GRACE ACADEMY

REGULATION
Academic Year 2023/2024

1. Framework

GRACE – Empresas Responsáveis is an association endowed with public utility, whose main objective is to promote the responsibility and sustainability of organizations and to strengthen a global movement of responsible companies, committed to the principles of sustainability in its various dimensions and to the exercise of active corporate citizenship.

Aware of the responsibility it has in expanding the positive impact of companies in the Community, through the development of projects capable of creating synergies between stakeholders of different natures and cooperation with other civil society entities, GRACE has identified Higher Education Institutions as partners in excellence, for the fundamental role they play in the education and training of young people.

In this context, and in order to achieve its objectives, GRACE implemented the Uni.Network project with the purpose of promoting the connection and approximation between the Portuguese Academic Entities and the Companies in the theme of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, promoting the approximation between the business world and Higher Education Institutions, so that there is greater convergence between young people leaving the academic world and their entry into professional life.

The GRACE Academy is one of the pillars of Uni.Network's activity, and its objective is the development of academic projects (individual or group) on Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

The essential contours of the GRACE Academy are the following:

✓ The elaboration of an academic project, individually or in a group, on the theme(s) defined annually by the GRACE Board, with applicability to the business context;

✓ The evaluation of the works by a Jury that will include elements appointed by GRACE (see point 10. Jury);

✓ The distinction of the authors of the best academic projects presented, under the terms defined in this Regulation.

2. Themes

In the 2023/2024 school year, students will have to respond to the following topics:

A. Employee's Last Years of Active Life

In the European Union, population ageing is particularly problematic. The most recent figures indicate that the average age is 44.1 years. Among European nations, Portugal stands out as the 3rd oldest country in the European Union. In 2021, the average age of the Portuguese stood at 45.8 years, only lower than the average age recorded in Italy and Germany.

When analyzing the different age groups of the Portuguese population, we see that the population aged 65 and over represents approximately 25% of its total. In the opposite direction, the 0-14 age group represents approximately 13%. The trend will not be reversed any time soon if we take into account that Portugal's birth rate is the 4th lowest in Europe at 1.40 births per woman. According to statistics, Portugal has lost more than 200,000 inhabitants in the last ten years, with projections predicting that by 2070 the population will be just 8 million and that 35% will be over 65.

With this data, the impact on the job market is notorious. In 2019, 50% of unemployed people registered with the IEFP were aged 45 or over and found it very difficult to return to working life. The ageing of the population also means that the working life of the employee is getting longer, and it is expected that in the future the age of retirement may be extended.

So, taking into account the ageing of the population associated with the increase in average life expectancy and, consequently, the extension of employees' working lives, present a proposal, in project format**, for how companies can make the most of senior talent to benefit the companies themselves and junior employees**, namely, among other things, by taking advantage of their

technical and leadership knowledge and their professional, personal and family experience, bearing in mind the current context in which there are increased challenges associated with the personal and professional expectations of the new generations, where - in the face of the "job for life" status quo - such different realities now seem to coexist as greater professional mobility and more lifelong learning, the permanent need for connectivity to social networks, the digitalization of processes, teleworking and the hybrid system, growing awareness of sustainability issues, changing consumer profiles (e-commerce, uberization, car-sharing), and lower salaries available compared to the previous generation.

B. Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is a process of innovation in the way organizations operate their business, communicate and interact with customers. It implies a break with more traditional procedures and a transition to a digital culture. Digital transformation is neither linear nor the same for all companies. It is, in fact, a complex process that forces organizations to rethink the way they do business and how the integration of technology and digital tools can contribute to their growth. In other words, digital transformation combines the growth of operational processes with the use of technology to make them more efficient and strategic.

Digital transformation will play a key role in companies' core processes, particularly in finance, sales, human resources and production. By adopting appropriate and effective solutions, companies can transform manual and time-consuming processes and automate key areas. Digital transformation in companies offers more efficient and flexible internal processes, with the capacity to keep up with business growth. Data and the level of analysis at the heart of a digital transformation strategy allow businesses to take advantage of big data. Companies today have access to data than ever before, largely due to the IoT (Internet of Things). With the right set of analytical tools, this data can be converted into business trends and used for important decision-making.

These technological advances in the job market require organizations and their employees to adapt quickly. It is estimated that when the automation of work explodes at the end of the next decade, it is possible that more than 400 million people will be out of work due to a lack of skills.

Therefore, and considering the impact of the digital transformation on companies and their

employees, present a proposal, in project format, **for how companies (a company, a sector, etc., at a national level) can and should deal with technological development, especially with regard to increasing the skills of their employees.**

3. Objectives

This initiative intends to:

- Allow awarded students, based on the criteria defined in point 7. Assessment Criteria, access to participation in an initiative in the area of innovation, entrepreneurship or sustainability where they will also benefit from relevant networking for their personal and professional path;

- Raise students' awareness of the importance of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability and promote the adoption, by Companies, of good practices in this matter, through the development of innovative academic work, as much as possible with applicability in the Portuguese business world.

4. Recipients

The GRACE Academy is aimed at undergraduate, postgraduate and master's students, Portuguese or foreign, from GRACE's partner Higher Education Institutions.

The following cannot apply to the GRACE Academy:
- Persons belonging to GRACE's governing bodies and technical team;
- Direct line relatives and affines of Jury members;
- Winners from previous years who have benefited from the Prize.

5. Participation Conditions

Applications can be submitted individually or collectively (maximum 4 elements) and can be written in English or Portuguese, and each candidate (or group of candidates) can submit only one work. Each student cannot participate in more than one individual or collective application.

The work should focus on the theme defined by the GRACE Board, seeking to develop a practical project that responds to the challenge launched.

Although media materials (images, videos, audio) are accepted, applications must be based on a written work, with a maximum of 30 pages, font size 11, which must include the following fields:

- Title
- Summary
- Introduction/Framework
- Body of Work
- Conclusions
- Bibliography

To formalize the application, participants must send all the content of the work and the application form completed with their full identification. If the application is collective, the spokesperson must be identified for the purpose of interfacing with GRACE.

Each application must be guided by a Coordinating Professor, who ensures compliance with the Regulations and the adequacy of the work to the selected topic, whose name and contact e-mail must also be mentioned in the form.

The application form is available here and is also available at: https://grace.pt/academia/

All documents must be submitted using the form indicated or, if this is not possible, sent to academiagrace@grace.pt. If it is not possible to submit or send the documents electronically, they must be sent in digital format, with a copy of the application form to the following address:

ACADEMIA GRACE
GRACE – Empresas Responsáveis
Now Beato – Rua da Manutenção, 67, 2º
1900-319 Lisboa

6. Deadlines
- The deadline for submitting applications will run until **April 30, 2024**.
- The winners will be announced at a public event in **June 2024**.

7. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation of applications to ACADEMIA GRACE will be carried out according to the following criteria:

• Pertinence of the approach to the chosen theme;
• Originality in approaching the theme;
• Applicability to the Portuguese business context;
• Impact on the Community;
• Internal impact on the company;
• Replicability.

8. Prize Categories

In order to differentiate the works to which the PRIZE is awarded, the Jury may assign the following categories:

• GRACE Academy Award, for work that stands out in all or most of the evaluation criteria;
• Idea Award, for work that stands out in terms of Pertinence and Originality;
• Action Award, for work that stands out in the Applicability and Replicability criteria;
• Impact Prize, for work that stands out in the Internal Impact and Community Impact criteria.

9. Prizes

The GRACE Academy will distinguish the winners with four prizes, according to the categories defined in point 8., in the area of innovation, entrepreneurship or sustainability, benefiting from relevant networking for their personal and professional path.

Lastly, all winners will have the opportunity to publicly present their work in pitch format during the PRIZE announcement and delivery ceremony, and to see it publicized on the various GRACE communication channels and partners.

The aforementioned public ceremony will be organized by GRACE and will take place around the month of June.

10. Jury

The Jury will be composed of people of recognized competence and suitability, representatives of the associative, business, academic and institutional areas, as well as of the Social Economy/Civil Society Organizations. GRACE will be responsible for nominating all members of the Jury and designating its President.

The Jury will be assisted in the evaluation of the projects by a Technical Team, whose constitution will be the responsibility of GRACE.

The GRACE Technical Team and the Jury may ask the identified candidates or coordinating professor for additional clarification on the projects presented and demand the delivery of supporting documents for some of their declarations, having the prerogative of disqualifying them if their veracity is not confirmed.

The Jury will have the following attributions:

1. Ensure rigor and transparency throughout the process of analysis and evaluation of applications;
2. Elect the GRACE Academy winning projects;
3. Decide not to grant GRACE Academy awards if the lack of quality of the projects or non-compliance with the objectives established in point 2, so justifies it.

The deliberations of the Jury will be taken by simple majority of the votes of the members present, with the President of the Jury having the casting vote. In the decisions of the Jury, there will be no appeal. Jury members cannot designate substitutes. In case of impediment or definitive absence of any of the members of the Jury, this will work with the remaining members.

11. Communication

GRACE assumes responsibility for disseminating the GRACE Academy through its website, for publicizing it to associates and national Higher Education Institutions, as well as for using the media or any other means deemed appropriate for this purpose.

12. Final considerations

GRACE guarantees the confidentiality of projects throughout their evaluation process, with information being used only for the purposes defined in this Regulation.

GRACE does not contribute to the costs of travel or stays spent by awarded students within the scope of achieving the awards, the respective costs being the responsibility of the students.

GRACE may, for weighty and well-founded reasons, amend this regulation, as well as the composition of the Jury.

GRACE will be indifferent to any lasting collaboration relationship, whether of a work nature or otherwise, that may be established between the awarded students and the companies or organizations with which they come into contact as a result of the Award, however, it must be informed of the establishment of such relationship.

Any questions related to the GRACE Academy can be clarified by email address academiagrace@grace.pt or by the website https://grace.pt/academia/.