

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title	Academic Bus
Key words	Transport Service, Low-Cost, Accessibility, Mobility, Equity
Objectives	To promote an alternative transport service to fill the gaps in public transport networks in the region; To practice a low cost price to ensure accessibility to higher education and minimize academic drop out and To facilitate mobility among students and schools in the region (avoiding the costs of displacement)
Phase of studies (<i>Choose all phases it applies</i>)	Access X Retain X Graduation X Transition to work-life -
Type of degree (<i>Choose all degrees it applies</i>)	Bachelor's X Graduate X Master's X
Level (<i>Choose all levels it applies</i>)	International National Institutional X Faculty Group Individual
Name of the institution	Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo
Location (<i>City and country</i>)	Viana do Castelo, Portugal
Target group/s	Students, Teaching Staff, Non-Teaching Staff, Family and Students from others schools of the region.
Stakeholders involved	Educational Institutions, Municipalities, Transport Companies, Academic Community and their Families.

<p>Description of the organisational process <i>Actors, triggering evidence, campaigns, graph... (max. 300 words)</i></p>	<p>The Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, in conjunction with the Intermunicipal Community of the region, created a service of low-cost transport for students, operating since September 2015 and connecting 17 locations to schools.</p> <p>Taking into account the financial difficulties that a relocation could mean for families, especially for the neediest areas of the interior, this initiative aims to democratize access to higher education and allow students and potential students to move every day to schools and, then, to return home (in an effort to meet the needs for mobility and prevent academic failure and dropout, ensuring equity and promoting social cohesion).</p> <p>Since May 2016, the Academic Bus, in partnership with the public transport network, has available 32 new schedules that will allow users a greater flexibility.</p>
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A. FORMAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

<p>A1. ACCESS TO INFORMATION <i>Provide sources of information (URL, websites, literature, materials)</i></p>	<p>Social Services Website www.sas.ipvc.pt</p>
<p>A2. TIMEFRAME <i>Since when has it been in use? What is its maturity level (initial, intermediate, advanced)? Describe if there is evidence of its duration in the long run. (max. 70 words)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - since September 2015 - maturity level: initial - no long-term evidence for being a recent service
<p>A3. NUMBER OF STUDENTS <i>How many students are involved? Is the number representative considering the target group?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100 users - 10% of the target group (students from the region who need to use shared transport - bus or train – to go to schools)
<p>A4. SCALABILITY (“volume”) <i>Describe how it has been or can potentially be scaled up and practiced in a wider scale. Or, has it been or can it potentially be scaled down (e.g., from larger to smaller institutions)? (max. 70 words)</i></p>	<p>It can be practiced in a smaller and larger scale in regions with insufficient public transport networks to respond to the needs of users.</p>

<p>A5. TRANSFERABILITY (from one context to another) <i>Describe how it has been or can potentially be transferred and applied to different (a) target groups, (b) institutions, and (c) societies. If possible, name also some practices that this initiative was developed from or has inspired to. (max. 70 words)</i></p>	<p>It can be transferred to other contexts (institutions, societies) with the same need for mobility.</p>
<p>A6. ASSESSMENT <i>Describe how it has been evaluated. How has it proved its relevance as the most effective way to achieve the objective? How it was successfully adopted? How it has had a positive impact on people? How the impact has been measured? Shortly describe how various forms of evaluations have been used in the assessment (A6.1 User evaluation, A6.2 Self-evaluation, A6.3 Peer evaluation, A6.4 External expert evaluation). Provide references, if possible. (max. 200 words)</i></p>	<p>The number of users and routes has been increasing, which we consider as evidence of the success of the initiative. We have planned questionnaires to users for further evaluative information.</p>
<p>A7. CONTACT <i>Who can be contacted so as to seek support and networks for implementing the practice (name, position, e-mail)?</i></p>	<p>Vítor Monteiro, Academic Bus vitormonteiro@ipvc.pt</p>

B. CONTENT EVALUATION CRITERIA

B1. SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES (see Nelson & Creagh, 2013)

B1.1 Self-determination <i>Rate and Justify (max. 70 words)</i>	<i>Very weakly</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Weakly</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Well</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Very well</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>(how students have participated to its (a) design, (b) enactment and (c) evaluation and how they can (d) make informed decisions about the participation)</i>	<p>Despite the low participation of students in the design and implementation, most of them was auscultated to better understand the need and the most important routes to ensure accessibility / mobility for all.</p>			
B1.2 Rights	<i>Very weakly</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Weakly</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Well</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Very well</i> <input type="checkbox"/>

<p><i>Rate and Justify (max. 70 words)</i></p> <p><i>(how it is assured that all participants are treated with dignity and respect. How have their individual cultural, social and knowledge systems been recognised and valued?)</i></p>	<p>The service responds to all participants, without discriminating individual systems (cultural, social and knowledge).</p>			
<p>B1.3 Access</p> <p><i>Rate and Justify (max. 70 words)</i></p> <p><i>(how it is assured that there is an active and impartial access to the resources (e.g., curriculum, learning, academic, social, cultural, support, and financial resources))</i></p>	<p><i>Very weakly</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Weakly</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Well</i></p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Very well</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>B1.4 Equity</p> <p><i>Rate and Justify (max. 70 words)</i></p> <p><i>(how if it openly demystifies and decodes dominant university cultures, processes, expectations and language for differently prepared cohorts)</i></p>	<p><i>Very weakly</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Weakly</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Well</i></p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Very well</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>B1.5 Participation</p> <p><i>Rate and Justify (max. 70 words)</i></p> <p><i>(how it has led to socially inclusive practices. How does it increase students' sense of belonging and connectedness?)</i></p>	<p><i>Very weakly</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Weakly</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Well</i></p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Very well</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>B2. COLLABORATION</p> <p><i>Describe what kind of collaboration there is between various stakeholders. (max. 70 words)</i></p>	<p>This project is made possible only by the good relationship between the stakeholders, including the involved schools and municipalities, because they support, with IPVC, the costs associated with Academic Bus. This financial support is seen as an investment – in facilitating access to higher education, the region will benefit from more educated and able citizens to contribute to social development in the future.</p>			
<p>B3. STUDENT SATISFACTION</p> <p><i>Describe the student perception of this initiative. Is there evidence of their</i></p>	<p>The satisfaction of the students (and other users) can be measured by the increasing number of users of Academic Bus (many of the</p>			

<p>satisfaction? (see also A6.1) (max. 200 words)</p>	<p>students report that they could not proceed with their studies if there was no such transport service).</p>
<p>B4. STUDENT WELLBEING <i>How does it influence on students' (a) psychological, (b) social, (c) academic, and (d) physical wellbeing? What kind of evidence there is? (max. 200 words)</i></p>	<p>The Academic Bus facilitates the access to higher education without students having to be displaced, which strengthens family ties and the perception of student's psychosocial support, as well as reduces the financial costs (ensuring the access to higher education as a possible life project).</p>
<p>C. FINAL REFLECTIONS (based on the previous description of you good practice)</p>	
<p>Success factors <i>What are the factors required for the successful implementation? (max. 200 words)</i></p>	<p>Success can be measured by the increasing number of users of Academic Bus and that results from the efforts of stakeholders to extend the timetables and routes to meet the needs of the target group.</p>
<p>Sustainability <i>What is needed for the practice to sustain? What resources are required? How it contributes to environmental, economic or social sustainability? (max. 200 words)</i></p>	<p>Despite not having financial sustainability (only sustainable by the investment of the stakeholders), this service promotes: access to higher education (which is an investment for more educated and able citizens in the future), shared transport (reducing the impact on the environment) and the development of region (ensuring more educated human resources, as well as more jobs and social development).</p>
<p>Challenges <i>What are the constraints identified? How easy it is to learn and implement? (max. 200 words)</i></p>	<p>It is a recent service, seen as an increasing value proposal (it will be learning from implementation, in an effort to adjust the service to meet the needs of the target group). There is a financial limitation (for not being a sustainable project, only made possible by the investment of the stakeholders) and the demand to extend the timetables and routes to better serve users. It should be seen as an investment with no financial return but, probably, with individual, social and environmental impact that can improve significantly the region.</p>