

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION STRATEGIES AT THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTA MARIA (UFSM)

ACESSIBILIDADE E INCLUSÃO: ESTRATÉGIAS DE EDUCAÇÃO INCLUSIVA DA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA MARIA (UFSM)

ACCESIBILIDAD E INCLUSIÓN: ESTRATEGIAS DE EDUCACIÓN INCLUSIVA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD FEDERAL DE SANTA MARIA (UFSM)

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ABSTRACT: Given the normative scenario and the increase in the number of people with disabilities accessing the university, it is necessary to reflect on opportunities for improvement, aiming at making decisions that qualify participation and learning. Thus, the Index of Inclusion in Higher Education – INES in the Portuguese acronym - was applied to 37 students with disabilities and/or special educational needs from UFSM, whose answers were collected from the Lickert Scale, analyzed descriptively, building the semaphores matrix. It was revealed as strong points: the existence of policies that minimize the barriers for learning and participation of students, programs that value the well-being of academics, facilities and infrastructure consistent with inclusive education; and as points for improvement: processes of identification and characterization of students with disabilities, greater incentive to faculty and student mobility in national and international levels. The application of the Index allowed the perception of the actions that this University develops, its strengths, and the identification of situations for improvement.

KEYWORDS: Special education. Higher education. INES. Accessibility.

RESUMO: Diante do cenário normativo e da ampliação do número de pessoas com deficiência acessando a universidade, necessita-se refletir sobre oportunidades de melhoria, visando a tomada de decisões que qualifiquem a participação e a aprendizagem. Assim, realizou-se a aplicação do Índice de Inclusão no Ensino Superior - INES junto a 37 estudantes com deficiência e/ou necessidades educacionais especiais da UFSM, cujas respostas foram coletadas a partir da Escala Lickert, analisadas descritivamente, construindo-se a matriz de semaforização. Revelaram-se como pontos fortes: a existência de políticas que minimizam as barreiras para aprendizagem e participação dos estudantes, programas que prezam pelo bem-

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estar dos acadêmicos, instalações e infraestrutura condizentes à educação inclusiva; e como pontos a melhorar: processos de identificação e caracterização dos estudantes com deficiência, maior incentivo à mobilidade docente e estudantil em âmbito nacional e internacional. A aplicação do Índice possibilitou a percepção das ações que essa Universidade desenvolve, seus pontos fortes, e a identificação de situações para aperfeiçoamento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: Educação especial. Ensino superior. INES. Acessibilidade.

RESUMEN: *Dado el escenario normativo y la ampliación del número de personas con discapacidad que acceden a la universidad, es necesario reflexionar sobre las oportunidades de mejora, apuntando a la toma de decisiones que califiquen la participación y el aprendizaje. Así, se realizó el Índice de Inclusión en Educación Superior - INES con 37 estudiantes con discapacidad y/o necesidades educativas especiales de la UFSM, cuyas respuestas fueron recogidas de la Escala Lickert, analizado descriptivamente, construyendo la matriz de semaforización. Demostraron ser fortalezas: la existencia de políticas que minimicen las barreras al aprendizaje y la participación estudiantil, programas que valoren el bienestar de los académicos, instalaciones e infraestructura consistentes con la educación inclusiva; y como puntos a mejorar: procesos de identificación y caracterización de estudiantes con discapacidad, mayor incentivo a la movilidad docente y estudiantil a nivel nacional e internacional. La aplicación del Índice permitió la percepción de las acciones que desarrolla esta Universidad, sus fortalezas, y la identificación de situaciones de mejora.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación especial. Enseñanza superior. INES. Accesibilidad.

Introduction

This article aims to present and analyze the results from the application of the instrument called Index of Inclusion in Higher Education (INES in the Portuguese acronym) at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM). The Index was developed by Carrillo and Aristizabal (2017) in the city of Bogotá, Colombia, and regulated by Decree 1421/2017 of the Ministry of National Education - MEN of Colombia by which regulates, within the framework of inclusive education, the educational attention to the population with disabilities. Its objective is to foster quality education, promoting inclusive education strategies within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), as a central part of the institutional policy.

INES⁴ is a resource that allows higher education institutions to identify where they stand in relation to attention to diversity, analyzing their strengths and opportunities for improvement, enabling them to make decisions that qualify community learning, participation, and

⁴ This instrument was translated and adapted to the realities of the Brazilian, Argentine, and Uruguayan universities that make up the aforementioned research, in a process that took place in six phases and over six months (2018-2019). A detailed description can be found in the doctoral thesis of LOUZADA (2022).

cooperation. The Index is based on Booth and Ainscow's (2000, p. 06) concept of inclusion, according to which "inclusion is a set of processes aimed at increasing students' participation in culture, curricula, and communities".

In the Brazilian scenario, the guarantee of the right to education is a fundamental clause of the Brazilian Federal Constitution since its promulgation in 1988. Its Article 205 determines that "education becomes a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, in collaboration with society" (BRAZIL, 1988, our translation), aiming at the integral development of the person, "its preparation for the exercise of citizenship and its qualification for work" (BRAZIL, 1988). In Art. 206, it is stated that teaching shall occur under "equal conditions for access to and permanence in school" (BRAZIL, 1988, our translation). And, in Article 208, there is the detailing of the relationship of duty between the State for the Education of people with disabilities, which will take place by means of "specialized educational services for the disabled, preferably in the regular education system" (BRAZIL, 1988, our translation)

However, even though there was an explicit commitment that education for people with disabilities was a duty of the state, the presence of people with disabilities in Higher Education was only regulated 27 years later, by Law 13.146/2015, the "Brazilian Inclusion Law", which in its Article 27 determines that education is a:

[...] the right of the person with disabilities in an inclusive educational system **at all levels and learning** throughout life, aiming to obtain the maximum possible development of their talents and physical, sensorial, intellectual and social abilities, according to their characteristics, interests and learning needs (BRAZIL 2015, p. 19, authors' emphasis, our translation).

In federal universities, the access of people with disabilities was legally guaranteed by Law 13,409/2016 (BRAZIL, 2016), which amended Law 12,711/2012 (BRAZIL, 2012), known as the "Quotas Law". Its Article 3 states that:

In each federal institution of higher education, the vacancies referred to in art. 1 of this law will be filled, by course and shift, by self-declared black, mixed race and indigenous people and by **people with disabilities**, under the terms of the legislation, in proportion to the total number of vacancies at least equal to the respective proportion of black, mixed race, indigenous and disabled people in the population of the Federation unit where the institution is located, according to the last census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics Foundation - IBGE (BRAZIL, 2016, authors' emphasis, our translation).

However, prior to the enactment of these laws, some federal universities, through resolutions and internal regulations, ensured the access of people with disabilities, either by a

certain percentage or by quotas (CARRIERI, 2012). More precisely, by the year 2012, eight federal universities already provided as affirmative action the reserve of vacancies for people with disabilities and/or special educational needs (CARRIERI, 2012): one of them was the Federal University of Santa Maria.

The UFSM, guided by Resolution 011/2007, since 2007 provided 5% of vacancies in each undergraduate course for people with special educational needs. However, as of Law 13.409/2016 (BRAZIL, 2016), UFSM has adapted its selective processes for admission, contemplating the following situations: candidates with disabilities who have fully attended high school in public schools, with family gross income per person equal to or less than 1.5 minimum wage; candidates with disabilities who have fully attended high school in public schools, with family gross income per person equal to or less than 1.5 minimum wage, self-declared black, mixed race or indigenous; applicants with disabilities who have attended high school in full time in public schools, with a family income per person higher than 1.5 minimum wages; applicants with disabilities who have attended high school in full time in public schools, with a family income per person higher than 1.5 minimum wages, self-declared black, mixed race, or indigenous people.

With this adaptation of the selection processes of UFSM to the federal legislation, it was identified that people with disabilities who had not attended high school in public schools were not contemplated by the vacancy reservation policy. Thus, in 2018, UFSM instituted Resolution 02/2018, which now regulates the forms of admission to undergraduate courses and related affirmative actions at UFSM. This new resolution also creates specific selective processes for admission to undergraduate courses, one of them being specific for people with disabilities, aiming to complement the range not covered by Law 12.711/2012 (amended by Law 13.409/2016), offering supplementary vacancies in the percentage of up to 5% of vacancies/year of the total number of vacancies offered in each Undergraduate Course at UFSM (UFSM, 2018).

In view of the regulatory scenario already mentioned and the expansion of the number of people with disabilities who are accessing the University (BRAZIL, 2020), since 2019 universities in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay have been developing research involving the access and permanence of students with disabilities in Higher Education, from a Project entitled "Accessibility and Inclusion in differentiated university contexts". The purpose of this research is to draw a panorama of the cultures, policies and inclusive educational practices aimed at students with disabilities in public universities in Latin American countries - Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. It comes from the actions of the Research Network "Accessibility in Higher

Education" (OBEDUC/CAPES), coordinated by Professor Sandra Eli Sartoreto de Oliveira Martins, and counts with the participation of researchers who work in the Academic Committee of Disability and Accessibility/Association of Montevideo Group of Universities (CAAyD AUGM) and in the Latin American and Caribbean Interuniversity Network on Disability and Human Rights/UNPL - Argentina.

Thus, this article presents the results from the application of INES at UFSM, also highlighting the methodological process for its collection, the actions that this University develops, its strengths, and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Methodology

The network research was developed in four stages. The first included the process of characterizing the profile of students with disabilities through census data available in the institution's enrollment system. The second and third stages comprised the adaptation and application of guiding questions present in the Index of Inclusion for Higher Education (INES). This is an instrument that aims to help identify accessibility barriers in Higher Education. It was developed in three distinct moments; namely: a) sending the INES to be translated by special education professionals; b) adaptation of the Questionnaire and the guiding questions of the INES by the group of HEI coordinators and c) application of the Questionnaire to the study sample.

The fourth and last stage, which is being dealt with in this article, refers to the treatment and analysis of the data collected that qualifies the profile and the accessibility conditions from the point of view of disabled university students enrolled in undergraduate courses at UFSM.

The data treatment of the questionnaire was carried out by using the technique of distribution of values assigned for measurement on the Likert scale, being subjected to descriptive treatment, where the average scores of students were calculated and the semaphores matrix was built (GOYENECHE; RUIZ, 2021) shown below.

Table 1 – INES' Traffic Light Matrix

Type of indicator	Category of interest	Color	Percentage
Frequency	Always - Sometimes	Red	Less than 60%
		Yellow	Between 60% and 80%
		Green	More than 80%
Existence	Exists and is implemented - Exists and does not implements	Red	Less than 60%
		Yellow	Between 60% and 80%
		Green	More than 80%
Recognition	Yes	Red	Less than 60%
		Yellow	Between 60% and 80%
		Green	More than 80%

Source: GOYENECHÉ; RUIZ (2021)

In the traffic light matrix, the values are taken into account: red: less than 60%, yellow: between 60% and 80%, and green: greater than 80%.

Thus, after data analysis, Ángel and Pérez (2020) propose that interventions should be carried out, as a priority, in those factors and indicators with lower perception, visualized in the red traffic light.

The Research Context

The Federal University of Santa Maria is located in southern Brazil, more precisely in the central region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It was created by Law 3.834-C, of December 14, 1960, as the first federal university outside a Brazilian capital. At the time it had the Faculty of Pharmacy, Medicine, Dentistry and the Electrotechnical Institute of the Polytechnic Center (UFSM, 2022).

Currently, it has 276 courses distributed between basic and higher education, in the stages of early childhood education, high school (with integrated and subsequent technical courses), undergraduate and graduate, which are located on the main campus (Santa Maria), Frederico Westphalen Campus, Palmeira das Missões Campus and Cachoeira do Sul Campus. It has a staff of 2,070 professors and 2,544 administrative staff, to serve 28,511 students (data from the first semester of 2022).

It is worth mentioning that in 2016, UFSM approved its Institutional Development Plan (PDI), which will last ten years, starting from the year of its approval/implementation. One of its challenges, more precisely **Challenge 3 - Social Inclusion**, aims to "develop pedagogical support strategies that encourage learning and completion within an adequate timeframe" (UFSM, 2016). This challenge led to the elevation of the percentage of 25% of students served in 2019 by the Coordination of Educational Actions (CAED in the Portuguese acronym) to 50% in 2022 (UFSM, 2022).

It is also noteworthy that in 2021, UFSM passed two relevant Resolutions regarding inclusion. The first Resolution, 064/2021, which *Disciplines the Gender Equality Policy of the Federal University of Santa Maria* (UFSM), and the second Resolution, 068/2021, which *Provides for the Affirmative Action Policy and Inclusion in Graduate Programs at the Federal University of Santa Maria* (UFSM, 2021a).

Population and sample

Since the approval of Resolution 011/2007 until the year 2022, the Coordination of Educational Actions (CAEd-UFSM) has provided some kind of support to 822 students with disabilities. In the year 2022, there are 305 regular students with disabilities enrolled, who were contacted by the project team, through the Accessibility Sub-division of CAEd, in January and February 2022 (end of the second semester of 2021) and May 2022 (fifteen days after the beginning of the first semester of 2022).⁵ to answer INES' questions.

Thirty-seven questionnaires were answered by students with disabilities, aged 18 to 64. Of these, 22 were male, 14 female, and one did not define gender. Regarding ethnicity/race, six said they were of Hispanic origin, 28 white, one brown, one black, and one Brazilian (which did not allow an ethnicity to be assigned). Regarding marital status, there are 29 single, five married, two in a stable union, and one divorced. As for the place of birth, 11 were born in Santa Maria/RS, 12 in other cities in RS, and the others in other states, such as Bahia, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rondônia, and Minas Gerais. However, most of them, 30 students, live in Santa Maria/RS, 02 in Cachoeira do Sul/RS, 04 in other cities in RS and two in the state of São Paulo.⁶

⁵ The invitation to respond to the INES instrument was made in two moments due to the low participation of the first attempt.

⁶ The COVID 19 Pandemic forced UFSM to exceptionally transform teaching to remote modality, which made it possible for some students to continue to reside in their hometown.

Finally, regarding the condition of disability and/or special educational needs, these are presented as: learning disabilities (5.41%), hearing impairment (5.41%), physical disability (27.05%), High Abilities (2.70%), Visual Impairment (13.51%), Deafness (8.11%), Mental Illness (2.70%), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (18.92%), Blindness (2.70%), Visual and Hearing Disabilities (2.70%), Dyslexia (5.41%), Intellectual Disability (2.70%), and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (2.70%).

Having outlined the profile of the sample, we will now discuss the data from INES.

Data Analysis and Discussion

To treat the data from the application of the Questionnaire with the 37 students with disabilities and/or special educational needs from UFSM, we chose to evaluate each one of the 12 factors of INES, as follows:

1. Mission and institutional project
2. Students
3. Teachers
4. Academic Processes
5. National and International Visibility
6. Spaces for research, innovation, artistic and cultural creations
7. Social relevance and impact
8. Self-evaluation and self-regulation processes with an inclusive education approach
9. Institutional well-being
10. Organization, management, and administrative management
11. Academic support resources and physical infrastructure
12. Financial Resources

These 12 factors are the summary of 24 thematic indicators of inclusive education proposed at INES with emphasis on the development of inclusive policies, practices and cultures at the university.

From the semaphores matrix we observe three indicators in green (low priority of actions), fifteen in yellow (actions with priority in the medium term) and six in red (with high priority indication). In the research on which this article is based, conducted at the Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander (Colombia), Goyeneche and Ruys (2021) identified one green indicator, ten yellow and 13 red.

Let's look at the discussion of each of these traffic light indicators:

As for the factor *Mission and institutional project*, 84% of students with disabilities at UFSM recognize the existence of policies that allow minimizing barriers to participation and learning. As for these institutional policies recognized by the students, we can denote their materialization through the actions developed by CAEd, more specifically by the Subdivision of Accessibility, responsible for welcoming students entering through the policy of reserved places, offering specialized care in the areas of Special Education, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy, preparation of guidelines on the need for curricular adaptations, translation and interpretation service of the Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS), in addition to the offer of training, production of instructive materials, description of images and attention actions to servers with disabilities (UFSM, 2020).

These results, which are very positive, contradict studies that point out several types of barriers that hinder the learning and participation of people with disabilities, namely: the attitudinal barriers, which are present both in the interactive processes between students with or without disabilities and in the pedagogical relationship (RIBEIRO; GOMES, 2017), the barriers related to the access to information about edicts, documents pertaining to the daily life of the university (SILVA, 2020), and the lack of information about the rights and resources offered to students with disabilities (SANTOS; SOUZA, 2021).

However, in the same factor, *Mission and institutional project*, the indicator frequency is red, that is, 43% say that the institution does not use instruments to know the student diversity-plurality in its different manifestations/spheres (social, economic, political, cultural, linguistic, sensory, gender, ethno-racial, physical, geographic), and identify those most likely to be excluded or marginalized (who suffer bullying, for example) from the system.

Table 2 - Mission and Institutional Project

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
1. MISSION AND INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT	1.1 Barriers to learning and participation.	EXISTENCE	84%
	1.2 Identification and characterization of the students	FREQUENCY	57%

Source: Prepared by the authors

In the research by Goyeneche and Ruys (2021), at the Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander, and Ángel and Perez (2020), at the Universidad Católica de Colombia, the data showed similarities to the data from UFSM, where the indicator Identification and characterization of students also appears in red, pointing to the high priority for actions to identify student needs in the three institutions. In this sense, it is expected that the UFSM scenario will change, since the UFSM approved, in the year 2021, two relevant Resolutions regarding inclusion. The first Resolution, 064/2021, which *Disciplines the Gender Equality Policy of the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM)*, and the second Resolution, 068/2021, which *"Disposes about the Affirmative Action and Inclusion Policy in the Graduate Programs of the Federal University of Santa Maria"* (UFSM, 2021a).

Thus, it was found the broad recognition of UFSM students regarding the existence of policies that allow minimizing barriers to participation and learning, but it is pointed out the high priority as to actions to identify student needs.

Regarding the second factor, *Students*, 73% of the participants in this survey recognize the existence of a policy that facilitates their participation in academic and administrative processes, which corroborates what was recommended by the Guiding Document of the INCLUIR Program (BRASIL, 2005, p. 13), which had "[...] the purpose of institutionalizing accessibility policy actions in higher education, through the Accessibility Centers”:

Table 3 - Students

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
2. STUDENTS	2.1 Student Participation	EXISTENCE	73%

Source: Prepared by the authors

It is well known the importance of the Accessibility Centers, or other instances, that promote student participation in the University, advocating actions as medium priority in the view of the UFSM research participants.

Professors is the third factor considered at INES and has an alert tone (yellow), since 70% of the participants in this survey recognize that there is a policy that facilitates the participation of all professors in academic and administrative processes, and 65% consider that their professors are inclusive, that is, that the institution promotes actions to enable professors to promote pedagogical practices that value the diversity of students in the educational process.

Table 4 - Professors

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
3. PROFESSORS	3.1 Participation of Professors	EXISTENCE	70%
	3.2 Inclusive Teachers	FREQUENCY	65%

Source: Prepared by the authors

Related to this result, one can highlight the Training Course for Educational Inclusion, offered annually to the university staff, where themes involving the conditions (visual, hearing, deaf, blindness and intellectual disabilities), the public policies and Assistive Technology resources are developed; the specific lectures offered by the Accessibility Subdivision, open to the whole community; and the guidelines concerning the pedagogical adaptations (UFSM, 2020).

Although this factor indicates the need for "medium-term actions", it can be analyzed that there is already a path passed regarding the consolidation of an institutional policy of accessibility, something also recommended by the INCLUIR Program (BRAZIL, 2005) and that finds support in actions of other Brazilian federal universities from actions of access and permanence (SILVA *et al.*, 2018; SILVEIRA; COSTAS, 2019) and affirmative policies that ensure access and permanence (SANTOS *et al.*, 2022).

The factor *Academic Processes* also appears in yellow, in which 73% of the students participating in the survey consider the curricula flexible and interdisciplinary, with aspects that value the abilities, potential and skills of students, promoting actions that facilitate learning and development.

In this context, we can cite other actions taken by CAED (UFSM, 2020), particularly under the responsibility of the Subdivision of Accessibility, such as specialized educational care, occupational therapeutic care, guidance and meetings with the coordinators of courses and teachers, adaptations of texts and study materials. Regarding the interdisciplinarity and curricular flexibility indicator, the pedagogical projects of the undergraduate courses may foresee a workload of complementary disciplines, which enables students to participate in disciplines in other undergraduate courses. There is, also, an hourly load destined to complementary activities, contemplating the participation in events, research projects, scholarships, among other activities.

Table 5 – Academic processes

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
4. ACADEMIC PROCESSES	4.1 Interdisciplinarity and curricular flexibility	FREQUENCY	73%
	4.2 Flexible Evaluation	EXISTENCE	68%

Source: Prepared by the authors

We can notice, in this same factor, that 32% of the students who answered the survey point out that the assessment processes do not include flexible tools and strategies, a fact that raises the alert as to the need of the institution to intensify the actions of capacity building and faculty training, both for accessible and flexible assessments for the public with disabilities as for the importance of thinking different assessment strategies for all students, considering the different learning styles.

In the *National and International Visibility* factor, it is noted that 32% of the students surveyed do not recognize the interlocution of the institution with national and international partners. In this sense, we must emphasize that the Secretariat of International Support (SAI) and the Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group (AUGM) still seem to be unknown and/or not very active within the institution, and certainly more visibility and publicity should be given to their actions. Added to this is the fact that internationalization programs, such as "Science without Borders" (BRASIL, 2011), have been extinguished in 2017.

On the same path, 51% of students do not recognize the presence of external relations between professors and students. This indicates, in red, the need to develop institutional actions that promote these relationships, especially focusing on students with disabilities.

Table 6 – National and International Visibility

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
5. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY	5.1 Interlocution of the institution in national and international academic contexts	RECOGNITION	68%
	5.2 External relationships of teachers and students	RECOGNITION	49%

Source: Prepared by the authors

In the sixth factor, *Spaces for Research, Innovation, Artistic and Cultural Creations*, we noticed that 62% of students recognize the existence of centers, groups and/or research programs related to inclusive education. Considering that UFSM is one of the two federal universities in the country that has a Special Education course, this number warns of the need to expand the dissemination of these activities at the university. Despite this, 73% of students identify the participation of the institution in agreements that promote research in inclusive education.

Regarding the indicator of policies in inclusive education, it is possible to notice a certain lack of knowledge on the part of the survey respondents, since the institution has several internal policies, approved through resolutions, being one of the first universities in the country to implement a policy to reserve spaces for people with disabilities, when, in 2007, it approved Resolution 11.

Table 7 – Spaces for Research, Innovation, Artistic and Cultural Creations

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
6. SPACES FOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION, ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL CREATIONS	6.1 Research, innovation and artistic and cultural creation in inclusive education.	RECOGNITION	62%
	6.2 Research/Research. Cooperation Networks in inclusive education	FREQUENCY	73%
	6.3 Policies in inclusive education.	FREQUENCY	54%

Source: Prepared by the authors

In the factor *Relevance and Social Impact*, only 54% recognize that the Institution develops programs and extension activities or social projection that meet specific regional and population needs, taking into account the approach of inclusive education in the Brazilian context, which points us to an alert, since the Institution has the Extension Policy and develops many projects with projection and social impact, with the need for dissemination of these actions in the academic context. It can be inferred that students with disabilities rarely or never apply and/or are selected as fellows in research and/or extension projects, and that due to their non-selection or exclusion from these processes, they probably do not have knowledge and recognition of their existence.

Table 8 – Relevance and Social Impact

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
7. RELEVANCE AND SOCIAL IMPACT	7.1 Extension, social projection, and regional context	RECOGNITION	54%

Source: Prepared by the authors

As for the *Self-evaluation and Self-regulation Processes with Inclusive Education Approach*, factor 8, the indicators of frequency and existence are in yellow, while the frequency of intervention, assessment and improvement strategies is in red, pointing to the high priority of carrying out improvement actions from the results of the academic assessment.

It is worth mentioning that between 2020 and 2021, due to the Pandemic, the teaching processes took place remotely, and the institutional evaluations and self-assessments were restricted to the perceptions of students and faculty on the Home Exercise Regime (REDE in the Portuguese acronym)⁷, that was adopted and developed by UFSM. Thus, the Institutional evaluation and self-assessment actions were resumed as of the first semester of 2022, which began in April 2022 at UFSM.

Table 9 – Self-evaluation and Self-regulation Processes

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
8. SELF-EVALUATION AND SELF-REGULATION PROCESSES	8.1 Regulating inclusive education	FREQUENCY	68%
	8.2 Intervention strategies, evaluation and improvement	FREQUENCY	57%
	8.3 Accessible Information System	EXISTENCE	73%

Source: Prepared by the authors

Leisure, culture, and health activities/programs at the University are pointed out by 73% of students, while 68% recognize that such actions may be associated with the permanence and/or dropout of students. It is worth mentioning that this research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, when all classroom activities were suspended, which may represent a hypothesis for this factor to present itself in yellow. The existence in UFSM of specific projects

⁷ Resolution n. 024/2020, revoked by Resolution 79/2022. Available at: <https://www.ufsm.br/pro-reitorias/proplan/resolucao-ufsm-n-079-2022/>. Access on: 12 Jan. 2022.

for students with disabilities is also noteworthy, such as, for example, adapted sports modalities offered by the Center for Support and Studies of Adapted Physical Education. UFSM also has a broad program of student permanence, with one of the largest student residences in Latin America, university restaurants, among other actions that aim to promote the permanence of students at the university.

As for the specialized services for students, two sectors of UFSM work on this front: the Dean's Office (PRAE) of Student Affairs and the Coordination of Educational Actions (CAED). At PRAE, students can count on health services, dental care, psychological care, psychosocial support, besides specific edicts for transportation aid, didactic materials, among others. CAED offers specialized services in the areas of Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, psycho-pedagogical evaluation, educational guidance, psycho-pedagogical guidance, mental health care (psychology and psychiatry), as well as lectures and specific courses on topics involving academic performance.

Specifically for people with disabilities in the institution, students and servers, a partnership between PRAE and CAED was made to enable the delivery of packed lunches for people with disabilities in the institution. This service caters exclusively to students and employees who have some kind of disability that limits access to University Restaurants.

Table 10 – Institutional Well-Being

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
9. INSTITUTIONAL WELL-BEING	9.1 University Welfare Programs	FREQUENCY	73%
	9.2 Student Permanence	FREQUENCY	68%

Source: Prepared by the authors

As for indicator ten, referring to administrative actions being supported from the perspective of inclusive education, 68% of students pointed to the frequency, while 62% pointed out that the organizational structure of the institution allows it to develop specific actions to promote inclusive education.

Table 11 – Organization, Management and Administrative Management

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
10. ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT	10.1 Administrative and management actions:	FREQUENCY	68%
	10.2 Organizational structure	RECOGNITION	62%

Source: Prepared by the authors

The factor that stands out the most in the researched Institution, with green emphasis, is the *Academic Support Resources and Physical Infrastructure*: it can be seen by the data that students point to the existence of programs and projects aimed at academic well-being, and that the Institutional infrastructure meets the requirements of the assumptions of inclusive education and accessibility ensured in the axis concerning the infrastructure of the INCLUIR Program (BRAZIL, 2005), which provides: "architectural and urban projects of the IFES are conceived and implemented, meeting the principles of universal design" (p. 13). Some examples of such actions are the construction and renovation of old buildings (university restaurant, for example), as well as sidewalks, foreseeing the accessibility, specific places for students with disabilities in the student residences, welcoming of students when they are admitted by the Accessibility Sub-division, which seeks to identify the accessibility demands and pedagogical adaptations, communicates the course coordination and offers specialized services.

It is also noteworthy the international recognition of such actions that come from UFSM, since according to the ranking University Impact 2019⁸, published by Times Higher Education magazine, UFSM is among the most inclusive and diverse in the world, considering data from the 2017 academic year.

⁸Available at: <https://www.ufsm.br/2019/04/17/ufsm-e-uma-das-universidades-mais-inclusivas-e-diversas-do-mundo/>. Access on: 12 Jan. 2022.

Table 12 – Academic Support Resources and Physical Infrastructure

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
11. ACADEMIC SUPPORT RESOURCES AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE	11.1 University Satisfaction Program	FREQUENCY	81%
	11.2 Facilities and Infrastructure	FREQUENCY	92%

Source: Prepared by the authors

In the last factor, *Financial Resources*, students recognize that the institution fosters programs that promote inclusive education. However, 46% affirm that the institution does not have programs that support cooperation agreements that finance the access and permanence of students.

Table 13 – Financial Resources

FACTOR	INDICATOR	TYPE OF INDICATOR	%
12. FINANCIAL RESOURCES	12.1 Sustainable inclusive education programs	FREQUENCY	78%
	12.2 Financial and student support	FREQUENCY	54%

Source: Prepared by the authors

The answers to this last factor indicate actions to be implemented in the "short term". However, since the year 2014, federal universities have been suffering constant contingencies and cuts, which intensified in the year 2022, according to Decree 11.216/2022. And, although the CENSUS of Higher Education (BRAZIL, 2022) indicates that there are 55,829 students with disabilities enrolled in public and private universities (an increase of 0.56% compared to 2009), what is observed is a gradual decrease in the value of the funds allocated to the National Program for Student Assistance - PNAES (BRAZIL, 2010), which in 2016 was R\$ 810,103,000 and is currently R\$ 268,080,000. It is noteworthy that in 2016 the Constitutional Amendment 95/16 was approved, which limits the ceiling of government spending on health, education, and social security, a fact that has greatly hindered the continuity of accessibility and inclusion actions already underway, and practically makes it impossible to implement new ones.

Final remarks

This article aimed to present and analyze the results from the application of the instrument called Index of Inclusion in Higher Education (INES in the Portuguese acronym), at UFSM, in the year 2022.

The data revealed that the institution has strengths that require "low priority actions," that is, the university would currently be in a satisfactory situation in relation to the following aspects: the existence of policies that minimize barriers to learning and participation of students, programs that value the well-being of scholars, in terms of their resources, teams and spaces for development, and facilities and infrastructure that match what is required in terms of current regulations relevant to inclusive education.

On the other hand, it can be observed that there are indicators that require "medium-term actions", which involve: greater participation of students and faculty in academic and administrative processes, interdisciplinarity, curricular flexibility and flexible assessment, better dissemination of the contacts established between the institution and recognized members of the national and international academic community, dissemination of research spaces, innovation, groups/programs, cooperation networks pertaining to inclusive education, self-evaluation and regulation of actions aiming at the effectiveness of inclusive education, accessibility to information for people with disabilities in order to encourage the development of inclusive policies, leisure programs, student permanence, administrative actions supported by inclusive education, and promotion and implementation of programs that enhance inclusive education.

The indicators that demand "high priority" for action are: improvement in the processes involving the indication and characterization of students with disabilities, greater incentive for faculty and student mobility at national and international levels, need to increase the university's participation in agreements with other institutions that aim to conduct research related to inclusive education, consider the results of the evaluations of graduates and scholars to support improvements in their evaluation processes and self-regulation in an inclusive perspective and expansion of cooperation agreements that fund student access and permanence.

The answers to the application from INES at UFSM also indicated a greater need to inform students about the actions developed by the institution. It was possible to notice that many students do not understand what student assistance is or do not associate the actions of the university with student assistance policies, such as: student housing, university restaurant, transportation aid, aid for the purchase of teaching materials, aid for digital inclusion,

specialized services, day care center aid, tutoring, workshops, scholarships for teaching, research and extension, among others.

Finally, although INES is an instrument from another country, with some particularities that are not common to Brazil, which has diverse legislation and a specific university organization, the exercise of applying the instrument and analyzing the data allowed the perception of aspects that need to be looked at and improved in the institution.

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