

Full Costing: best practice in Europe

University of Aveiro has been developing its analytical accounting system since 2000, in the consequence of national orientations and legislation applied to Portuguese universities. The development of such accounting systems, mostly directed to a new management model, should allow universities to obtain the cost per activity, to analyze the efficiency in the use of public financial resources, to support the development of indicators, among others.

The progress and implementation of this system was difficult and long, being the first years dedicated to the internal and external research, the integral study of the institution and the primary design of the methodology to be implemented – an activity based costing method. The subsequent phase was the in-house development of the software that would allow the management of all data, by an interdisciplinary team with members of the accounting services and informatics.

Despite the barriers of institution complexity and the lack of existent software adjusted to the universities reality, as well as the absence of financial support to develop all the work, which, by nature, implies a great consumption of resources, or even the cultural barriers for time recording, most common in universities, University of Aveiro is now in conditions to provide the cost of each support activity and the total direct and indirect costs of each final activity (teaching, research, subcontracting, users support, other activities), mainly supported in time records as activity cost driver.

However, all the methodology and correspondent tools were developed over national orientations and, as such, rules applied to community funds have been in a second plan. The last steps before the submission of the methodology to European Commission will, therefore, consist in the ongoing improvement of the existent software and the certification of the methodology by an independent auditor.