

# FROM SCHOLARLY PURSUITS TO GLOBAL EXCHANGE

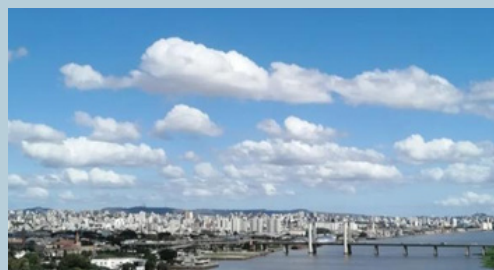
## INSIGHTS FROM A DOCTORATE EXCHANGE STUDENT

**Why did you decide to write part of your dissertation abroad and why did you choose Salzburg in particular?**

It's essential for doctoral researchers to embrace multiple perspectives within one's chosen field. Although I've spent several years working on my topic, I've realized how important it is to explore alternative points of view. In the field of law, it is crucial to understand our historical foundations and classical texts. Often, we neglect these basics in favor of focusing solely on current issues. I chose to study in Salzburg to gain a deeper understanding of these fundamental principles, which I believe are essential for producing high quality academic work. Although my specialization is in civil procedural law, recognizing the importance of the fundamental concepts and classics of philosophy and sociology of law is essential to the development of my field. My decision to study in Salzburg was influenced by the scholarship opportunities available through university partnerships; added to that, the specialization and international recognition of the department of legal philosophy here in Salzburg.

*Partner Universities of the University of Salzburg:*

<https://www.plus.ac.at/abteilung-fuer-internationale-beziehungen/buero-fuer-internationale-beziehungen/service-fuer-internationalisierung/kooperationspartner-netzwerke/universitaetspartnerschaften/>



**Could you describe your home university, PUCRS? How was your time as a student at PUCRS?**

PUCRS, a prestigious private university in Brazil, has been ranked among the top private institutions in the country for years and was ranked first in 2023. Its campus occupies an entire city block in the southern state, providing students with a comprehensive campus experience. While specific enrolment figures are not provided, the law programme alone graduates approximately 400 to 500 students per year. The bachelor's programme typically takes 10 semesters, with flexible scheduling options including morning, afternoon and evening classes to accommodate students with work commitments. The academic year begins in March and ends in mid-June or early July, with the second semester running from August to mid-November/early December. The academic structure is adaptable and often varies according to the preferences of individual professors, with primarily written exams and collaborative coursework. Despite the language barrier, international students can use dictionaries during Portuguese-taught classes, with professors accommodating exam needs after explanation. In addition, PUCRS University offers several subjects taught in English, including Arbitration and International Human Rights, with course details available on the university's website. The availability of English courses may vary from semester to semester.

*List of English Courses at PUCRS:*  
<https://www.pucrs.br/blog/disciplinas-em-ingles/>



## Profile

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**Age:** 27

**Studies:**

Doctorate student, Bachelor and Master degree in Law from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS)

**Exchange semesters:**

since 12/2023 at the University of Salzburg (Austria)

2016 at the University of Tübingen (Germany)

**Semester in Salzburg:**

Research in the Department of Philosophy and Sociology of Law

**Dissertation topic:**

Legal Consequentialism and Economic Efficiency

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### Could you please tell us about life in Brazil, especially in Porto Alegre, where your home university is located?

Porto Alegre, with a population of around 1.5 million, has a vibrant cultural scene with numerous museums. Although the level of English varies, the locals are generally welcoming and helpful, especially if you have some knowledge of Portuguese, and most of us can understand Spanish in a daily conversation. The university environment is particularly welcoming to English speakers and provides support for international students. *The university offers an extensive library and a whole building dedicated to study spaces with recreational areas with swings, pool tables and a piano.* Outdoor enthusiasts can explore the city's riverside walks, parks and bike hire facilities and enjoy the varied climate throughout the year. Support for international students at PURCS depends on the area in which they live. While the University offers support through dedicated offices and buddy programmes, students should actively seek information about accommodation and safety. Certain areas should be avoided at night due to safety concerns, but the university campus and adjacent shopping centres generally provide a safe environment. Parks are patrolled by the police for added security, emphasising the importance of caution when moving around the city, which means basically paying attention to our surroundings while walking. Within the university campus, there are several cafeterias, and the city centre has numerous renowned cafes. Coffee lovers can indulge in Porto Alegre's passion for coffee, making the city a hub for locals and visitors alike. PURCS has a remarkable science museum, founded in 1967 and known for its possibilities of interactivity of its visitors, which offers student discounts. The city is also home to several art museums, including MARGS, Fundação Iberê Camargo, Farol Santander and Casa de Cultura Mário Quintana, a historic site that was turned into a café known for its charming pink facade and cultural significance.

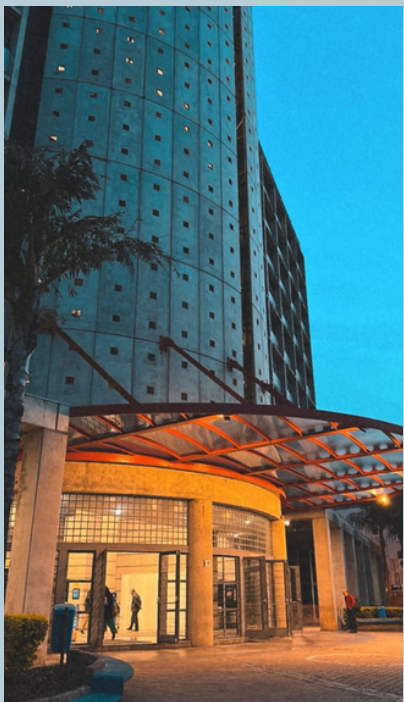
*Porto Alegre Guidebook from PUCRS:*

<https://ebooks.pucrs.br/edipucrs/welcome-to-porto-alegre/#/side-menu21/page1>

### What is your favorite place in Porto Alegre?

During the weekends, there are several activities to enjoy in Porto Alegre. One option is to visit parks such as Parque Germania or Farroupilha Park, where you can stroll around and visit flea markets ('pulga' in Portuguese), vegetable, fruit and vegetable fair or craft markets, known as Brique da Redenção, which are especially pleasant when the weather is good. These parks offer a relaxing environment to enjoy snacks such as popcorn or churros. Alternatively, you can go shopping or see a film. PURCS offers a wide range of cultural activities, which are detailed on the university's website. You can attend events at the Salão de Atos, including musical performances and theatre plays. Since Maria Leopoldine of Austria was appointed Empress of Brazil in 1822, influencing the cuisine and language. The close relationship between the two countries continues to grow, attracting a large number of Austrian students. Brazil's vastness ensures that each state maintains its unique traditions. *In Porto Alegre, residents known as gaúchos share cultural ties with Argentina and Uruguay. Local customs include indulging in chimarrão (a traditional hot drink with mate tea herb) and enjoying a distinctive style of barbecue known as churrasco.* Farroupilha Week is held in September, culminating in the celebration of the Farroupilha Revolution on the 20th. Although September is particularly festive, there are opportunities to see traditional dances throughout the year in Porto Alegre. Porto Alegre's city center is a picturesque place to explore, with the opportunity to take a leisurely stroll and enjoy a coffee at the Casa de Cultura Mário Quintana or now event at the Porto Alegre Metropolitan Cathedral, which opened its own café. A must-see is the sunset along the Guaíba River, renowned for its breathtaking beauty and considered one of the most breathtaking sunsets in Brazil. The riverfront is a popular spot for running, walking, biking and socializing at the local bars, making it an ideal destination to relax and spend time with friends. And for sports lovers, they have to watch a soccer match called Grenal from our two biggest teams, Grêmio (the blue, black and white one - our tricolor) and Internacional (the red and white team), their stadiums are accessible and it's definitely a great regional experience.





**What differences did you notice between European and Brazilian universities during your time as a doctoral student at the Department of Legal and Social Philosophy in Salzburg?**

In postgraduate programmes such as Masters and PhDs, there's a marked difference from undergraduate studies. Undergraduate classes typically have between forty and sixty students in PUCRS when in person, although this varies depending on the professor and the semester. There are also online classes now and have their own style. Professors are usually available for discussion before or after class, and attendance is mandatory at least 75%. Group assignments are common with variations in the number of assignments per course and semester and students can explore alternatives with supportive professors. This encourages open communication and fosters a collaborative learning atmosphere. By comparison, the academic experience in universities such as Salzburg is very different from that in Brazil particularly about the examination format. In Austria oral exams are common and written exams can last up to four hours, whereas in Brazil multiple-choice exams are usually the most common type of exam with the exception of written or mixed exams. Exams are also usually shorter so that students can take them during normal class time, which is about an hour and a half. Also, one very interesting fact concerning lifestyle: in Brazil your age doesn't matter to be considered a student. If you are enrolled and got a student card, you get all the discounts for cultural activities and public transportation as any student. You don't have the limitation of 26 or 27 as here in Austria.

**Finally, do you have any tips for students from Salzburg who would like to spend a semester abroad in Porto Alegre (accommodations, language barrier etc.)?**

In Brazil, student residences are not as common as in other countries, with most students opting to live at home and commute to university. However, at PURCS, a residence complex offers convenient accommodation just across the street from the university and also one within a few blocks. This complex offers two-room apartments and is particularly popular with international students. Alternative accommodation is also available close to the university and the shopping centre. It's important for students to check the suitability and safety of accommodation, and the university can advise on the best options. The Academic Mobility Office at PUCRS also assists international students by offering Portuguese classes before they arrive in Brazil. These classes are valuable in overcoming language barriers, especially outside the university campus where English proficiency may be limited. The office provides resources on its website and assigns coordinators, such as Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stephan Kirste, to assist students. Students are encouraged to seek help without hesitation and can email for assistance with any aspect of university life or adjusting to the city.

*Website and E-mail addresses of the Academic Mobility Office:*

<https://www.pucrs.br/en/study-at-pucrs/academic-mobility/>

*General:* mobilidade@pucrs.br

*Applicants and representatives from other institutions:* mobilidade.in@pucrs.br

*Interviewer: Pia Möslinger-Gehmayr*

