



**Coimbra Group
Scholarship Programme
for Latin America**

**Evaluation Survey
2009-2013 grant holders**

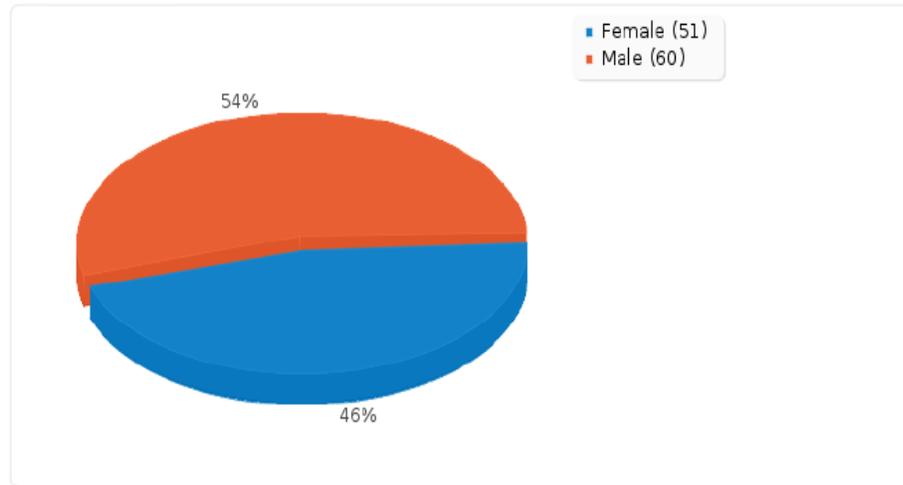
Coimbra Group Office

February 2015

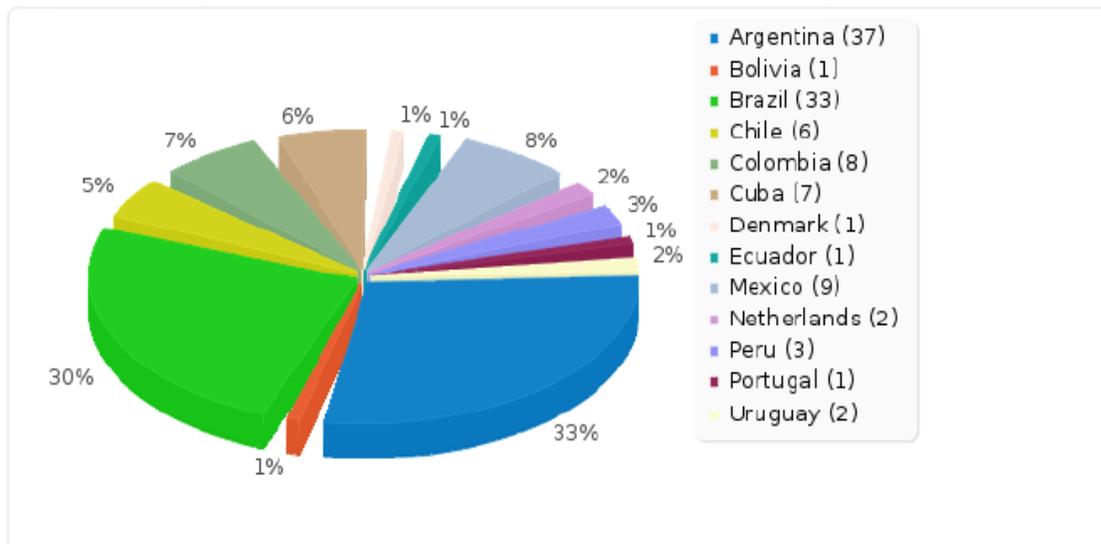
Response rate 80% (111 respondents out of 138 people questioned)

Average age when answering the survey: **34.9**

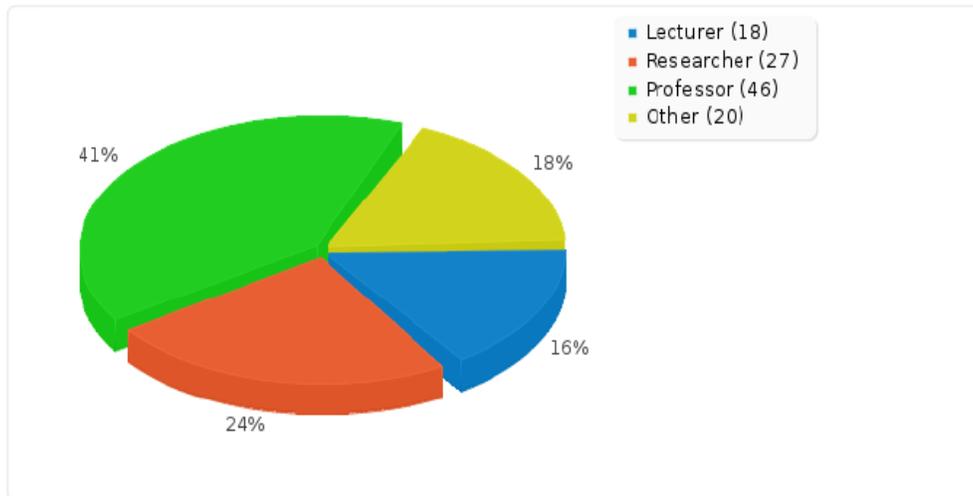
Gender: 54% men, 46% women



Country of home university

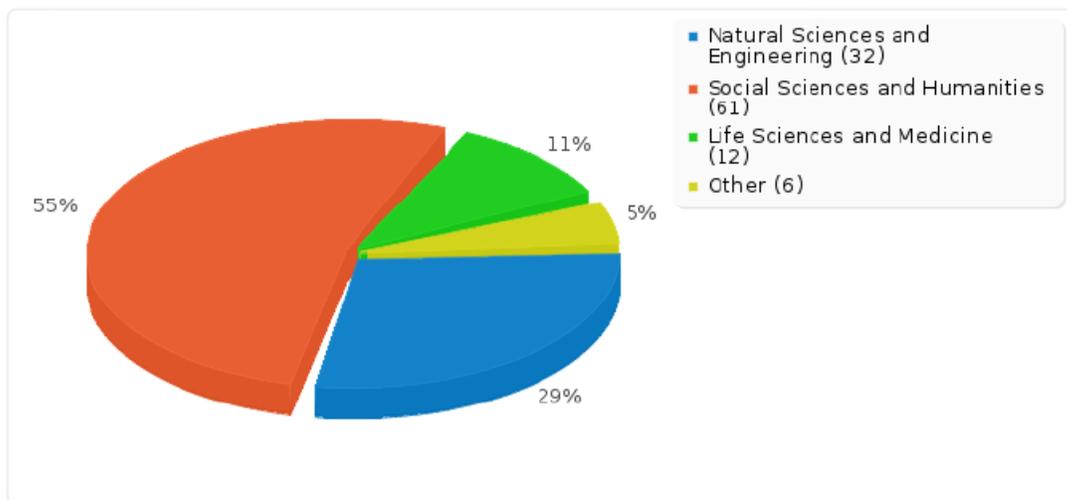


Position at home university



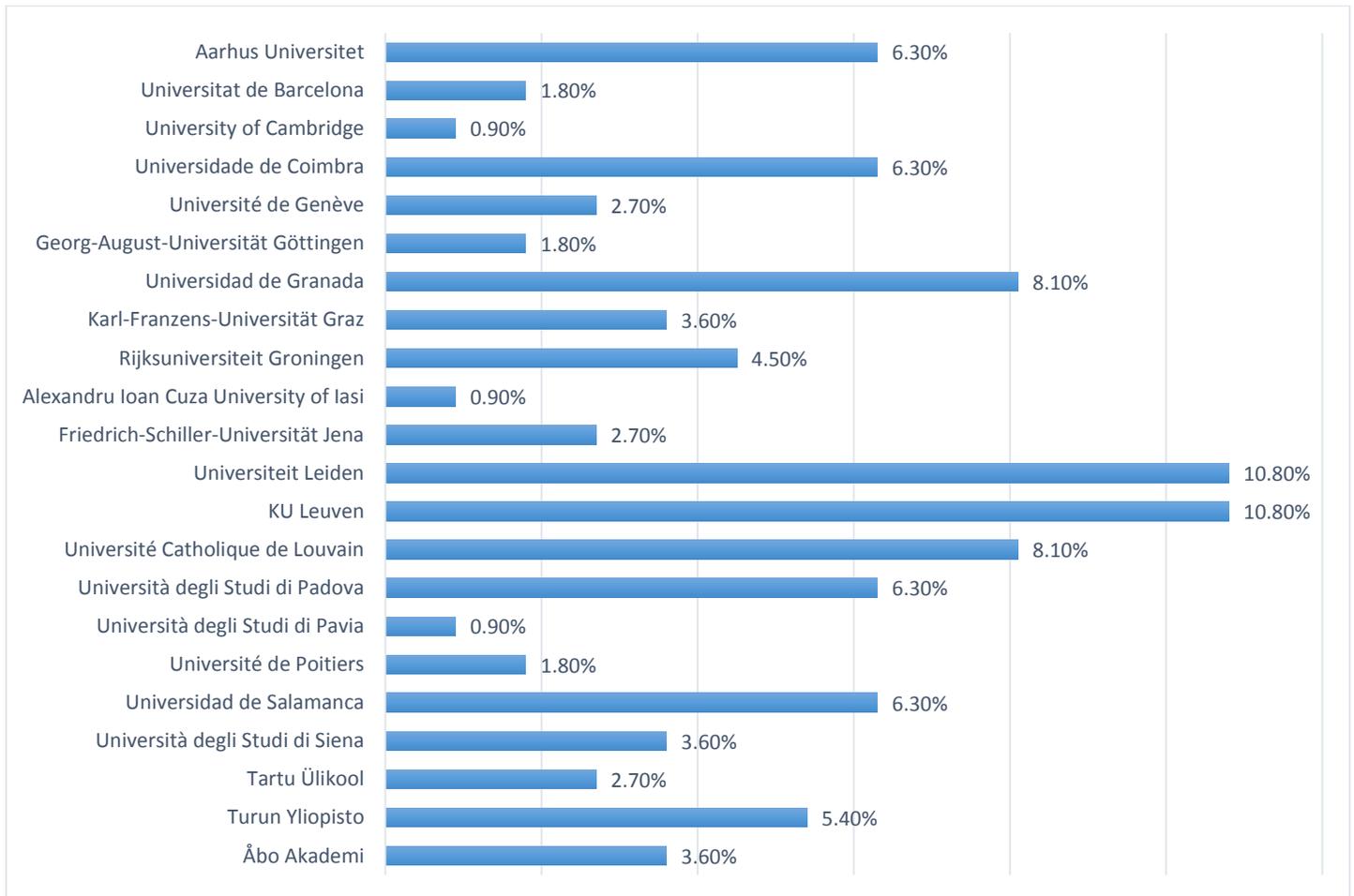
Other responses: *Master student, PhD student, postdoc, cathedratric teaching, assistant professor.*

Field of research

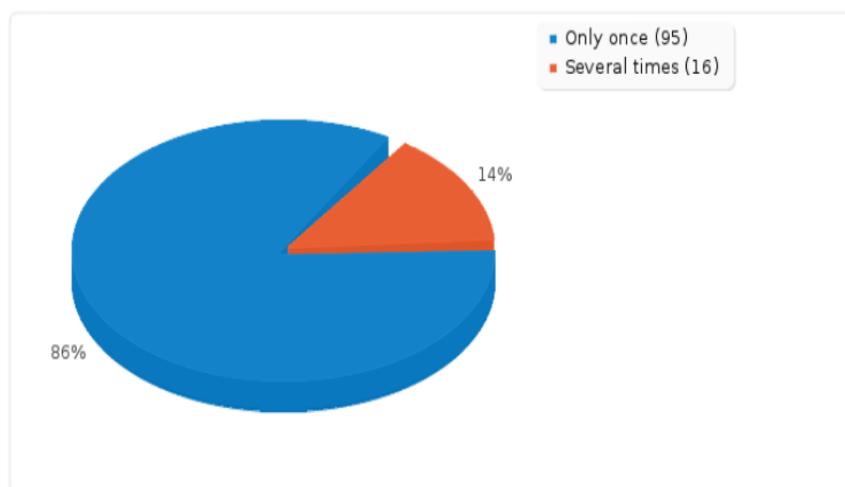


Other fields: *Earth sciences, Classical Studies, Neuroscience, Computer Sciences, Urban Climatology, Oceanography, Climatology, Meteorology*

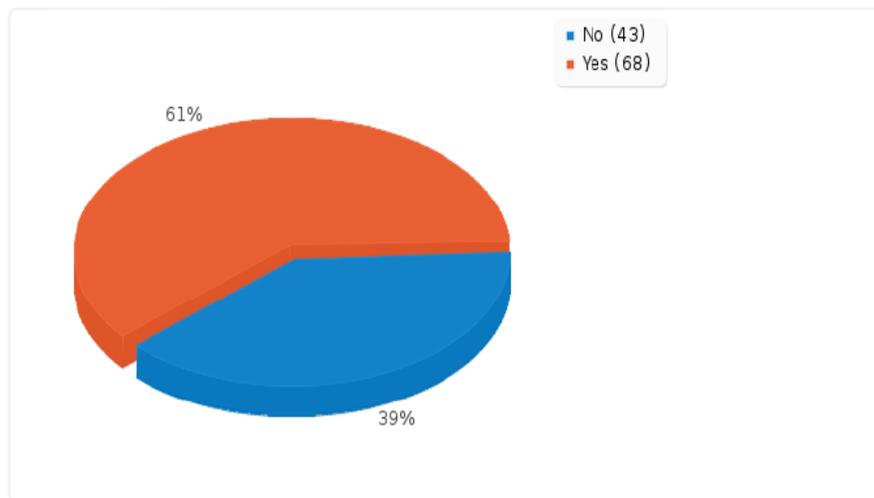
Host university



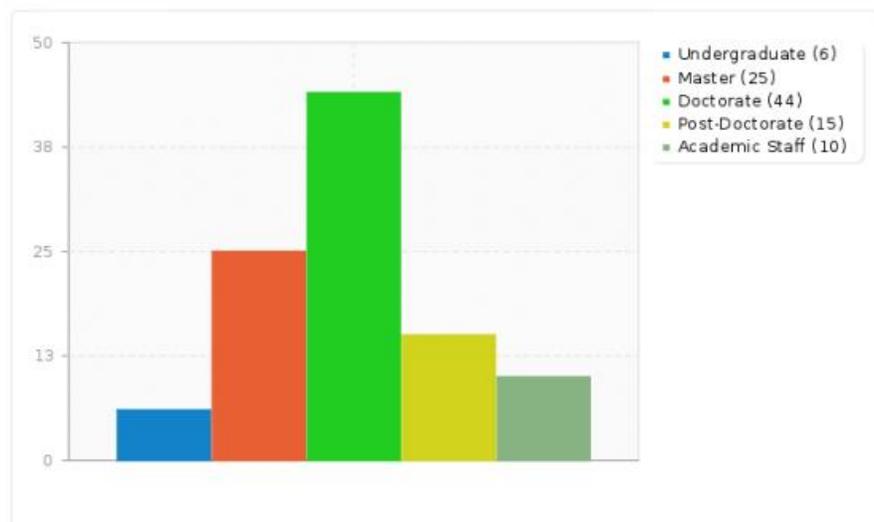
How many times did you apply for a Coimbra Group Scholarship?



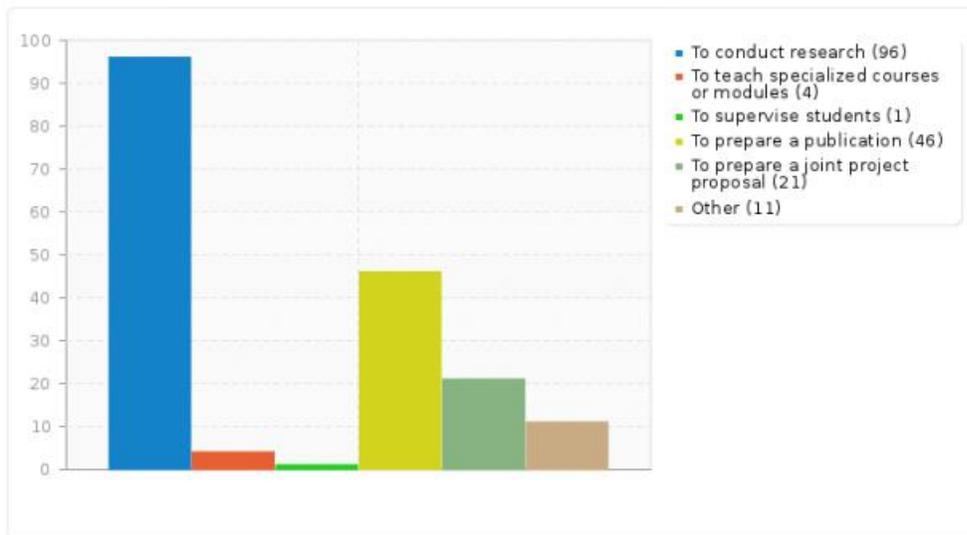
Have you ever stayed at a foreign university before?



At which academic levels?



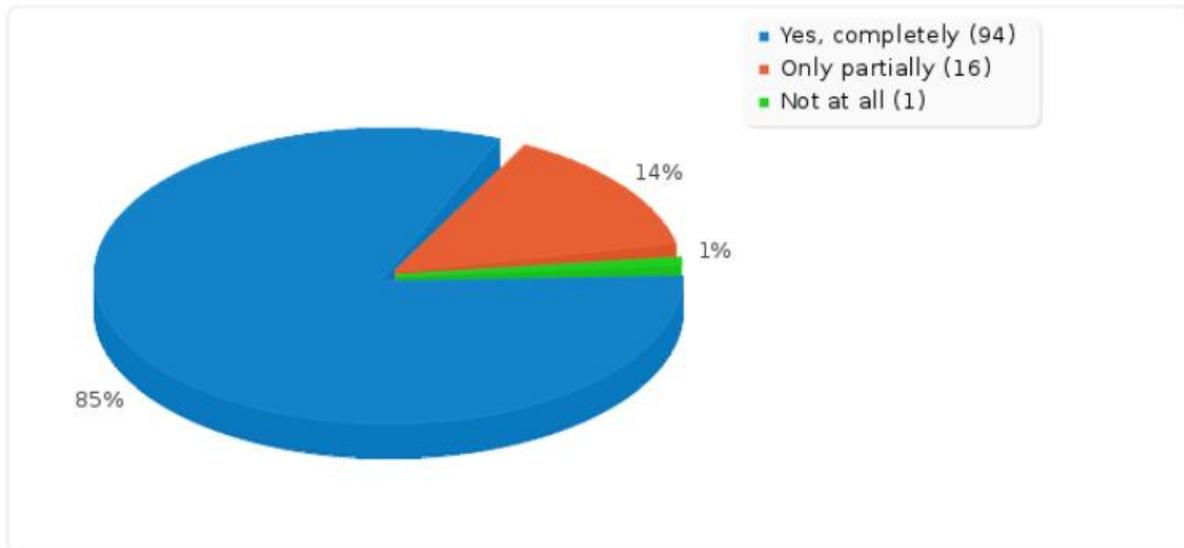
What were the main objectives of your stay?



Other objectives:

- *"research new bibliography, meet with others researchers"*
- *"To participate in several workshops"*
- *"To learn Romanian"*
- *"Desarrollar Módulos de la Tesis de Maestría" [develop modules of the master's thesis]*
- *"to discuss specific points with specialized colleagues to learn lab methodology and do part of my research initiated in the university of origin"*
- *"to minister a seminar"*
- *"to prepare my doctoral thesis"*
- *"to attend to doctoral seminars"*
- *"contact with professor[s] of other universities in Spain"*
- *"improve curriculum"*

Did you achieve these objectives?



Comments:

Too little time

"The **time was too short** to prepare a publication, and the research cannot be carried out in all its stages."

"I managed to teach phonetics classes, but I **only had time to collect and analyze part of the data.**"

"We are **still working on the publication.**"

"I had thought that 3 months would be enough (regarding my experience in short stays), but there was (luckily) a lot of material in the libraries, so **the reading process was not completed.** I could check a lot of books and articles, I could make a lot of notes and discuss the topics with my supervisor and other colleagues, but there were many books or articles I would like to have been able to read while I was in [host university]. This is especially because the reading enables following new search."

"I realised that **1 month I was not sufficient** to do that."

"The **time was not enough**, the researcher and his technician continued some experiments and we are still trying to publish, but the reviewers asked for more experiments."

"**Too short staying.**"

"I wrote the final part of my MA thesis dissertation and I **didn't have time** enough to finish a research article."

"*pouco tempo, 3 meses não foi o bastante para concluir a pesquisa*" [too little time, **3 months were not enough** to complete the research]

Research-related problems

"My research lines were slightly different from the research areas of my supervisor. I had to learn and study to find out the state of art closer to his research. So the time was not enough to finish our publication. Now, I'm trying to follow this area with some students in Brazil."

*"Because the **investigation was extended, new questions arose**, analysis and further work in the field and laboratory, which demanded additional time."*

*"This was a negative aspect about my visit to [host university]. When Dr [...] and I wrote the proposal for my 3 months stay, I was told to work on 2 main subjects [...]. These two topics are directly related with my PhD thesis. Unfortunately, when I got there to work, there was another person who [...] was then in charge of the first task. About one-two weeks after I got there, a new person got into the group and the second task was assigned to him. I end[ed] up working on a third task [...] that is not really useful to my PhD investigation here in my country. Of course I learned a lot, and I am grateful, but **it was not what I was expecting or planning to do**. I was always clear that I was not going there to work on my PhD research, but I was supposed to work in something related – according with the proposal we submitted to the Coimbra Group Scholarship. At some point I said to them that my advisor here in Colombia was not that happy about my advance because my work there was not related to my thesis. They told me then I could work on both topics (task one and three, even also two). But the truth is that they gave me all the resources to work on task three (what they needed), but not that much about the others (what I wanted to learn about). At least that's what I think and feel. The girl (in charge of task 1) was very rude to me all the time, didn't let me help or didn't help me to learn at all. I don't want to be unfair to anyone, but I think this is an honest evaluation about my research stay in [host university]."*

Miscellaneous

*"I was a victim of the **stealing of two computers** and there were a lot of data that could not be retrieved."*

*"The expected **sponsorship given by an international agency did not happen**."*

*"I had problems with the payment of the **scholarship**, which **was paid at the end of my stay** of investigation. That's why I had to find a place to stay with a friend, I lost time with it."*

*"Due to **health issues** I had to interrupt my stay before the objectives were fully achieved."*

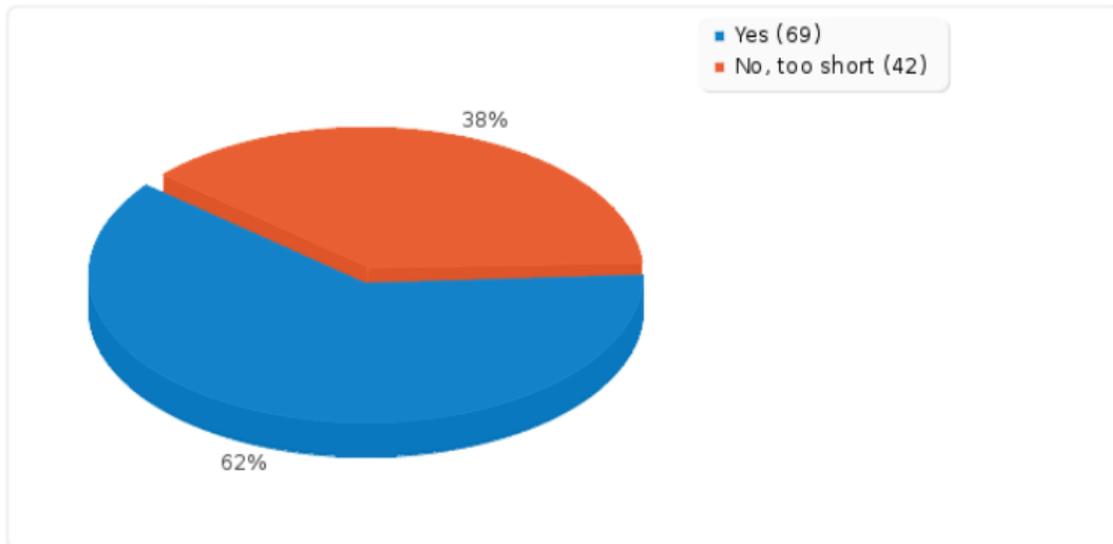
*"All the objectives of the visit were not achieved because during the period appeared **technical setbacks** that delayed the timetable."*

*"I did not get a working **VISA** to undertake research in [host country]. Problems at the [...] Consulate in [home country]. Documents did not arrive on time."*

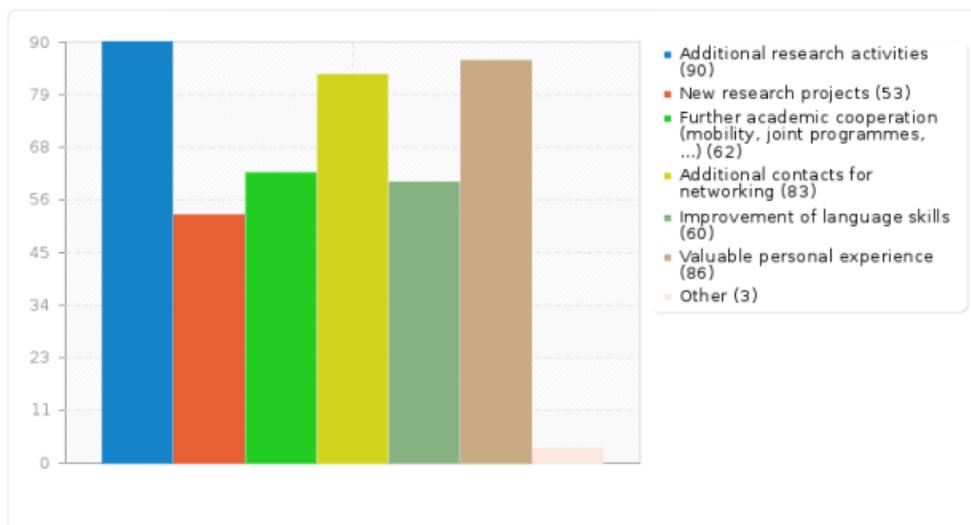
How long did you stay at the host university?

Average: **3.2 months**

Was the duration adequate?



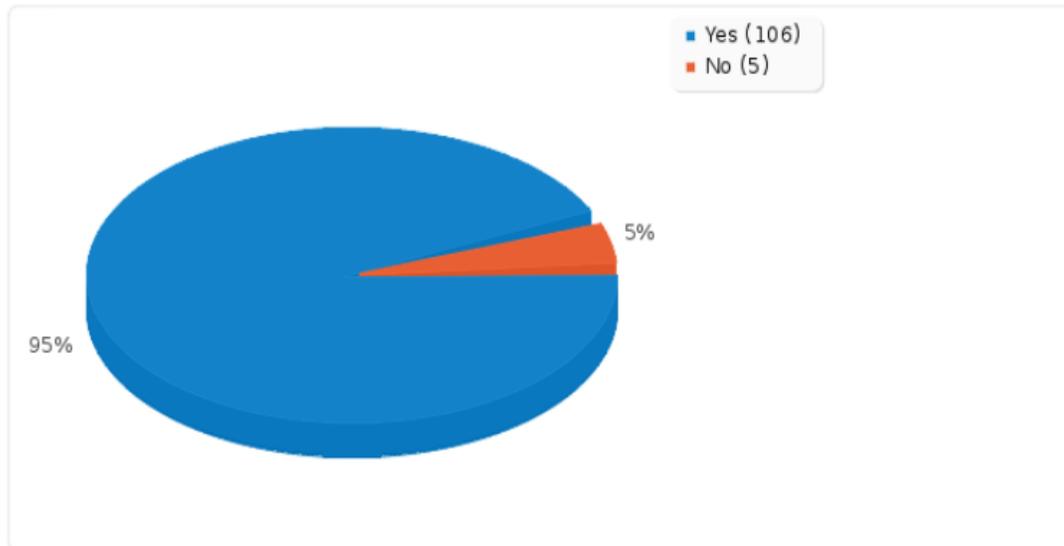
What were the main benefits of your stay?



Other benefits:

- "Valuable data collected"
- "post-doc position"
- "I took courses in that university and earned ETCS, and I got a paper publication as well."

Was it easy to find a supervisor or contact person at the host university?



Comments:

"I wrote to many teachers but they did not know me..."

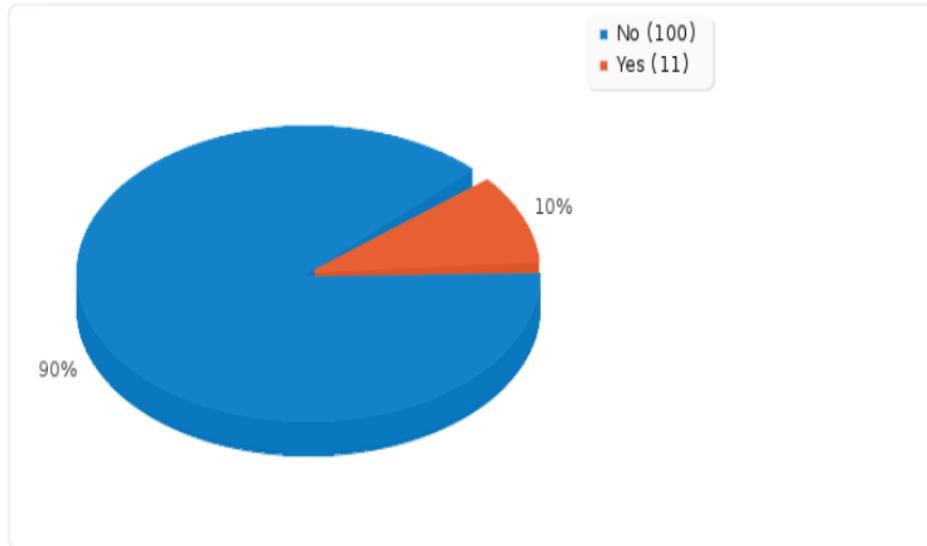
"I was lucky because the secretary of one of the most important sociologists in Spain told him about my idea and he accepted"

"I contacted Prof. [...] and he agreed immediately."

"I've tried to find a supervisor that was more close to my research area. But we had to find one on some universities/institutions and maybe would be a more adequate supervisor (I'm referring to the research area) if the number of possible places was wider."

"The focal point person [...] most of time is not pro-active in order to connect with tutors in a desired field of application. Because, it's difficult to find a supervisor in the study area with disposition time, even more if you don't know [any]body in the host university."

Did you encounter any special problems before or during your stay at the host university?



What kind of problems?

Administrative

*"I **needed a special permit to work in the laboratory**; [this] was not [mentioned] previously."*

*"Before travelling I was told I didn't need a **VISA** or any other kind of documentation to work at the university because I was going to stay for only 3 months. At my arrival, some people in the University were not very happy because they said I should have applied for a VISA so they could manage some insurance issues."*

*"Mainly **consular** [problems]."*

*"I had problems with the **payment of the scholarship**, which was paid at the end of my stay of investigation. That's why I had to find a place to stay with a friend."*

*"I did not get a working **VISA** to undertake research in [host country]. Problems at the [...] Consulate in [home country] documents did not arrive on time."*

*"A minor issue was about the **working permit** (TWV). As soon as I knew about my acceptance, I applied for the visa. Although I tried to send to the university all the papers on time, they issued my TWV with a gap of 15 days: I got there from Sept 1st to Nov 30th, but according to my TWV I was allowed to work from Sept 15 to Dec 15. I did and send all the papers and information as soon as I could."*

Lodging

"To find **accommodation**."

"In [host city] it is almost impossible to achieve a place to live, and the University didn't have adequate number of places to all students (my name was in a list, but I couldn't find a **place cheap to live**)."

"The main difficulty was that [host city] is an expensive city and it is so important to have a place from the University to rent."

Facilities at the host university

"I had **no office to work**. I was told I should work in the library."

"I **hadn't a proper place to work** at host Institute or Department."

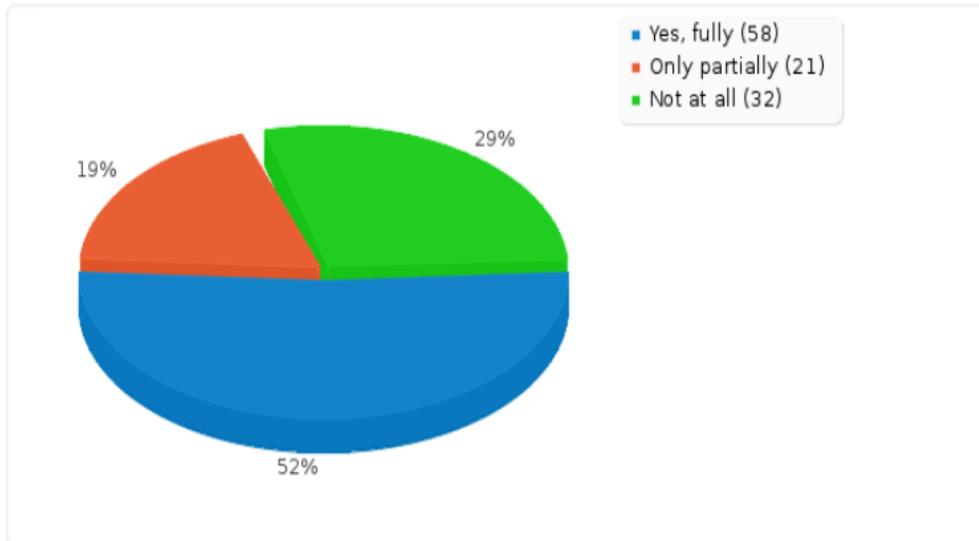
"There was **not enough information about the amount of download of digital material from the Library**. It would have been interesting if they had this information for foreign students, which do not know about these restrictions."

"I end[ed] up **working on a task [...] that is not really useful to my PhD investigation** here in my country. Of course I learned a lot, and I am grateful, but **it was not what I was expecting or planning to do**. I was always clear that I was not going there to work on my PhD research, but I was supposed to work in something related – according with the proposal we submitted to the Coimbra Group Scholarship. At some point I said to them that my advisor here in Colombia was not that happy about my advance because my work there was not related to my thesis. They told me then I could work on both topics (task one and three, even also two). But the truth is that they gave me all the resources to work on task three (what they needed), but not that much about the others (what I wanted to learn about)."

Miscellaneous

"I was a victim of the **stealing of two computers** and there were a lot of **data that could not be retrieved**."

Was your stay abroad supported by your home university?



Comments:

Financial support

"My home University, through the CSIC (Comisión Sectorial de Investigación Científica) supported my **flight tickets**."

"My funds come from the **government of Argentina** (CONICET: National Council of Science and Technology)."

"Apoyo en monto para los pasajes de ida del viaje." [Financial support for the **outward journey**.]

"They paid my travel cost (**plane ticket**)."

"Support for **buying material and reagents**."

"Recibí una ayuda para el **billete de avión**." [I received help for the airplane ticket.]

"Economically, my home university gave me money for the **airplane tickets** and for the student **health care insurance**."

Non financial support

"Me apoyaron dándome los permisos pertinentes para ausentarme en el período de octubre a enero." [They supported me by granting me **leave permits** for the period between October and January.]

"**Permission to leave**."

"They gave me **permission to travel**."

"My home University did not support my stay financially, but my supervisor at that time gave her **permission**."

Regular salary

"My home University was **paying my salary** as assistant teacher **but they did not give extra money.**"

"I received my institution **salary** during this three months abroad and this was important so that I could pay my bills at home. But I did not receive any support for being abroad."

"Universidad [...] just conceded me a **paid license.**"

"I received a **paid license** both in Conicet (a research position) and in University [...] (teaching position)."

"I left my home country during my vacation time, so the **university kept paying my salary** (which was good enough), but there was **no extra help** specific for this purpose."

"The period spent in France was supported by my University once I was authorized to be there **without any salary discounts**, which is usually common in Brazil."

"I **received my salary normally** while abroad."

"The stay occurred during my sabbatical year, so I had my **full income but I had not additional support** to pay the flight, nor the accommodation."

"I have a teaching position at [home university] and a research position at the National Research Council of Argentina (CONICET). I did not receive any financial support from my home university. CONICET paid my **research salary** during my absence."

No (financial) support

"They **didn't give me any extra support.**"

"It was supported by Coimbra Group."

"Normally, my **home university does not have enough budget** to ensure training and research stay to its professors/researchers abroad. It becomes **more difficult if you are young staff.**"

"I was not able to apply for financial support given that I did not have the seniority required."

"I got permission from my university, but I **could not get a support for the flight ticket.**"

"Small Brazilian Universities such as mine do not have the capacity to find substitutes and therefore to allow full time professors to leave for research abroad. Apart from that the **bureaucratic obstacles** are numerous and the actual **process of being authorized to travel is very difficult and stressful.**"

"I **did not receive funding** during those months from my home university."

"**No additional financial support was needed.**"

"**No money available.**"

"The **scholarship was not enough** for all expenses, including travelling, transportation, food, rent, etc."

"There are **no programs here to support short stays.**"

"**No support.**"

"My stay abroad was **mainly supported by Coimbra Fellowship.**"

"The **airplane ticket was not paid.**"

"My university **never considered to match funds** for my trip."

"In terms of funding, I had to pay for the flight ticket. Luckily, the **[host] University collaborated with part of those expenses.**"

"**It is not common in Brazil to support this type of activity abroad.** Hence, without the Coimbra Group I would have never been able to spend time in The Netherlands carrying out my research and preparing a paper to be published."

"The **host university supported fully my stay.**"

"The **only financial support was provided by Coimbra Group.**"

"I went on my own, **supported only by Coimbra.**"

"I **had to invest my own money.**"

"The contact was directly with the research group in the host university, with which I had previously worked. The **host university also covered the travel expenses.**"

"I **did not have a paid leave** so I did not have enough money for my living expenses. **Had to spend my savings.**"

"I had only the support of Coimbra Group. Usually, **budget is very difficult to get in Cuban universities to do academic stays abroad.**"

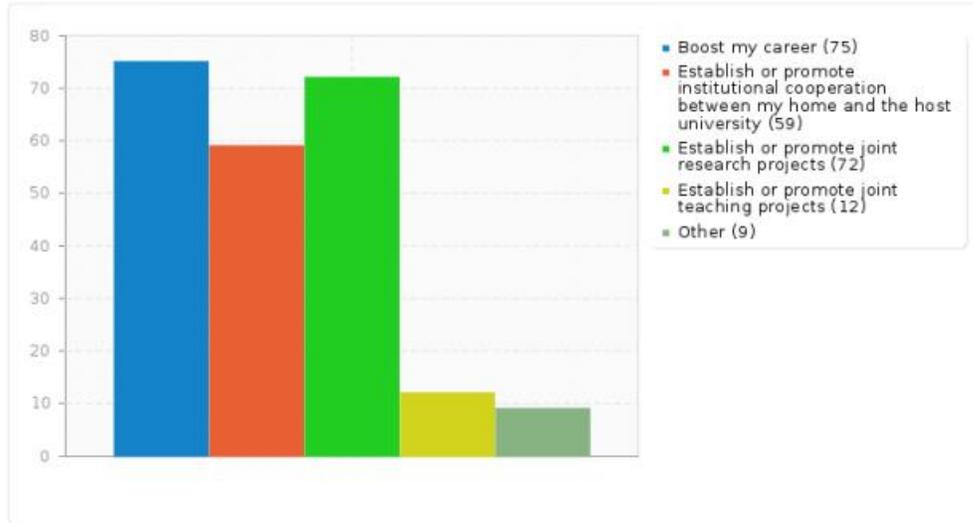
"I was writing my MA dissertation, and [the host university] in that period was completely out of the question."

"My contract with my home university ended before I started my stay abroad."

"The **financing came exclusively from the host University.**"

"My **home university did not financially support my stay** at [host university], as such kind of financial aid (for short research visits at that particular university) are not available in my home institution."

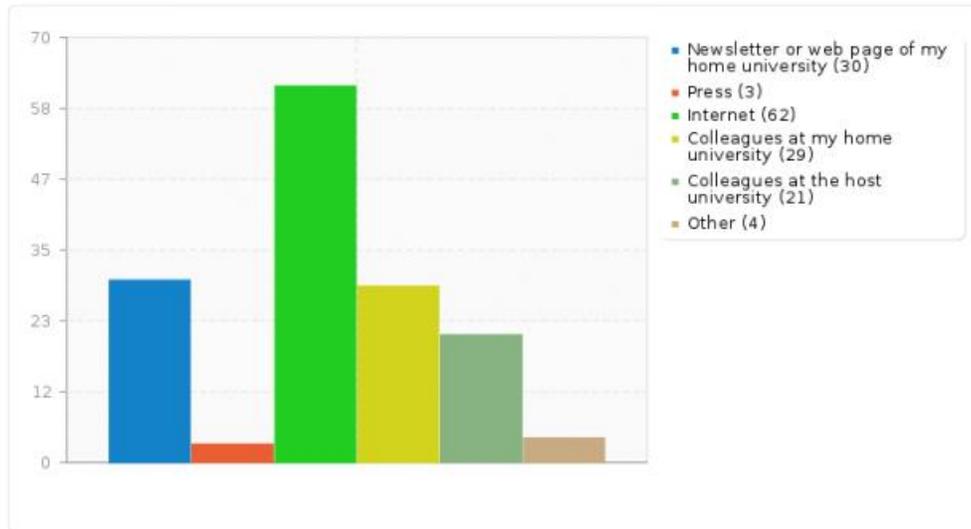
What kind of impact do you think your stay at a Coimbra Group university will have?



Other responses:

- *"Offer me the possibility to meet other European professionals in my field, as well as to participate in congress, workshops and academic activities held in Europe during the time of the Coimbra Scholarship"*
- *"Establish or promote exchange cooperation"*
- *"FNRS-CNPq project"*
- *"Possibility for students interchange"*
- *"It impacted my life in personal aspects, opened my mind to a new world, different cultures and it gave me perspective."*
- *"open my mind, know more about the research abroad in my field, enjoy the facilities, especially the library"*
- *"Establish or promote networks. I keep in touch with my supervisor and colleagues."*
- *"Promote publications in my hometown University related to [host] University's Semiotic Department"*
- *"Conocer profesores y otros becarios en los cuales seguiré en contacto." [Get to know and keep in touch with professors and other scholarship grantees.]*

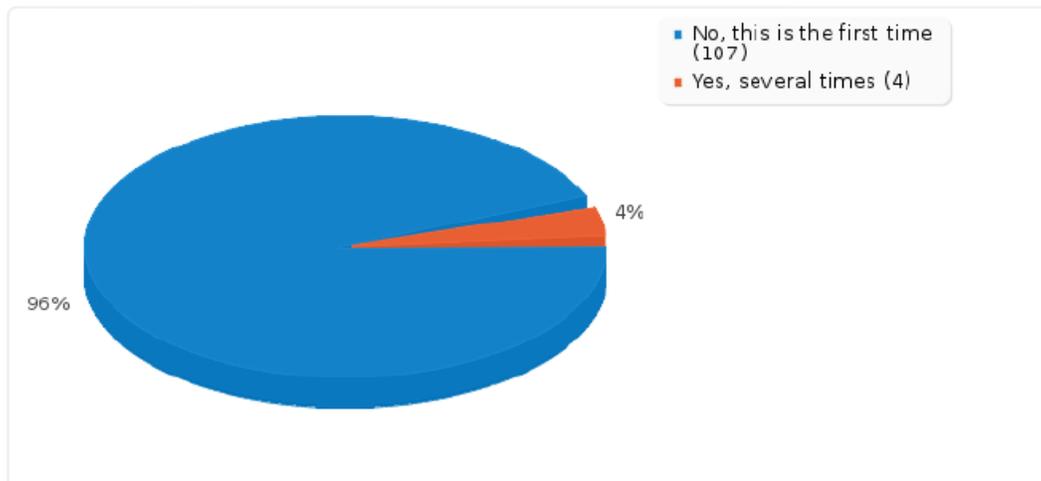
How did you come to know about the Coimbra Group Scholarship Programme?



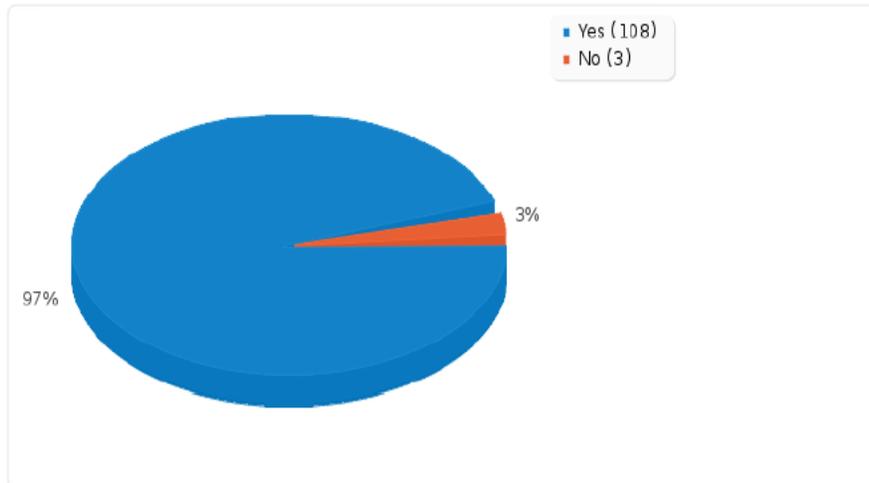
Other responses:

- "Erasmus Mundus news"
- "colleagues from Italy send me the information"
- "Colleagues from my former [home] University"

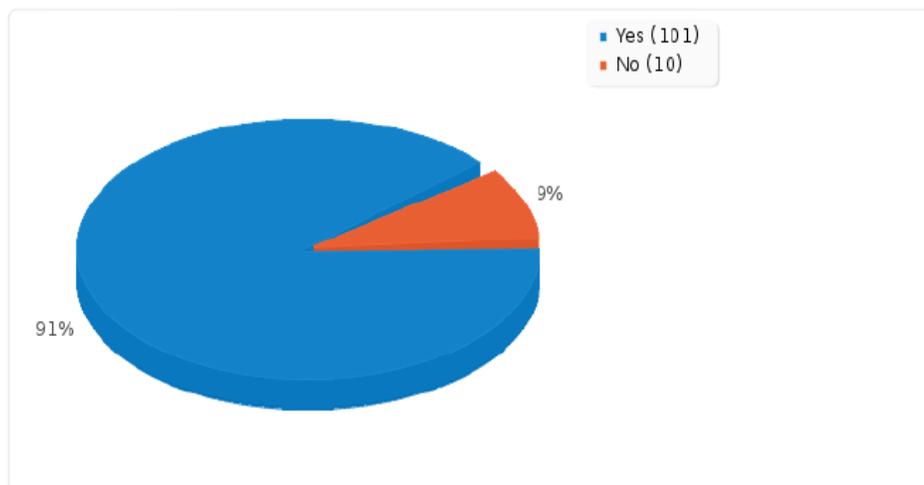
Were you ever granted a Coimbra Group Scholarship before?



Would you be willing to become an ambassador or advisor for future Coimbra Group Scholars?



Would you like to join a Coimbra Group Alumni Association?



Additional comments or suggestions

Suggestions

"The **duration** of the research could be **extended** and the **grant** could be **increased** to include the travel expenses."

"One suggestion is this: **the scheme can gain public interest by promoting meetings, conferences and research projects** in Latin America. In some countries like Argentina, for example, very few people know about the Coimbra scholarship scheme. If there is something more that I can make to help you I would be glad to do it."

"I think the **program should be expanded**. Perhaps a partnership with Brazilian government and more **participation from other countries' government** to boost the financing capacity of Coimbra Group."

"I strongly believe that the **duration of the stay should be longer** to have more time to finish the research or at least to make it more complete. **Six months should be an adequate duration.**"

"I think that the **practical issues of the scholarship** (amount of money, way of payment, insurance, housing, etc.) should be **more clearly stated.**"

"It would be useful for the appliers to offer **a list of Professors really interested to receive fellows** in each university in each area. I think this would be a way to guarantee the positive relationships between candidate and host."

"It could be important to **make more promotion of the Coimbra Group in Latin America**. Few universities and/or research institutions have full knowledge of the activities and programs related to the Group (for example in Chile there is not a lot of diffusion)."

"I really don't have the solution, but I think there must be some kind of **form or agreement to be signed for both parts (advisors at the universities of origin and destination)**. This to guarantee the achievement of the seeking goals in the investigation of both research groups, in fulfilment of the application form sent to Coimbra Group. I also think this kind of questionnaire is a very useful tool that you should keep applying during the whole Programme. Thanks for everything!"

"The only thing that I have to say is related to the **stay duration; I think it is too short** (1 month), I would have liked to have more time to deep in some scientific subjects of the stay."

Positive feedback

"The experience was excellent because I work in a research group with a lot of topics in common, that is one of the most important topics, and for sure the hospitality of Dr. [...]. Thank you very much it was a great opportunity for me."

"I believe Coimbra scholarship a good opportunity for interacting with other universities. For me it was good and I could get other research projects."

"Being interested in the personal and professional experiences of former Coimbra fellows is excellent. In my opinion it is one of the most important things in order to receive feedback about how the experience was. [...] I am interested in collaborating with the Coimbra Group."

"My stay was 3 years ago but I am still continuously in touch with my director. Next July, I will presenting in Madrid part of my work made in Salamanca. One more time, thank you very much for this wonderful opportunity!"

"I'm grateful to COIMBRA group for support my stay in the UB. It was a great experience in all my ambits of my professional career. Hope to be granted again by COIMBRA in the future."

"The support of the Coimbra Group was very important for me, since it allowed me to advance in my investigation. I would be interested to collaborate, in what is necessary, with the Coimbra Group. Thank you."

"This is a very important project to provide mobility to PhD students or young researchers willing to enlarge their collaboration network. By the time I was in the host university (now I'm a post-doc researcher in the host university thanks to this project), it was one of the very few opportunities to have a collaboration abroad. Thanks."

"I only would like to thank Coimbra Group for the opportunity, it was really fruitful, both in personal and professional aspects."

"For me it was an excellent opportunity to learn more in research and to get to know topics that I only read about in books. Thanks a lot Coimbra Group."

"My stay in University of Padua could not have been better. I have learned many new research activities. We produced a volume of data sufficient to write a paper that will be soon submitted to a high impact factor journal. Thank you very much Coimbra Group for the opportunity."

"Thanks for this opportunity!"

"I want to express to the greatest thanks for giving me the opportunity to conduct academic and scientific exchanges. Without your support it would not have been possible. Thousand Thanks for all your support, the scholarship was very useful. Compliments for this scholarship program, which is very helpful for students around the world who want to fulfill their dreams."

"My stay at Leuven allowed me to start a number of joint projects with Prof. [...], that otherwise would have been impossible. I would like to thank the Coimbra Group for that. If there was another scholarship for more experienced researchers, I would surely apply!"

"Agradecer infinitamente la posibilidad brindada." [Many thanks for the opportunity you have offered me.]

"I am grateful for the opportunity, and I hope, the next year, to participate to the call again."

"The Coimbra Group Scholarship Programme is a great opportunity to any student or professor in the world. I think it is [a] well known programme, it is excellent rated in my opinion and it is totally worth it. I talked to some professors at the [host] university and they have a very high opinion about the performance of the students who have won the Coimbra Group Scholarship. So it has been the best experience in my life so far, a great opportunity to learn, to know what you are capable of doing. A unique experience to live and to be a better person and a great professional. It was a wonderful experience."

"I sincerely appreciate the scholarship from Coimbra Group. I never had an inconvenient, always people at your office were so clear about the procedures to do. In addition, before, during and after the research stay, the International Relations Department of the [host] University always responded quickly and clearly [to] any questions or requests."

Regarding to the research stay, I had a very good personal and professional experience in the Renewable Resources Group. I am sure that now I have very good contacts (researchers and post graduate students) in this group to develop good working relationships with my Center in the future (...) On the other hand, I have [had] the opportunity to make great and very good friends in this Group in a very short time, besides knowing a wonderful [host] city. To resume, I think this is a very good program for mobility and academic exchange; I am very pleased to have participated this year [because] without your financial aid it would have been impossible to do the research stay. Many thanks again."