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INTERNSHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF A COURSE ESTABLISHED IN THE INTERIOR OF BRAZIL

**ESTÁGIOS EM RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS: EVIDÊNCIAS EMPÍRICAS DE UM
CURSO ESTABELECIDO NO INTERIOR DO BRASIL**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to present the contribution of internships in the undergraduate academic context of Bachelors degree in International Relations. The research was developed throughout 2021, during non-mandatory internship orientation activities, in a course located in a Brazilian inland city. Given the absence of previous surveys on the role of internships, this work was based on Law 11.788 of 2008, the National Curriculum Guidelines for Bachelors Degrees in International Relations, the Pedagogical Project of the Course and literature on internships in university education. Regarding the methodology, it is a case study with exploratory purpose, through a quali-quantitative approach, carried out through documental and bibliographical sources and a survey with academics who carried out internship activities in 2021. In a universe of 224 academics regularly enrolled in the year, only 11 performed internships, defined as non-mandatory by the course. The results of the survey among students indicate that, in their perception skills and competences foreseen in the National Curriculum Guidelines are developed in the internships. The research also suggests that the role of internships as a learning experience lacks discussion and analysis both in the course where it was held and in International Relations courses established in Brazil.

Keywords: Bachelor of International Relations. Non-mandatory internship. Skills and competences.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste trabalho é apresentar a contribuição dos estágios no contexto acadêmico dos Bacharelados em Relações Internacionais. A pesquisa foi desenvolvida ao longo do ano de 2021, durante as atividades de orientação de estágios não-obrigatórios, em um curso localizado no interior do Brasil. Diante da ausência de levantamentos prévios sobre o papel dos estágios, este trabalho fundamentou-se na Lei nº 11.788 de 2008, nas Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para os Bacharelados em Relações Internacionais, no Projeto Pedagógico do Curso e literatura sobre estágios na formação universitária. Quanto à metodologia, trata-se de um estudo de caso com finalidade exploratória, de abordagem quali-quantitativa, realizado por meio de fontes documentais, bibliográficas e levantamento junto aos acadêmicos que realizaram atividades de estágio no ano de 2021. Do universo de 224 acadêmicos regularmente matriculados no ano, apenas 11 realizaram estágios, definidos como não-obrigatórios no curso. Os resultados do levantamento entre os alunos apontam que, na sua percepção, os estágios contribuem para a formação de habilidades e competências previstas pelas Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais. A pesquisa também sugere que o papel dos estágios como experiência de aprendizagem carece de discussão e análise, tanto no curso onde foi realizada, quanto nos cursos de Relações Internacionais estabelecidos no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: Bacharelado em Relações Internacionais. Estágio não-obrigatório. Habilidades e Competências.

1 INTRODUCTION

O objective of this work is to present the contribution of internships in the undergraduate academic context of bachelor's degree in International Relations in a course established ten years ago, at Brazil's interior. This is pioneering research in the course, developed throughout 2021, within the scope of guidance and advisory activities for non-mandatory internship provided at the Course Pedagogical Project.

It is worth noting that the bachelor's degree in International Relations courses are relatively new in Brazil, with the first course created at 1974, in Brasília. In the following decades, new courses were founded at universities in capital cities (Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte e São Paulo). It was from the 1990s onwards that there was an expansion of the offering courses across the country, primarily at private universities and, after the 2000s, in public universities. The most recent wave of expansion of the International Relations is the result of a public policy so-called Support Program for Restructuring and Expansion Plans Federal Universities (Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais - Reuni), program that also contributed to its internalization (MAIA, 2017; PFRIMER; OKADO, 2019).

The expansion of the course offer stimulated debates related to the identity of studies' field, searching the establishment of ordinary parameters, of which have, in 2017, approved the National Curriculum Guidelines (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais - DCNs) (MAIA, 2017; BRASIL, 2017). At Brazil, the DCNs means a significant mark defining the general objective of these courses: “[...] to form professionals which can exercise activities with international interface at public and private sphere, like governments, universities, enterprises, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, consultancy, financial market and other institutions”. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 2). In addition to other relevant aspects, the skills and competences that such courses should enable were also defined.

Internships, like other academic activities, are a learning experience with the potential to significantly contribute to the development of academics' skills and competences. However, there is a lack of these discussions in the field of International Relations, both in the course where this research was developed (FREITAS; SCHIMANSKI, 2021), and in other courses in Brazil. For example, the search in the annals of the Meetings of the Brazilian Association of International Relations (Associação Brasileira de Relações Internacionais – ABRI) – where since 2015 there is thematic area for the discussion of Teaching, Research and

Community Outreach - finds only one expanded abstract on the topic (HOLZHACKER, 2017). Despite the efforts of coordinators organizing dossiers in academic journals¹, different topics were addressed – active methodologies, community outreach, among others – and any contributions on the internships (ABRI, 2021).

This gap becomes even more uncomfortable when surveys of International Relations alumni reveal that, during the course, students performed such activity. A national survey identified that 54.5% of graduates participated in internships (MAIA; FRANCO; NEDER, 2017). Other studies, with more specific sampling concentrated in capitals and large centers, reveal a rate above 70% (RIBEIRO; KATO; REINER, 2013; PUC, 2016; SEABRA; LEITE; DIAS, 2017). In the course where this work was fulfilled, a recent survey with graduates shows that 31.1% did the activity in the field of International Relations or correlated, while another 19% did internships in other areas (SCHIMANSKI et al, 2021).

In seeking to contribute to this debate, the present work presents the evidence collected from an International Relations course, established ten years ago at a university located in the interior of Brazil. The location of the course is a relevant element in this scenario, due to the low internationalization and interiorization of the job market in International Relations (PFRIMER; OKADO, 2019). The consolidation of a pro-internationalization culture, which allows opportunities for local professional practice, goes through the consolidation of the field itself (MOREIRA JUNIOR, 2015), which still requires the deconstruction of the common sense that this field of knowledge is exclusive to the governmental diplomatic service (RIBEIRO; KATO; REINER, 2013).

The case study with exploratory purpose was prepared from the quali-quantitative approach in the year 2021, considering the sample of 11 students participants of internship activities. The sources for the research were primary and secondary. The first part of the article presents the legislation, documents and literature that guide the debate on internships in higher education. Next, the methodology adopted is presented to, finally, describe the process of the internships in the course and the evidence obtained from the survey realized with the students.

This research allows to consider that students recognize that internships contribute to the formation of some skills and competences foreseen in the International Relations course.

¹ Under the coordination of the ABRI thematic area, the following dossiers were organized: the first was a special volume on “Ensino, Pesquisa e Extensão”, in the magazine Meridiano 47, in 2017; the second “Ensino, Pesquisa e Extensão”, by the Revista Mural Internacional, in 2019.

However, the research suggests that internships, in their pedagogical feature and as a learning experience, requires greater involvement of the academic community.

2 INTERNSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In higher education, internships are one of the possibilities to promote contacts with professional experiences, as well to develop skills and competences required in the profile of graduates of each course. In Brazil, the internship is characterized in terms of the Internship Law (Law n° 11,788, of September 25, 2008) and has been discussed, in the context of teaching-learning processes, in different areas of knowledge.

The Law provides that such activity “[...] aims at learning skills specific to the professional activity and a curricular contextualization, aiming at the development of the student for citizen life and for work” (BRASIL, 2008, p.1). It also determines a series of commitments that the institutions involved in the internship processes must assume, including the need for follow-up by such institutions:

§ 1o The internship, as a supervised school educational act, must be effectively monitored by the guiding professor of the educational institution and by the supervisor of the granting party, **evidenced by visa in the reports** referred to on item IV of the *caput* of art. 7o of this Law and mention of final approval.

The Law also informs that the determination regarding the mandatory or non-mandatory character of internship depends on definition of each field, indicating this will be defined in the the National Curriculum Guidelines for the area, as well as provisions in the Pedagogical Course Projects (BRASIL, 2008). Thus, each course, in compliance with the National Curriculum Guidelines and the particularities of each field, will define whether to realize internships as a requirement for approval and obtaining a diploma.

The National Curriculum Guidelines for bachelor’s in International Relations determine that the internships integrate the complementary training axis, whose activities:

[...] they include contents of a transversal and interdisciplinary nature, for the **enrichment of the trainee's profile**. Its objective is to enable the student to **recognize and test skills, knowledge, and competences, including outside the academic environment**, including the practice of independent studies and activities. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 4).

While the Guidelines inform that the mandatory or not of internships is an option of each institution, they determine that such activities must be guided by course professors, according to criteria regulated within the scope of each Higher Education Institution.

Art. 6º The curricular internship is a curricular component, aimed at consolidating the desired professional performance, inherent to the trainee's profile, and each institution must, through the competent institutional instance, approve the corresponding regulation, with its operationalization modalities.

§ 1º The prediction of mandatory curricular internship is an option of the Higher Education Institution.

§ 2º The conception and composition of the internship activities must be described in the document, even when the Higher Education Institution chooses not to be obligatory, since the student can opt for the internship or, within the scope of the Complementary Activities, have it as recognized. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 4)

It is worth noting that one of the most extensive studies on International Relations courses in Brazil undertook an analysis of one hundred and eleven Pedagogical Course Projects, of one hundred and fifty-one institutions of higher education. The study identified that 32% of the courses provide for mandatory internships and 29% regulate the activity as elective (MAIA, 2017). In the second case, the non-mandatory internship is an optional activity, added to the regular and mandatory academic workload (BRASIL, 2008).

In the course where the research was conducted, the internship activities are foreseen in the Pedagogical Course Project, on non-mandatory basis. Thus, students undertake the internship only if they wish to do so, contributing to integrate the workload of complementary activities required by the curriculum. Beyond the legal requirements - documents, workload, bureaucratic procedures with the course collegiate - the Pedagogical Course Project highlights: "as for the activities plan and reports, it is observed the international interface of the activities developed - or their possibilities - as well as their contribution to the formation of the skills and competences required in the profile of the graduate." (UFPEL, 2021, p. 40).

In favor of internships, stands out their contribution in the context of didactic-methodological programs, as they can be understood as integrating and interdisciplinary elements, which contribute both to the insertion of students in the community to which they belong (MARTINS, 2012), as to the articulation of the knowledge acquired during the course (SCHWARTZ, BAPTISTA, CASTELEINS, 2001). The theoretical-empirical literature suggests that internships contribute to the formation of students, including: development of skills and abilities (SCHWARTZ, BAPTISTA, CASTELEINS, 2001; MURARI, HELAL, 2009); the application of the knowledges acquired during the courses and the obtaining of a

useful experiences for the future professional (LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014); approach to the world of work (MURARI, HELAL, 2009; LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014; POLZIN, BERNARDIN, 2018). In some cases, they overcome the financial needs for permanence at the university through scholarships, assistance, or others (LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014; POLZIN, BERNARDIN, 2018).

Nevertheless, the management of non-mandatory internships in higher education faces numerous challenges, among them, ensure that they fulfill their role in the context of the courses: its pedagogical objective and the reflection on the contribution of the activities performed for the formation. This is because its contribution to the development of skills and competences is not automatic (GISI, SCHUARTZ *et al.*, 2000; OLIVEIRA, 2009).

Machry (2014, p. 22) highlights that “[...] little is known about the results and achievements obtained in this important professional practice of the students”, since higher education institutions have focused on regulatory, documentary, and bureaucratic issues. Silva (2016, p. 12) points out that “[...] students do not seem to understand this type of internship as an academic learning experience, but as an opportunity to get work or remuneration”. Companies, in turn, mischaracterize and devalue what is recommended for the internship activity, when they deviate from the purpose of learning and preparing the student for work (OLIVEIRA, 2009).

Among the main difficulties of the internships processes, Lavall and Barden (2014, p. 62, emphasis added) highlight:

[...] the biggest difficulty for interns is the low remuneration paid by the company for the development of activities, followed by the lack of time to study and the little theoretical knowledge when starting the internship. [...] Teachers, on the other hand, highlight as the greatest difficulty the **monitoring of students in the field of non-mandatory internship**, since they do not have time allocation for such activity. It is worth noting that, according to Law nº 11,788, of September 25, 2008, **the teacher's monitoring of the internship takes place through visas in reports** [...]. In relation to companies, it was found that the greatest difficulty is in the behavior of the interns, considering that the main difficulty was the commitment of the students, in addition to the lack of interest, pro-activity and punctuality of the students.

The Internship Law establishes the entire process by which internships will be managed by Higher Education Institutions, as well as documents that formalize their start, renewal, termination, and completion. It also provides that the pedagogical monitoring of the internships is realized through the delivery of internship reports, within a period not

exceeding six months. However, there are concerns about how to make internships meaningful in academic formation (MACHRY, 2014; SILVA, 2016).

Although the internship activities offer the practice of reflection, enabling the modification of reality, it also requires a collective effort within the scope of the course:

The approximation to reality only makes sense when it has a connotation of involvement, of intentionality, since most bureaucratized internships, loaded with observation cards, are myopic, which points to the need for a conceptual deepening of the internship and the activities that are involved in it. **It is necessary that the supervisors of internships, collectively, together with their peers and students, carry out this appropriation of reality, to analyze it and question it, critically, in the light of the theories [...].** (PIMENTA; LIMA, 2012, p.45)

Despite the challenges related to the follow-up process, internships are considered to have significant potential to contribute to the skills and competences of higher education academics. It is worth remembering that while skills transform knowledge into actions to reach a certain objective (KATZ, 2009), competencies are understood “[...] as the demonstration, within concrete situations, of mastery of knowledges and skills, seizes and learned, promoting the ability to innovate with autonomy in decisions and actions” (SILVA, 2007, p. 316). Both concepts involve, in addition to scientific knowledge, the experimentation of the real world.

The National Curriculum Guidelines for bachelor’s in International Relations establish that these courses must provide the following competencies and skills:

Art. 4º The Graduation Course in International Relations must enable professional formation that reveals, at least, the following competencies and skills related to the conception, management and organization of activities with an international interface:

I - Ability to understand international issues in their political, economic, historical, geographic, strategic, legal, cultural, environmental and social context, guided by a general, humanistic and ethical training;

II - Ability to solve problems in a diversified and changing reality;

III - Ability to use new research and communication technologies;

IV - Interpersonal skills (social awareness, social responsibility and empathy);

V - Ability to plan, propose, execute and evaluate actions to promote development at the local scale, based on the coherent integration between theory and practice;

VI - Ability to plan and strategically execute the internationalization of organizations of different types;

VII - Mastery in the elaboration, evaluation and application of international normative instruments;

VIII - Use of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze historical and contemporary phenomena of international politics;
IX - Logical reasoning and adequate expression of complex ideas;
X - Proper use of theories and concepts specific to the field of International Relations and their use in the analysis of concrete situations;
XI - Critical stance regarding arguments, evidence, discourses and interpretations, regarding both international events and processes, as well as approaches, theories and perspectives in International Relations;
XII - Mastery of skills related to effective communication and oral and written expression in Portuguese language;
XIII - Ability to understand a foreign language, especially English;
XIV - Ability to research, analyze, evaluate and formulate scenarios for action in the international sphere;
XV - Ability to make decisions; planning, conducting, analyzing and evaluating negotiations and problem solving in a diversified and constantly changing reality;
XVI - Ability to formulate, negotiate and execute international cooperation projects. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 2-3).

Considering the points above, it is important to say that the non-mandatory internship should allow students and teachers to reflect on the activities performed, as well as regarding their contribution to the formation of abilities and competences expected of the graduate. This type of internship should not be seen as an opportunity for remuneration, but rather as an activity with significant potential to contribute to the academic path.

3 METHODOLOGY

Due to the absence of general discussions about the contribution of internships in International Relations courses and, particularly, in the course where the research was carried out, the purpose of this research was exploratory. Gil (2007) suggests that exploratory research allows familiarization with the phenomenon being investigated.

As the study was developed from the reality of an International Relations course established ten years ago, in a Public Higher Education Institution in a municipality in the interior of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, it is defined as a case study. For Godoy (2006) it is the study of a phenomenon, object of investigation, directed to a particular situation, focused on practical and specific problems. The case study, according to Yin (2015), allows investigating a contemporary phenomenon in depth, within its real-world context.

The approach used in this study was mixed (quali-quantitative), considering the need to integrate qualitative and quantitative data, through the sequential mixed strategy (CRESWELL, 2010). The qualitative approach - from bibliographic and documentary sources - has contributed to the understanding of the scenario, the reflection over the theme, as well

as in the preparation of the questions applied to the sampling of students linked to the internship activity.

The quantitative approach allowed the realization of the survey, which “[...] provides a quantitative or numerical description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population, studying a sample of this population”. (CRESWELL, 2010, p.36). The sample consists of students who made internships in the year 2021: of the universe of 224 academics regularly registered in the year, only 11 participated of internships activity.

The questions were formulated considering the following statements: internships contribute to the development of skills and abilities (SCHWARTZ, BAPTISTA, CASTELEINS, 2001; MURARA, HELAL, 2009); internships contribute to the application of the knowledge acquired during the courses and the obtaining of useful experiences for the professional future (LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014); internships contribute to getting closer to the world of work (MURARI, HELAL, 2009; LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014; POLZIN, BERNARDIN, 2018); internships contribute to overcome financial needs for permanence at university (LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014; POLZIN, BERNARDIN, 2018); Companies respect the purpose of learning and preparing students for internship work (OLIVEIRA, 2009); internships are widely discussed in the course (PIMENTA; LIMA, 2012);

An electronic form (google forms) with 06 structured multiple-choice questions was used as a data collection instrument. Each question also allowed the insertion of observations by the respondents, through the option “others”. The form was applied to a sample of 11 students with non-mandatory internship processes approved by the course collegiate, at the end of the academic semester of the year 2021 (between October 23 and November 23, 2021) and 08 answers were obtained.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section describes how the monitoring of non-mandatory internships is carried out in the course, characterizes the sample that realized this activity in 2021 and, finally, presents the results related to the contribution of internships in the perception of the students of the sample.

4.1 THE MANAGEMENT OF NON-MANDATORY PROGRAMS IN THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COURSE

The bachelor's Degree in International Relations, in which the research was developed, was established in 2010, within an already consolidated public Higher Education Institution, as a result of policies to promote the expansion and interiorization of higher education in the country. It is an evening course, in the presential modality, lasting four years and organized by semesters.

In 2020, when completing its first decade, a lack of systematized data on non-mandatory internships has been verified. It is also worth noting the lack of records on possible actions to promote the course and the profile of its graduates, aimed to the local society, seeking to approach public, private and social institutions, seeking to expand the opportunities for insertion of students - through internships - and of future professionals. This point deserves to be mentioned, since studies that discuss the creation and consolidation of International Relations courses and the search for the professional insertion of their graduate mention efforts made by the academic community. Lessa (2005, p. 11) states that “[...] in the 1970s, when UnB created the first course, it had to invest important energies in publicizing the profile of egresses and in convincing potential employers to employ them [...]”. Miyamoto (2003) also gives examples of actions to promote and publicize courses and their professionals, highlighting the importance of joint action with course directors, students, teachers, and other stakeholders.

In the referred Educational Institution where the course is inserted, the internships are regulated by the Pró-Dean of Education, from its Bachelor's Core, Technologists and Internships. This organ, basically, publishes the Internship Law and regulates the conditions for the activity, which must be observed by the courses. Its operationalization – acceptance of documents, signatures, and monitoring – is realized within the competence of the course collegiate.

The internships are foreseen in the Pedagogical Project of the International Relations Course, in the non-mandatory modality, in compliance with the aforementioned legal and normative provisions. Its approval and follow-up involve: Secretary, Course Coordinator and Advisor Teacher. Each student interested in performing an internship should look for it himself, since there is no disclosure or promotion of specific opportunities by the course.

The Secretary keeps the course's website updated, which has a specific tab with information on non-mandatory internships: regulatory aspects, necessary documents and information on procedures and deadlines. Among the documents, the Term of Commitment and the Activity Plan, required for the beginning of the internship, stand out; model of Activity Reports to be delivered to the Advisor Teacher; further instructions on renewal, termination or completion of internships.

The Term of Commitment will be signed by the Course Coordinator and the Activity Plan will be signed by the Advisor Professor, with due acknowledgment of the other members of the course collegiate. Once the non-mandatory internship is approved, a process is opened, through the Electronic Information System (Sistema Eletrônico de Informações – SEI), through which the monitoring of the student will be operationalized.

Through the description of the process (synthesized in Table 1), it is observed that while the Secretary and Course Coordination focus on complying with legal and bureaucratic-administrative issues, the pedagogical aspects of the internships are limited to two moments: (i) the evaluation of the compatibility between the activities described in the Internship Activity Plan and the course's pedagogical proposal; (ii) signature on the Activity Reports, delivered by the interns within a period not exceeding six months.

Table 1 Summary of steps and requirements for non-mandatory internships

Stage	Responsible	Course requirements
Interested in doing an internship	Student	International interface of activities - or its possibilities; contribution to the formation of the skills and competences required in the graduate profile.
Start of internship	Secretary receives signed documents, forwards them to required signatures, let the collegiate know and opens the process	Term of Commitment: Coordinator Signature Activities plan: Signature of the Advisor Professor
Internship follow-up	Advisor Teacher	Activity reports every six months: Signature of the Advisor Professor
Internship renewal	Secretary updates the student process	Addendum: Coordinator Signature Activity Report for the previous period: Signature of the Advisor Professor
Internship Termination	Advisor Teacher updates the student process	Termination Term: Coordinator Signature Activity Report for Signature of the Advisor Professor
Completion of Internship	Advisor Teacher updates the student process	Term of Performance Activity Report for Signature of the Advisor Professor

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on internships routines.

The role of the Advisor Professor basically focuses on document analysis, ensuring that the internship activities are adequate to the pedagogical proposal of the course. It is

evident, however, the lack of greater interaction for exchanging experiences and reflections about the activities, either with Advisor Professors, or even between the students involved in the internship activities and the other students and professors.

In addition, a recent study sought to diagnose the students' perception of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges related to non-mandatory internships in the course. One of the first evidences is that students are interested in do internships, however, many are not even clear about the sector, activities, locations, among others. It was also mentioned the lack of knowledge of the skills and abilities of International Relations professionals by local institutions (FREITAS; SCHIMANSKI, 2021).

In view of these considerations, it is possible to affirm that, despite the fulfillment of normative and legal requirements, advances are still necessary in terms of aspects related to the monitoring and discussion of potential pedagogical contributions acquired in internship experiences. It is noteworthy that such responsibility is not exclusive to the role of the Advisor Teacher - already provided for in the Legislation and other regulations - but of the course community. To mean the internship experiences, contextualizing them to other activities and discussions foreseen in the Pedagogical Course Project, promoting the course and the profile of the egress with the local community, are ways to overcome the challenges related to the location of the course, as well as promoting the internationalization and interiorization of the job market in International Relations.

4.2 SAMPLING CHARACTERIZATION

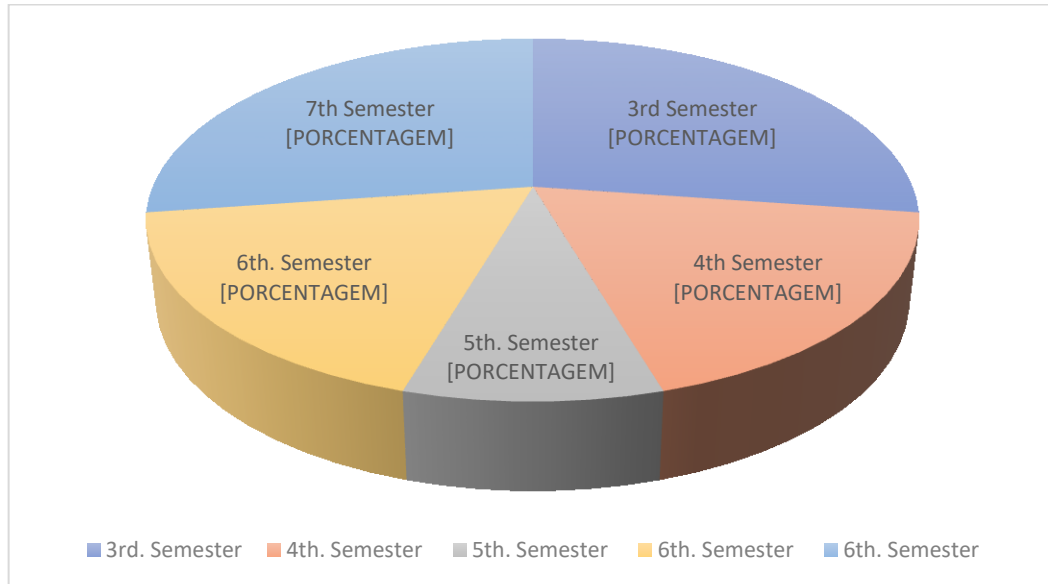
In 2021, of the universe of 224 academics regularly registered, only 11 performed internships, defined as non-mandatory in the course. Due to the lack of systematization of previous data, it is not possible to say whether this number was impacted by the pandemic context by COVID-19².

Among the students who started their non-mandatory internships, seven identify with the male gender and four with the female gender. Figure 1 shows the semesters in which the students were registered when they started their internships. From the sample, it was observed

² During the pandemic, although some internships could be done remotely, a Term of Responsibility was required so that students could start or maintain non-mandatory internships in presential form. The Term foresee that the place offers safety conditions, including distancing measures, hygiene, equipment, number of people in the environment, among others.

that the greatest interest in the activity occurs by students in the second year of the course (3rd and 4th semester) and from the third to the fourth year (6th and 7th semester).

Figure 1 Beginning semester of non-mandatory internships



Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on the internship documents.

As for the sectors in which the non-mandatory internship activities were developed, the private sector deserves to be highlighted, in the service provision branch, presented in Table 2. Only 01 student performed the internship in the public sector and none in the other sectors foreseen by the National Curricular Guidelines, highlighting the challenges of internationalization and interiorization of the world of work for the field of International Relations, already pointed out by other studies.

Table 2 Sectors for realizing non-mandatory internships

Sector	Segment / Branch
Public	City Hall
Private	Telecommunications Services / Advertising Services / Social Investment Services / Trade / Technology Services / Customs Services.
Social Organizations	(-)
International Organizations	(-)
Teaching or Academy	(-)

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on the internship documents.

Of the number of processes analyzed, it is observed that, while some students had their Terms of Commitment renewed, ended their activities, or were even hired, others had their contracts terminated, both by the company and upon request, as described in Table 3.

Table 3 Status of non-mandatory internships monitored in 2021

Status of internships	Quantity	Description
In follow-up	05	Internships in progress.
Internship renewal	02	Additives, after 6 months, renewed for another 6 months.
Internship Termination	03	01 terminated by the company after a period of 3 months; 01 terminated on request, after a period of 2 months; 01 termination of the internship for formal hiring after the period of 3 months.
End of internship	01	End of internship due to graduation.

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on the internship documents.

The continuity of this analysis will be necessary, so that it is possible to make the crossing of data for the due deepening of this discussion. It is considered relevant to identify students' expectations before starting their non-mandatory internship activities, previous experiences with the world of work, among other factors. Align students' expectations about the activities to be developed also presupposes discussions about the profile of internship vacancies, preventing possible frustrations.

4.3 THE STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF NON-MANDATORY INTERNSHIPS

With the purpose of evaluate the perception of sutudents about their non-mandatory internship activities, questions were created based on the main findings of research already made on non-mandatory internships.

The first question is based on the assumptions that internships contribute to approaching the world of work (MURARI, HELAL, 2009; LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014; POLZIN, BERNARDIN, 2018); and that internships contribute to overcome financial needs for permanence at the university (LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014; POLZIN, BERNARDIN, 2018). In this sense, it was asked about the students' motivation to perform or stay in the internship. While 02 respondents pointed out that the motivation was exclusively financial, the others selected the option: balance between approximation to the world of work and financial aspect. It is worth noting that none of the respondents selected the option: "strictly for the learning that the activities provide".

The second question is based on the consideration that internships contribute to the application of knowledge acquired during the courses and the obtaining of useful experiences for the professional future (LAVALL, BARDEN, 2014). All respondents consider that they are obtaining useful experiences for their formation, in the context of the organizations where they carry out their activities.

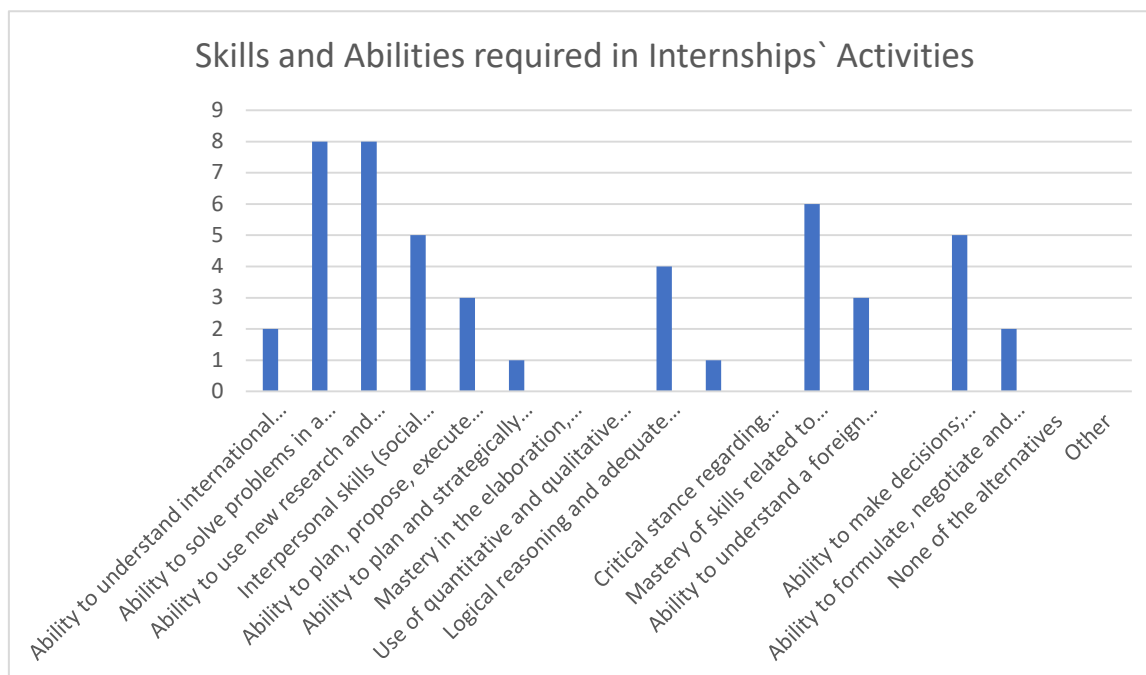
The third question seeks to explore if the organizations value what is recommended for the internship activity, which is student learning and preparation for work (OLIVEIRA, 2009). While 7 responses agreed with the statement that the activities described in their Activity Plans are being developed, one response pointed out that there were adaptations due to an internal change. All highlighted that they have support from local supervisors regarding doubts in the execution of tasks.

The fourth question assumes that internships contribute to the development of skills and abilities (SCHWARTZ, BAPTISTA, CASTELEINS, 2001; MURARA, HELAL, 2009). Through a question with multiple options, the students were invited to select, among the competences and abilities foreseen in the National Curriculum Guidelines, those that are or were required in the development of the activities developed in their internships.

The Figure 2 shows that the respondents were unanimous in marking: ability to solve problems in a diversified and changing reality; and ability to use new research and communication technologies. The mastery of skills related to effective communication and oral and written expression in Portuguese language was an option selected by six of the eight respondents. Finally, five students marked each of the following options: interpersonal skills (social awareness, social responsibility, and empathy); and ability to make decisions, plan, conduct, analyze and evaluate negotiations and problem solving in a diversified and constantly changing reality.

When asked if they agree with the statement that internships are discussed and/or promoted in the course (PIMENTA; LIMA, 2012), students were unanimous in denying the statement. In the observations, they highlighted the lack of disclosure of internship opportunities directed at students of International Relations; suggest that there is a sharp cleavage between academic career and insertion in the job market; and that students are not supported/stimulated to undertake internships.

Figure 2 Skills and Abilities required in non-mandatory internship activities



Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on the interns' answers.

Finally, the sixth question was related to the administrative-bureaucratic process, seeking to identify any doubts regarding the internship process itself, deadlines, or documents. Although most respondents indicated that there were no doubts, one of the answers was related to the delivery of documents. In this case, it is possible to affirm that the maintenance of information, flows and documents on the course website is a strategy that helps students in this process.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this paper was to show the contribution of internships in the academic context of Bachelor's in International Relations, based on the case of a course established ten years ago, in a public university, in the interior of Brazil. The research is justified due to the observed absence of records, debates, and reflections on the role of non-mandatory internships in terms of their pedagogical character, as an experience of learning the skills and competences of the professional who is seeking to form.

At first moment, support was sought in the legal and normative bases, as well as in the literature on non-mandatory internships, both in the field of International Relations and in general. This step revealed the first finding of the research: although the students of International Relations in Brazil do internships, little is known about the contribution of this

activity in their formation context. It is true that the first National Curriculum Guidelines for these bachelor's degree courses were only published in 2017. Even so, the topic has not been widely discussed in the instances that have promoted significant advances in the field, such as the Brazilian Association of International Relations (ABRI).

The results also suggest the need to deepen the discussions on the role of non-mandatory internships, within the courses themselves. It is observed that this challenge is not exclusive to the course where the research was conducted, nor only to International Relations courses. This is a challenge observed in different areas of knowledge.

Describing the process of monitoring internships was essential to identify that, despite the fulfillment of legal, administrative, and bureaucratic requirements, there is not a broad and deep debate on how the internships' activities can be signified in the formative path of students. It is possible to consider that the monitoring of the non-mandatory internship through activity reports is an insufficient mechanism to provoke broad reflection and debate on its contribution in the context of academic formation. Especially, it comes at such an important time for young people, who often have their first experiences with the world of work through the internships.

The reality of the course's points to the absence of wider spaces for discussions and reflections, which ends up separating the practical activities promoted by the internships from theoretical discussions. To reflect on ways to promote this connection, valuing internships as privileged formation opportunities, is a gap to be filled.

By characterizing the sample and raising the perceptions of the students who carried out the activity in the year 2021, it contributes to highlight this important debate. The students perceive that the activities contribute to the development of skills and competences in their fields of formation, but they also note the absence of debate, reflection and involvement of the academic community in the learning obtained in their experiences.

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