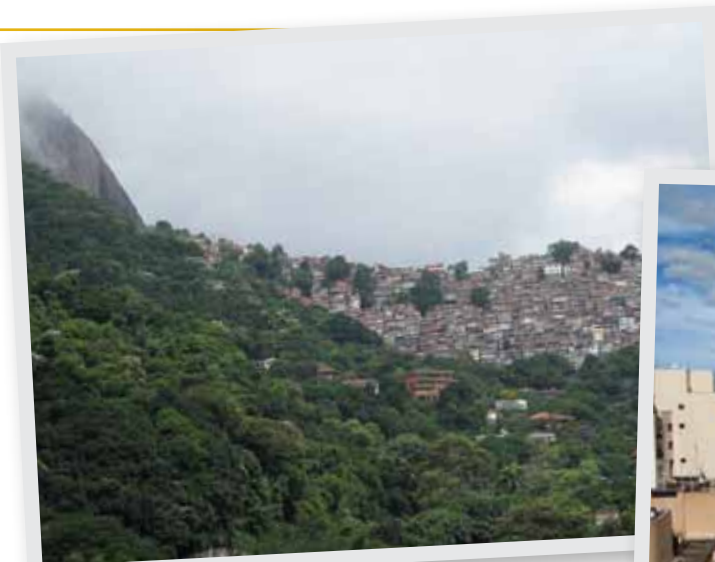
## *Introduction*

Brazil is a fascinating country, particularly in terms of its demographics, with over 50% of the population under the age of 20. This has a significant impact on the country's higher education sector. Also, its sheer size is extraordinary, being the fifth largest country in the world in terms of both population and area. Its population is more than three times that of the United Kingdom and its geographical area is, 35 times as large.

Along with China, India and Russia, it is acknowledged as one of the major developing global economies. As well having a promising future as a growing world

power, Brazil faces many challenges. While UNESCO report dropping rates of adult illiteracy from 31% in 1970, the figure still remains at over 10% today.

It is worthy of note that the study visited higher education institutions (HEIs) which are held in high regard and are reputed as those of high quality, within the most affluent states in Brazil. With 1,900 HEIs in Brazil, however, only a small snapshot of the Brazilian higher education sector can be taken but the report should provide valuable insight.



The favelas in Rio de Janeiro



The country's capital, Brasília



The AUA in Brazil

## Education

In a country of 200 million of whom half are under the age of 20, state secondary education is underfunded and generally poor in Brazil. State schools typically do not offer English Language tuition while Mathematics teaching is poor. Although attendance at school is technically compulsory, it is difficult to monitor and police. Staff absenteeism is also a significant problem in some instances.

One of the major issues in Brazilian education is the sad irony that admittance to tuition-free quality higher education institutions remains largely the domain of the middle classes, who can afford private schooling or coaching to pass the vestibular entrance examinations at the best HEIs. Meanwhile, the country's poorer children attend the underfunded state schools, which offer only a few hours of education a day. Those less fortunate often leave schooling before compulsory education is completed, or are forced to pay for poorer quality, private university education which can cost around £1,000 per month – a significant figure for a country with a GDP per capita figure of less than one-third that found in the UK. As one might expect there are exceptions, with some very high quality private institutions, particularly those aimed at niche markets.

## Higher Education

The most prestigious universities in Brazil are the federal and state universities where students pay no tuition fees, accommodation and transport is provided for the poorest students, and food is subsidized for everyone. Those failing to make the grade to enter a public university have the option to attend a private university of which there are many but only a small number of these have a good reputation for quality and standards.

### Brazilian universities can be divided into four main groups:

**Federal Universities** – these are funded by the Federal (national) Government and are free of charge and usually high quality.

**State Universities** – these are funded by the State (local) Government and are also usually considered very high quality and free of charge

**Private Universities** – these make up the vast majority of institutions and are generally less prestigious and charge tuition fees, although there are some notable exceptions.

**Catholic Universities** – these are considered to be very high quality. They charge tuition fees and staff/students are not required to be a Catholic in order to join.

## The AUA/AHUA Study Tour

With limited historical links to the United Kingdom, only small numbers of Brazilian students studying here and relatively small-scale research activity for a country of its size, mutual understanding between the higher education sectors in the two countries is somewhat limited. It is for this reason that Brazil was chosen as the destination for this Study Tour.

The Tour visited three cities in Brazil: São Paulo, the major business centre; Brasília, the political capital; and Rio de Janeiro, one of the liveliest and most beautiful cities in the world. Within these three cities, six higher education institutions were visited.

The Study Tour visited six successful and highly regarded higher education institutions within the three most affluent states in Brazil. With 1,900 HEIs in Brazil, only a small snapshot of the Brazilian higher education sector can be taken.

Although we were advised that some private institutions were not of the same quality and calibre as some of the public institutions, those that we visited demonstrated their commitment to quality provision in both the curricula, student experience/expectations and a strong ethos of corporate social responsibility.



## Study Tour Hosts Institutions

### Universidade de São Paulo (USP)

Universidade de São Paulo is by UK standards a vast institution with over 100,000 students and a strategy which covers research, teaching and cultural engagement. USP is a State University, funded by the State of São Paulo.

The institution described itself as 'like a city within a city' with a vast campus which incorporates teaching facilities, accommodation, sport facilities, restaurants and a hospital.

Its contribution to the research body of knowledge is immense, comprising 28% of the Brazilian Scientific Research knowledge production (1780 Research groups) both at postgraduate and doctoral level.

### Fundação Getulio Vargas, São Paulo (Escola de Economia São Paulo)

FGV-EESP is a highly prestigious, private business school in central São Paulo. It is smaller than public institutions, with a much smaller campus and smaller class sizes.

FGV-EESP's ethos is 'to form an explicit link between public policy and social inclusion' and it has the highest quality grading of any private institution in Brazil. There is strong competition for the best students between this very high quality fee-paying institution and tuition-free public institutions.

Students feel that the investment is worth the fees, with high quality teachers (80-90% of lecturers hold a PhD), good employment prospects and scholarships which are easily accessed and well publicised. Students here noted that they feel valued as individuals and they have a voice.

### Universidade de Brasília (UnB)

UnB is a public, tuition-free Federal university with 40,000 students and offering a multi-disciplinary curricula across three campuses in the capital.

Its research centre and courses are amongst the top 10 in Brazil with one course, in Anthropology, receiving the Brazilian government's very highest quality grading.

UnB has aspirations to be internationally recognised as world class. Only its very best students go abroad and many of its professors have their PhD from a UK institution.

### Centro Universitário de Brasília (UniCEUB)

UniCEUB is a private institution with 50,000 students. UniCEUB describes itself as having "grown up with Brasília". The capital itself is 50 years old, while the university is 43.

The primary focus is to allow the students to gain professional practical experience in the world of work.

The institution is a not-for-profit philanthropic organisation, with fee income being used to support the university and wider society; providing "liberty, ethics, social values and democracy".

### Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)

UFRJ is a large, government funded multi-faculty university with a very broad range of subjects offered across its campuses.

The enormous and impressive edge-of-the-city campus took a half-hour bus ride to circumnavigate and included the 'brain' of Petrobras, a global energy provider and Brazil's largest company.

UFRJ's strong wish to collaborate with UK institutions has recently resulted in a delegation visit to explore potential partnerships – especially around culture, sport and the Olympic legacy issues that the two countries have in common.

### Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)

PUC-Rio is a private, research intensive, fee paying university and one of only a select group of 3 or 4 private universities in Brazil that carries out research. PUC-Rio is 70 years old and is considered the premier Catholic university in Brazil; the Vatican recognises the excellence of the theology of PUC-Rio. PUC-Rio staff and students are not universally Catholic.

PUC-Rio is located on a small, compact and extremely attractive campus which offers undergraduate programmes to more than 13,000 students in Social Sciences, Technology and Humanities and Theology.

The University is well organised and aims to "give the students extra and offer the best programmes", although it faces stiff competition as there are 5 free, public universities in Rio.

### Brazilian Embassy

The Brazilian Embassy in the United Kingdom hosted a pre-departure event for the Study Tour members. The Team was extremely grateful for the use of these facilities and particularly to the Head of the Cultural Section, Counsellor of State Helena Gasparian, who gave an extremely useful presentation on modern-day Brazil and its higher education sector.

### British Embassy and British Council

The Study Tour Team visited the British Council in Brasilia in order to receive an overview of the Brazilian higher education sector from a British Government perspective, as well as attending a higher education reception at the British Embassy in Brasilia which was arranged specifically for the Study Tour.

The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly textured image of the Brazilian flag. It features the green field with the yellow rhombus, the blue globe, and the white band with the text 'REPÚBLICA REPÚBLICA REPÚBLICA' (partially visible as 'ORDEN E PROGRESSO').

# *Quality, Academic Standards and Course Construction*



Higher Education in Brazil is regulated by the Federal Government through the Ministry of Education (MEC). The MEC oversees both public

and private education institutions and is responsible for evaluating the quality and standards of these facilities and the graduate courses that they offer.



Permitted wall graffiti at UFRJ

At undergraduate level, the provision is regulated through Sistema Nacional de Avaliação do Ensino Superior (SINAES), or Higher Education National Evaluation System.

The main criteria of the evaluation process are:

- Institutional Self Assessment: Higher Education Institutions must answer a questionnaire that provides information about the academic staff, physical structure, methodology, and other subjects concerning the quality of the institution.
- External Institutional Assessment: A visit to the institution by an auditor to verify the answers submitted by the Institutions on the Institutional Self Assessment.
- Evaluation of studying conditions
- Exame Nacional de Desempenho de Avaliação de Estudantes (ENADE), which is a survey for students starting university

At postgraduate level, institutions and courses are regulated through the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior, or CAPES. The criteria for evaluation is similar to that of SINAES, except that it does not include any student examination data.

The information collected from these evaluations is used to create the Índice Geral de Cursos (IGC) or General Courses Index, that is published much like our own league tables in the UK. The IGC rating system, published annually, assigns a score out of 500 and a grade of 1- 5 to institutions (with 5 the highest), which enables institutions to be ranked. Generally public institutions perform better than private, although half of the top 20 institutions in the 2009 rankings are private. Grades 1 and 2 are considered insufficient quality, and 30% of HEIs in Brazil fall into this category, the vast majority of which are private institutions. Institutions that stay below the average for three consecutive years lose the MEC's permission to operate.

## Curriculum Development

In the area of curriculum development, the MEC acts in a similar capacity to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the United Kingdom, in that it defines the guidelines and bases for national education and monitors the quality of the educational programmes. However, it has greater regulatory powers than the QAA and stipulates a number of criteria that have to be met in order for the course to receive and retain approval. Like the QAA, the MEC sets subject benchmark statements, but it also specifies:

- a minimum level of core curriculum to be included between years one and three
- the number of hours of study required to obtain an award
- an attendance policy which requires students to have a minimum of 75% attendance in classes and assessment
- the amount of on-line learning that can be included in a taught graduate course, which is limited to 20%

There are other similarities with UK course design and development in that certain courses are subject to the scrutiny of outside agencies. In Brazil, courses such as law are evaluated by the Brazilian Bar Association and medicine, dentistry and psychology by the National Council of Health.

The institutions visited reported that they are free to design and develop new courses, as long as they follow the general framework set by the MEC and obtain approval before running the course. The process for the design and development of new courses is similar throughout all institutions. New course proposals are firstly developed through a school/faculty level committee, in response to market or student demand. The subject area, content and design of the course tends to be influenced by the characteristics of the region in which the University is

situated. The financial viability, capacity and resources needed to operate the course are major considerations in the development of new proposals.

The proposals are then considered at a central committee level. Student feedback to inform the design and curriculum of the course is obtained through evaluation questionnaires and student representation at these committees. Unlike the UK there is no external adviser used in the course development process to assure the validating institution that the standards are equivalent to those across the sector. This requirement is negated by the fact that the MEC determines the minimum curriculum and time allotment for these core subjects. On completion of the approval process at institutional level, the course documentation is sent to the MEC for its authorisation.

A challenge for institutions is the depth of the regulatory powers of the MEC. FGV-EESP is hoping to introduce Problem Based Learning to some of its curriculum areas, but the general guidelines and minimum contact hours will potentially restrict how far they can take this approach. The MEC rules on curriculum design are considered by some as something of a 'blunt instrument' in assuring quality and standards.

At undergraduate level the courses on offer tend to be single subject and specialist in nature. There is little evidence of joint awards where students can select to study topics from more than one discipline area, or major /minor in more than one subject. This could be attributed to the mandatory curriculum content set by the MEC.

## Entry Criteria

Entry to undergraduate courses is via an entrance examination, the Vestibular. This exam lasts several days and differs between universities. The standard of this examination is high. As a result students from privileged backgrounds, who may have either attended private schools or received private tuition, secure the majority of the places in public universities where the teaching is free. To re-address the balance, the MEC introduced the Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio or National High School Exam (ENEM), the grades from which are used by some institutions to satisfy entry requirements on to graduate courses. For those Universities that do not recognise this qualification as fulfilling the entry criteria, the score can be used in conjunction with the Vestibular to provide additional points in the selection of candidates.

The quality of basic education in public schools is highlighted as a continuing problem in Brazil and a barrier to entry into higher education for the lower social classes. This is not just due to lower standards of teaching than those found in private schools, but because the curriculum is broad and does not cover core subjects in any depth. For those students fortunate to secure a place at university, the transition to studying at graduate level is a great leap and there are no formal study skills built into undergraduate courses for new students entering university.

There is some in-country mobility of students at undergraduate level and accreditation for prior learning (APL) can be awarded if the programmes are closely mapped. However, this arrangement is predominantly confined to Federal Universities.

## Internal monitoring

At all of the institutions visited each course is managed by a Course Co-ordinator, responsible for both the pedagogic and student support elements of the course. At the larger public universities Deans for Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes have overall responsibility for the degrees offered by the departments of the universities, and they discuss any issues at monthly meetings with the Course Co-ordinators.

Student feedback on their courses forms part of the internal monitoring carried out by all institutions. As in the UK, students participate in course committees, giving feedback on their courses, the facilities and so on. Regular review of the content of courses by staff teaching on the course, including internal peer review, is a feature at all institutions. At the private institutions in particular, this review often includes consideration of how the course aligns with employers' considerations and the practical applications of the course. At one small, private institution the teaching team also ask their graduates for feedback. The collated results of student feedback questionnaires are shared with students and staff at the institution, and in one case (PUC-Rio) published on its website.

FGV-EESP is planning to pilot a new mechanism for monitoring the quality of its undergraduate students in Economics. It is going to use Associação Nacional dos Centros de Pós-graduação em Economia (ANPEC), a national examination for entry to Masters programmes in Economics which ranks candidates. FGV-EESP will require its undergraduate students to take the exam at the end of the third year, even if they are not going on to Masters studies. FGV-EESP will decide a cut-off point in the ranking as a pass/fail mark, and it requires its students to achieve that mark. The aim is to have an external benchmark of the quality of its students.

FGV-EESP is moving towards the management of overall quality via its management structures: for example appointing directors rather than having them elected from within the ranks; setting targets for them (such as attaining high CAPES grades, international targets, student grades); and external peer review and evaluation of directors.

## Undergraduate course quality

The ENADE is a national examination taken by undergraduate students, which does not form part of their degree, but is used to evaluate and rate universities. Not all universities participate in the ENADE. USP, for example, disagrees with the methodology of the assessment and has been trying to work with the MEC to try to influence the future development of the examination. As it is a national examination there are issues related to the relationship between the examination content and each institution's curriculum, even though much of the curriculum is guided by the MEC. The ENADE is a relatively new system attempting to evaluate institutional quality through individual student performance, and is still the subject of considerable discussion.



Students at USP



## Postgraduate evaluation

Postgraduate evaluation is conducted by CAPES: a national committee that evaluates all postgraduate courses every three years and produces a grading (out of seven) for every course. Each university submits a report to CAPES annually, which includes information such as the number of students taking the course, course content, the qualifications of academic staff, projects, research and other output of the academic staff, and the level of internationalisation of the course. There is no student input to the report. Grades 6 and 7 are 'excellent' and grade 5 is 'very good'. Courses need to be rated 5 or above to be able to offer Masters and PhD courses in that area. The grading impacts on access to scholarships and funding.

CAPES has been around since the 1970s and is more widely accepted than ENADE; staff at one large public university said "the system works and is well established... we know what we have to do to get good rankings". It can drive the appointment of academic staff due to the research output metrics. Several of the institutions did mention that the CAPES grading system favours sciences over the humanities in that the metrics used are more appropriate for science subjects.

Although institutions state that they don't treat the CAPES rankings like a league table, all the highly rated institutions mentioned their CAPES ratings during the visit. Several institutions gave a rationale for their lower rated courses, and mentioned that it is a matter of institutional importance to raise the grading.

## Partnerships

Many institutions have established partnerships with overseas institutions for their students to take an exchange for a semester or a year. Agreements are made either at institutional level, or at school/department level.

Public universities tend to form partnerships and dual degree arrangements with universities in Europe, mainly France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Germany. However, unlike many other institutions in the world few partnerships have been agreed with UK (or US) institutions. Public universities cannot charge fees to students and these financial barriers prove insurmountable.

For private universities fees are less of an issue, although the high living costs in the UK remain a barrier. Despite this, Brazilian institutions are interested in exchanges, particularly incoming and outgoing exchange arrangements with individual students as they don't want to be viewed as a source of overseas students.

## On-line Research Portal

**The government, through CAPES, provides an online library for science and technology research. The Portal de Periódicos provides faculty, researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, and technical personnel at Brazilian Universities with free access to the full text of leading journals and databases covering all areas of academic research activity.**



Members of the Study Tour Team with academic staff at UFRJ



Students working in Rio de Janeiro



# *Student Expectations and Representation*

The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly textured image of the Brazilian flag. It features a large green field with a yellow rhombus in the center. Inside the rhombus is a blue globe with white stars and a white banner with the words 'ORDEN E PROGRESSO' in green capital letters. The text 'ORDEN E PROGRESSO' is partially visible, following the curve of the banner.

ORDEN E PROGRESSO



## Choosing to Study at University

The expectation of the vast majority of middle class parents is that their children will attend university. A university education is seen as ensuring a decent job and a high standard of living. Most parents clearly would prefer their children to attend a free, high quality institution. The best careers are considered to be medicine, dentistry, law, business administration, communications, journalism, psychology and engineering. Consequently these are the most competitive courses and as such attract students from the most affluent backgrounds who will be better prepared for the Vestibular. Poorer students tend to aim for courses such as teaching, which are less attractive and therefore easier to get into.

Privately educated students who are better prepared to pass the Vestibular tend to register with very good public universities. However, some students chose to attend high performing private institutions because of the services and facilities, small class sizes and networking opportunities, even where they have scored highly in the Vestibular.

Although there are quotas (in public universities) for the number of students of black origin who are awarded places, and concessions are made with regards to the Vestibular, there is an issue of what constitutes black, as there is a great diversity of races and origin in Brazil. There appear to be no quotas for ethnicity in private institutions.

Non-academic support structures are less in evidence than in the UK – largely because most students live locally or on campus and already have their own support networks. Students who drop out usually do so for financial reasons and the requirement to find work to support their families. Universities are starting to offer evening classes to enable those who have to work during the day to study in the evening (part-time study, in the manner familiar in the UK, is rare in Brazil). Legislation will shortly require that 33% of all courses must be offered in the evening in an attempt to meet the demand for university education.

## Pre-registration information and material

Prospective students are very aware of the reputations of universities. Particularly at postgraduate level, they understand the role of CAPES well and use it to guide their graduate choices.

A new national student guide is emerging. The information is based on surveys of student views and includes data on employer links, infrastructure, research ratings, internationalisation and so on. Internationalisation has resulted in increased competition – one institution stated that its biggest challenge was Harvard – leading to a requirement to work harder to attract high quality students. Students themselves are becoming increasingly keen on international placements.

One way of managing applicant expectations is for universities to go out to the local community and speak to prospective students, PUC-Rio and FGV-EESP both do this. They also hold annual open days to encourage prospective students to visit the campus and gain a feel for what university will be like. FGV-EESP even hold sample lectures for prospective students. TV adverts are transmitted to attract poorer students to apply to private institutions. All the universities visited produced recruitment material both in hard copy and electronically and provided programme handbooks for distribution during induction week.

## Expectations of teaching methodologies

There is clear evidence that students expect active learning initiatives, including interactive games and distance learning resources. While staff development is not currently compulsory, this demand from students is resulting in a wider dissemination of best practice in pedagogical issues. FGV-EESP has recently initiated a programme which introduces project-based learning to improve the quality of graduates and their currency in the market place. At PUC-Rio, in response to the trend for students to come to class armed with their own laptops, the institution has installed Wi-Fi in all its classrooms.

## Feedback mechanisms to clarify expectations

Once the students are registered, they are given the opportunity to feedback on their experience with on-line module evaluation questionnaires at the end of each semester. The results of these are given to the relevant member of academic staff who will make improvements to the courses as they see fit. At one university the use of module evaluation forms is at the discretion of the individual members of staff and generally implemented only during his or her probation. The outcome of the feedback is not always made clear to students although it appears to be more effective in the private institutions. Second year students on the Student Council at FGV-EESP were pleased to be able to report that they had seen improvements made for the first year timetable following feedback they had given.



The cathedral, museum and library in Brasília, designed by Oscar Niemeyer





Student accommodation at USP



A banner at UFRJ advertising the election for Rector and Vice-Rector

At UniCEUB students are surveyed on 22 different issues including teaching methods, clarity of assessment, organisation and management, relationship with their teachers and on their contribution to their studies. Feedback is given to the students online but this information also serves as one set of data which is considered as part of SINEAS.

At UnB, students are surveyed on more than 40 issues concerning their course, including the attendance of their professors. This survey is anonymous and completed online with all the results being made available to the students. The feedback on the professors is made available to the MEC.

### Academic and pastoral support

While students can expect health care, welfare and psychological support services, the careers services tend to be limited in the public universities. At USP the careers service ensure job opportunities are listed on their website and hold an annual careers fair. Students are expected to organise their own internships for their final year. These are very important as they can often lead to permanent jobs. The careers service at FGV-EESP appears to follow more closely the UK model in offering students help with interview and CV preparation and organising visits from industrial and commercial sector organisations.

Students expect to obtain academic support from their professors, older students acting as mentors and their peers. The evidence provided from students is that this expectation is acceptable and is met. At UniCEUB staff are reviewing student literacy and offering remedial Mathematics and Portuguese to those from state schools.

### Staff awareness of student expectations

Staff at private institutions are keenly aware of the expectations students have of their education, for which they are paying handsomely. UniCEUB started to evaluate students' motives for registering with them back in 2009 and discovered that the main driver for their choice was the quality of the teaching. The definition of quality, however, varies between discipline. Technology students want to work with up-to-date technology while health students value the quality of facilities and the opportunity to be involved in research. For law students, quality embodies high calibre teaching and infrastructure, and clear processes. UniCEUB is undertaking work to co-ordinate this definition of quality in order to better manage students' expectations.

Brazilian students very clearly expect that a university education will lead to well-paid employment, and exposure to relevant experience including final year internships during the course is highly valued. FGV-EESP offers undergraduate

students the opportunity to undertake Non-Government organisation (NGO) style work in the community, or to join an "entity" – groups of staff and students who form an enterprise to undertake work for large multinational and Brazilian companies. Students must apply formally, are interviewed for a place on the entity team and are remunerated for their work. At the UnB, about 800 second and third year students were working on research projects with their professors. They produce their own short project within a larger one and are expected to present and publish this work.

At PUC-Rio, staff are very conscious of the competition they face and their unique selling point is to be found in excellent teaching methodologies. Students are attracted by the traditions of the organisation, family precedent and the institution's long history of effective networking, particularly in law and engineering. Visiting lecturers include judges, lawyers and journalists with very relevant practical experience to enrich the academic studies. It is very unusual for private universities in Brazil to appoint full-time teaching staff, but PUC-Rio has done so to stimulate research excellence among high quality staff. In a spirit of openness and frankness, the Rector of PUC-Rio writes to all students to explain any rise in fees resulting from a salary increase for staff thus managing the students' expectations of the value they gain for the fees they pay.

PUC-Rio runs a research incubator and 90% of the initiatives continue to prosper after the two-year incubation period. Students are encouraged to become involved with one of three pathways offered within the incubator: technology; culture and social responsibility. All this experience leads to greater employability prospects.

## Expectations of international placements

Students are becoming increasingly eager to undertake international placements and several of the universities visited are developing bilateral agreements with overseas HEIs. Unfortunately the cost of studying in the UK represents a huge barrier to international placements in the UK while the fact that currently few courses can be delivered in English within Brazilian institutions (although this is increasing) mitigates against large numbers of English students wishing to take part in exchange programmes. At UnB only the brightest students are currently permitted to study abroad but the students there are calling for this opportunity to be extended to more students as they realise that international experience will be a key to their future employability. Students at USP are keen that more opportunities to study abroad are made available, especially for those studying international relations, a subject increasing in popularity across the country.

## Student Representation

All students have the right of representation but, as in the UK, different universities run slightly different systems of representation and students responded in different ways to the opportunities available to them. USP, for example, has an Undergraduate Commission which oversees the quality of academic courses and which comprises student representatives.

At FGV-EESP there is a Council of Students which meets monthly to discuss academic issues and support requirements; five representatives are elected from each school and the cleverest students carry the greatest weighting in the vote.

Student representatives at UnB are entitled to attend the regular departmental meetings of professors to observe and participate as appropriate, but they have no power to vote on any issues. Students there are vocal about many things, including car parking, but their major preoccupations reflect their expectations of a good course and excellent teaching. They also expect that the government should pay for higher education and a recent substantial budget cut resulted in strike action being organised by the Students' Union.

In all the institutions visited, the Students' Unions are more political and outward facing in profile, rather than either having the internal dialogue with the institution or offering social events and clubs and societies. Of those visited, at least one university had several different student groups each with a political focus and competing with each other. Those students planning a career in politics are the ones to join these groups.

At PUC-Rio, the Students' Union has grown less political and is now assuming more characteristics of a UK union, organising shows and events. Although given various opportunities to exercise their right to representation, students at PUC-Rio rarely avail themselves of these opportunities and staff feel that the students are on the whole content with their provision. One reason for this lack of involvement might be the existence of a Vice-Rector (Communications) who deals effectively with student issues.

The Rector of UnB recently appointed a Youth Representative to act as a mediator between senior management and the student body. An interesting development, this representative is an alumnus of the university, enjoys direct access to, and is funded by the Rector. The fact that this position exists indicates the lack of a role for the Students' Union.

One area where Brazilian students have greater representation than those in the UK is in the appointment of the head of an institution. The Rector of a state university is elected by both academic staff and students. At UFRJ posters advertise hustings and each student has a vote in the election, although the collective student vote carries a lesser weighting than that of the staff vote.

## Returning Failed Students

**One institution informed the team that students who fail assessments and as a result are excluded from their course, are able to re-take the Vestibular entrance exam. If they are successful in passing the Vestibular again, then the University has to re-admit them on to the course.**



The student advice centre at UniCEUB



# *Teaching, Learning and Pedagogy*



ORDEN E PROGRESSO



## Curricula – Student Typology

Geographical mobility of students is limited in Brazil, with most students studying at an institution which is in close to home and living with their families for the entire four years of their studies. At some private institutions, for example FGV-EESP, it is the students' responsibility to organise their own accommodation. In the public universities limited accommodation is provided for the poorer students, and for staff too at UnB.

Students typically study in the morning (starting at 7.00 a.m.), in the afternoon or the evening (up until 10.00 p.m.). The students remain in their cohorts in one place as academic staff come to them. A lecture will typically last 100 minutes and can include lecture time, group work, seminars and group discussion, according to the direction of the individual member of staff. Places are increased by repeating the same classes in the evening as are available in the morning.

At USP, Engineering and Medicine are predominantly full time as they require access to laboratories and equipment, while Humanities tends to be part time.

UnICEUB offers inter-disciplinary programmes which encompass environmental sustainability and development, community integration and life quality on campus. Some of these activities are assessed and a student can only pass if they have the relevant practical experience.

Attendance rules at FGV-EESP are strict. If students miss three classes without extenuating circumstances they fail by default.

It is difficult to hold onto the best Masters students in a booming economy, as they may prefer to work in industry and command wages much higher than the national average. Some Masters students go to work in the private institutions. At FGV-EESP less than 10% go on to PhD. Staff and student retention at public universities appears to be an issue.

Whilst there are a few programmes taught in English, institutions are interested in initiating these and occasionally carry out tuition in English to incoming elective students, from the US for example.



Students working in a lab at UniCEUB

## Teaching Styles

There is limited evidence of the type of educational development and innovation in teaching which has become common in the UK.

At FGV-EESP, plans are well advanced to introduce Problem Based Learning for economics students by 2013. This adoption of the Maastricht method is a carefully thought-out solution to the perceived problem of making economics teaching more engaging for students and involves a very large staff development component. FGV-EESP wishes to continue to attract the most highly qualified students and there is a sense in this elite private University that they need to be globally competitive in teaching quality in order to maintain their current position as a top training school for Brazil's future leaders.

At UnB an initiative exists to introduce a development programme for staff to encourage active learning strategies. Traditional lecture methods, in which professors talk and students listen, are most common in Brazilian university classrooms.

The high average age of tenured staff at one University is a barrier to introducing teaching innovation as they had all learned themselves by 'chalk and talk' methods and hence have conservative approaches when new pedagogical methods are suggested.

## Staff Development

In each of the HEIs visited the Team asked about opportunities for staff to develop their teaching practice and whether any staff development activities are mandatory. In only one private university was attendance at a teacher development course not on a voluntary basis, though there are educational development units or 'Schools of Education' in each Institution offering courses.

The percentage of staff who have completed doctoral studies is used as a quality indicator but this varies considerably, with high percentages in public institutions and generally lower figures in the private institutions.

In many of the institutions there is no formal requirement for academic teaching staff to take part in staff training to enhance teaching and learning, although there is pressure to start course seminars for academics.

At UniCEUB a module in educational theory at postgraduate level is available. Staff are obliged to take part in continuing professional development in professional practice. Staff at USP can take advantage of a sabbatical for research purposes, whereby after five years service an academic can take a three month sabbatical and after 10 years up to six months. At FGV-EESP academics can take a sabbatical of up to one year after five years, with additional opportunities to work in collaboration with international HEIs or in commercial settings.



At USP collaboration between students is important, with students working well in groups together, as they say, "learning in co-operation is the Brazilian way".

## Cultural and Extension Activities

Both public and private universities in Brazil take a great deal of pride in their 'extension' projects. These outreach projects, carried out within the local community with the purpose of social and cultural engagement, are prescribed as the 'third stream' for Brazilian HEIs, and achievements under this heading are reported to and reviewed by the MEC.

There is a class divide in Brazil between those who have a degree and those who do not. Despite this, there is an explicit understanding that the educated have a responsibility towards the uneducated, particularly those who were not afforded a good education. Universities are obliged to support this and most do so through extension outreach activities. These range in size and scale.

Outreach activities include projects such as debt advice and financial management, pro bono legal work, coaching for the Vestibular, teaching in schools within the 'unsettled population' social programmes, working in a public hospital and building social housing.

UnICEUB run a Professional Practice Centre which incorporates centres for nutrition, psychotherapy, physiotherapy, community health, paediatrics and family law. The service is given free of charge to members of the community who are unable to pay for such treatment and advice and this service forms a central part of the ethos of the University.

USP has developed 'poly-citizenship'. These are specialist research teams linked to special needs. For example they have developed a walking stick with sensors for the blind, as telephone booths in Brazil encroach out into the pavement at head level.

UnB provide extra tuition in public schools to prepare students for the Vestibular examination, in 2010 three of 50 students were successful. The universities note that the successful social policy of 'bolsa familia' where poor people are paid to ensure their children attend school is starting to reap rewards but there are still not enough school places for every child to attend. In some communities school attendance is very low, as is fluency in Portuguese, and the true level of the eligible population is not known.

There is significant emphasis on philanthropic ventures but also it makes a good training ground for students to gain valuable experience in the application of their theoretical knowledge or research.

## Commercial and Industrial Engagement

Although there are limits to the extent to which industry and commercial organisations are able to influence the curricula there are examples of universities where commercial interests are taken into account and specific funding has been secured to support the refurbishment of infrastructure. Buildings and laboratories in some institutions bear the logos of key industrial sponsors. UFRJ have the research and development facility for Petrobras located on campus and carries out research and development in collaboration with many Brazilian HEIs.

At teaching universities, academics tend to be part-time so that they can supplement their income through consultancy. This enables them to bring practical experience into the classroom.

There are several examples of internships where students, either voluntarily or as part of the curricula, work in situ at these organisations.

FGV-EESP make a feature of all the sponsors of their university in a prominent place and their logos and corporate colours are prominent in the rooms they have supported. However, they are careful that commercial activities do not influence the academic integrity of their curricula.

There are excellent examples from FGV-EESP of theoretical knowledge being put into application, through applied student projects, consultancy projects, and the 'entity' projects where students set up and run their own companies, thereby honing their entrepreneurial skills.

At USP the primary focus is academic research, however there is less consideration as to the impact of their research. USP have three Research Institutes supported by the Federal Government; Institute for Technical Research (EPT); Research into Nuclear Engineering (IPEN); and the Marine Research Institute.

USP have examples of people who come from industry to study at PhD and Masters level, though this is not commonly reported.

There is a scheme whereby professors, according to their CAPES scores, can apply for studentship funding to support a number of undergraduates to work with them on particular projects of their own choosing. This might involve collaboration with other research institutions or companies and is a national scheme to inculcate research skills and encourage research talent at an early stage, while also supporting the work of established academics.

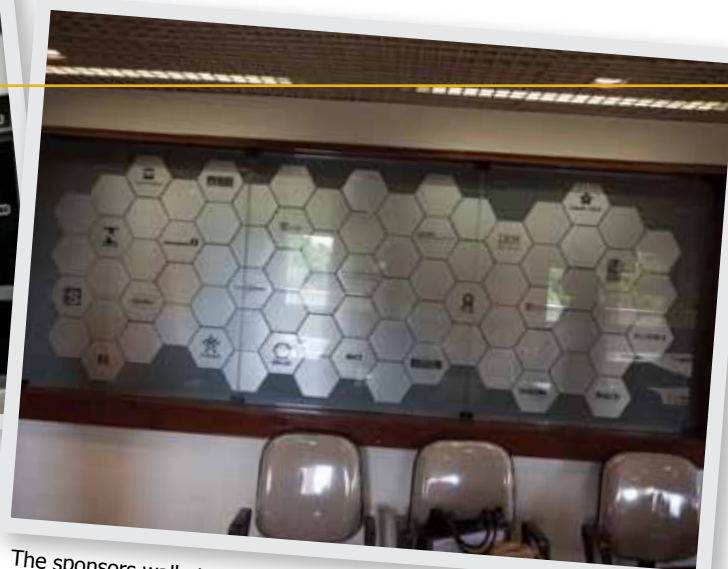
All research papers in Brazil are entered onto the Lattes central database, which is open to public scrutiny. Lattes is maintained by the federal bureau responsible for funding scientific and technological research, Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) or National Counsel of Scientific and Technological Development. As well as holding research papers, it also includes compulsory information relating to all researchers and higher education institutions in Brazil.

### Eating on campus

**Public universities provide subsidized hot meals on campus for their students for R\$1.50 – R\$2.00 (around 60-75 pence).**



A community assistance facility run by UniCEUB



The sponsors wall at UFRJ

## Funding and Scholarships

University scholarships are available at both state and private institutions and are awarded on the basis of both merit and need (FGV-EESP, for example, offers full scholarships to the top five candidates and part scholarships to another five). Students at private institutions can borrow money from the government to fund their tuition fees, and some can borrow from the university itself, signing a private contract to repay the sum borrowed after graduation and once in employment. The concept of repaying fees in order to assist less well-off students is an integral characteristic of the corporate social responsibility – a very important concept which underpins higher education in Brazil.

USP is funded by the State of São Paulo, which contributes 1% of the revenue raised from income tax directly to support the three public universities in this state. There is therefore a direct link between the state of the economy and the funding of its public universities. For example as São Paulo is the richest State in Brazil there is greater funding.

Funding for research activity is provided by three agencies: Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP); CAPES, and CNPq which are similar to the Research Councils in the UK. These scholarships are merit based.

Scholarships are provided by the Federal Government Agency for Masters and PhD research. Undergraduate scholarships are provided on a needs basis.

Students who cannot afford to study at the public universities are provided with scholarships which cover their accommodation and transport and food is subsidised (a good meal can be had on campus for only 1 real – 40p).

At UniCEUB, students who take part in community projects are offered a discount to their fees from 20% - 100%. There are also studentships available to support fees and living expenses of students from public schools and extra tuition is available to these students.

Brazilian law states that 20% of students should not pay fees at the private institutions. At PUC-Rio, there is a large programme of grants and between 40 and 45% of students are offered full or partial grants.

A number of institutions participate in an undergraduate science research programme, Programa de Iniciação Científica (PIC), which aims to prepare undergraduate students for future entry to Masters and doctoral programmes, teaching the fundamentals of science research. Undergraduate students join individual academic researchers or research groups at their own institution. The programme is funded by CNPq and institutions compete for scholarships to fund places on their programmes. Students receive a small scholarship for the one year programme of approximately R\$300 per month (around £115) as it is a requirement that they do not undertake any other paid employment. Their research contributes to their degree, but is additional to their curriculum. Each institution has a limited number of CNPq scholarships available, allocated based on CAPES and other ratings, so the programme is highly competitive.

## Alumni and Sponsorship

There is little evidence of sophisticated arrangements for managing alumni relations, with the possible exception of FGV-EESP where alumni are quite heavily involved in teaching and sponsoring activities. FGV-EESP staff said alumni are 'following their students' so that those currently enrolled can take advantage of internships with influential employers in finance, government and senior ministerial and administrative positions.

Private philanthropy is not common in Brazil as there is no incentive to support charitable giving. Universities are understandably hesitant about turning to fundraising, but are developing their engagement strategies. USP advise that "we do not rely too much on private funding although we do more now to keep in touch". Perhaps because public Brazilian Institutions are unable, by law, to charge course fees, there is no emphasis placed on recruiting students from overseas and so there are very few international alumni. This is changing, with USP building accommodation in the heart of São Paulo for international students.

Many academic staff seem to develop their international networks by studying at a doctoral level abroad.

There are some examples where alumni provide scholarships for students and the Team also found evidence of support from banks such as Santander.

Although PUC-Rio have a fund for donations, they do not have a tradition of endowments. They receive some commercial sponsorship for infrastructure. Importantly they do not receive money from the church or give money to the church which helps to maintain their independence.



# *Conclusions*



ORDEN E PROGRESSO



The Study Tour Team is very conscious of the fact that it was only able to visit a small number of institutions in a small number of cities in an enormous country, and so care has to be taken of the conclusions drawn and the need to avoid generalisations where possible.

From the institutions visited, one strong theme was an almost universal optimism for the future. With a burgeoning economy the HE sector is rapidly expanding, but it will need to expand further to cope with future demand. This optimism and hope of expansion is in stark contrast to the position in the UK today and reflects the status of Brazil as a major developing nation.

The confidence felt in Brazil is demonstrated by the reaction amongst many people that the country does not want to be seen as a source of international students for the likes of the UK, USA and Australia, but rather wants to enter into truly collaborative partnerships. This was a message which came through from the 2009 AUA / AHUA India Study Tour and perhaps reflects a wider attitude amongst the world's major developing powers. There is clearly a strong desire to develop student exchange agreements and double degrees, as well as research partnerships with British universities (and those in the USA), but cost remains a major problem. Should the UK wish to engage with Brazil in this way, this is an issue which will need to be addressed, as the competition from continental Europe is strong.

For a country of its size, the number of Brazilian universities in the various world rankings is limited, but this is a situation which is changing. There is an awareness too, of the fact that such rankings can be misleading and that the method used for calculating international rankings can favour English-speaking nations, particularly with regard to international research.

An admirable element of the Brazilian sector is the extremely strong feeling of social responsibility, amongst institutions as a whole and their staff and students. Amongst students there is a strong feeling that it is their duty to repay student loans in order to help those less fortunate in future years. This polar opposite view to the UK attitude is surely a result of the hugely different economic challenges facing the two countries, but it does also show a very different attitude to, and respect for, education.

One thing the whole Team agreed on was that Brazil is a fascinating and enjoyable place to visit and there is a strong welcome in Brazil for those willing and able to collaborate as equal partners. The Team strongly encourages universities across the UK to strengthen their engagement with this rapidly developing country.

## Brasilia National Library

**The Biblioteca Nacional de Brasilia was designed by the architect Oscar Niemeyer and built as part of the city development plan to move the capital from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia in 1960. This impressive glass fronted building has study rooms, reading rooms and is wi-fi enabled. However, you cannot access the books.**



A beachfront road in Rio de Janeiro, busier than normal with a visit by Barack Obama



Various specimens in jars at UniCEUB



# *Appendices*



ORDEN E PROGRESSO



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The Brazilian Embassy in London and the British Embassy in Brasilia both hosted events and the Team is extremely grateful for the facilities provided and the time taken out of busy schedules to meet us, including His Excellency the British Ambassador to Brazil, Mr Alan Charlton CMG CVO and Counsellor of State Helena Gasparian, the Head of the Cultural Section of the Brazilian Embassy.

Thanks go to Jenny Wragge and Matthew Reeve for allowing us to use their fantastic photos throughout this report.

Ms Patricia Borsa in the University of Nottingham's South America Office provided a great deal of assistance in the practical arrangements, as did members of the AUA National Office in Manchester. The Team is grateful to them all.

## Study Tours

The Study Tour was organised on behalf of the AUA's International Higher Education Special Interest Group (IHESIG) with additional financial support from the AHUA. The IHESIG arranges opportunities for members of the AUA based in the UK to gain an insight into higher education internationally through Study Tours and by making Travel Awards. Further details of previous and future Study Tours (which take place approximately once every year), details of how to apply for a Travel Award, and details of how to become a member of the IHESIG can be found on the AUA web-site.



The study tour team



The study tour team enjoying Caipirinhas at the British Embassy

## Glossary

<b>ANPEC</b> Associação Nacional dos Centros de Pós-graduação em Economia	<b>HEIs</b> Higher education institutions	<b>UFRJ</b> Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, a free public federal institution
<b>APL</b> Accreditation for prior learning	<b>IGC</b> Índice Geral de Cursos or General Courses Index	<b>UnB</b> University of Brasilia, a free public federal institution
<b>CAPES</b> Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior, the postgraduate quality and standards criteria	<b>IPEN</b> Research into Nuclear Engineering centre at Universidade de Sao Paulo	<b>UNESCO</b> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>CNPq</b> Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico, or National Counsel of Scientific and Technological Development	<b>Lattes</b> Lattes is maintained by the federal bureau responsible for funding scientific and technological research. As well as holding research papers, it also includes compulsory information relating to all researchers and higher education institutions in Brazil	<b>UnICEUB</b> Centro Universitario de Brasilia, a private fee-paying institution
<b>ENEM</b> Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio or National High School Exam, used in Brazilian universities to determine entry for students	<b>MEC</b> Ministry of Education, this is responsible for evaluating the quality and standards of both public and private education	<b>USP</b> Universidade de Sao Paulo, a free public state funded institution
<b>ENADE</b> Exame Nacional de Desempenho de Avaliação de Estudantes, a survey for students starting university	<b>NGO</b> Non-Government organisation	<b>Vestibular</b> The entrance examination for entry to undergraduate courses. This exam lasts several days and differs between universities.
<b>EPT</b> Institute for Technical Research at Universidade de Sao Paulo	<b>PIC</b> Programa de Iniciação Científica, an undergraduate science research programme which aims to prepare undergraduate students for future entry to Masters and doctoral programmes	
<b>FAPSEP</b> Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo, a funding Council	<b>PUC-Rio</b> Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, a private fee paying catholic institution	
<b>FGV-EESP</b> Fundação Getulio Vargas, Sao Paulo, a private fee-paying institution	<b>QAA</b> Quality Assurance Agency, maintains academic standard and quality in the UK	
<b>GDP</b> Gross Domestic Product, used to show the state of an economy	<b>SINEAS</b> Sistema Nacional de Avaliação do Ensino Superior, or Higher Education National Evaluation System, the undergraduate quality and standards criteria	





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