FACT SHEET

# PORTUGAL'S ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITIES RANKING'26

## INTRODUCTION

For many startups, it all begins at a university or polytechnic: where future founders meet each other, test their first ideas and turn research into companies. In time, those companies bring new technologies and solutions to market, raising the economy's capacity to innovate and creating jobs along the way: Portugal's startups already employ around 30,000 people and export €1.7 billion a year.[1] The Ranking maps each institution's entrepreneurial footprint. On one hand, it measures (i) the startups founded by its alumni and, new this year, (ii) its research spinouts. On the other, it tracks their impact: (a) the investment those companies raise, (b) the value they create and (c) how many remain based in Portugal. As Startup Portugal marks its 10th anniversary, the Ranking reaches its fifth edition. Since 2022, **nine institutions have appeared in the Top 10 in every edition**, and four have held first place: NOVA University Lisbon, the University of Porto, the Catholic University of Portugal and the University of Lisbon. Polytechnics have kept their place alongside universities: P.Porto has been in the Top 10 in every edition, and Leiria since 2024. Both became universities in 2026: the Universidade Técnica do Porto (UTP) and the Universidade de Leiria e Oeste (ULO).

The 2026 edition brings three methodology changes. Only active tech startups and spinouts now count, not all alumni companies, so figures are not comparable with past editions.[2] **Research spinouts count for the first time, to show how institutions turn their own research into companies.** Aligned with the country's vision to promote spinout creation, the Ranking now uses a weighted score: startups founded by alumni carry a 50% weight, startups that raised investment get 20%, and spinouts, VC funding, and enterprise value each get 10%.

## TOP 10 PORTUGUESE UNIVERSITIES BY ENTREPRENEURIAL FOOTPRINT

| RANK | INSTITUTION | ALUMNI STARTUPS | VC-BACKED STARTUPS | COMBINED ENTERPRISE VALUE (€M) | CUMULATIVE FUNDING RAISED (€M) | CUMULATIVE VC FUNDING RAISED (€M) | SPINOUTS | TOTAL SCORE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| #1 = | University of Lisbon | **1,239** PT Based: 734 | 378 | 33,443 | 5,083 | 4,969 | 133 | **96** |
| #2 = | Catholic University of Portugal | **1,313** PT Based: 721 | 295 | 38,516 | 3,339 | 3,248 | 23 | **84** |
| #3 = | NOVA University Lisbon | **742** PT Based: 418 | 204 | 13,494 | 3,647 | 3,241 | 43 | **52** |
| #4 = | University of Porto | **701** PT Based: 474 | 212 | 4,937 | 1,742 | 1,654 | 118 | **51** |
| #5 = | University of Coimbra | **503** PT Based: 330 | 119 | 4,965 | 1,110 | 965 | 104 | **37** |
| #6 ↑ +1 | University of Minho | **357** PT Based: 254 | 111 | 5,286 | 822 | 790 | 41 | **26** |
| #7 ↓ -1 | Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon | **330** PT Based: 226 | 92 | 6,070 | 1,473 | 1,422 | 1 | **22** |
| #8 = | University of Aveiro | **226** PT Based: 154 | 75 | 7,223 | 987 | 971 | 5 | **17** |
| #9 = | Technical University of Porto | **287** PT Based: 227 | 34 | 1,268 | 265 | 260 | 1 | **14** |
| #10 = | University of Leiria and Oeste | **243** PT Based: 183 | 16 | 258 | 72 | 71 | 5 | **11** |

Rank change compared with the 2025 Ranking.

(1) Source: Startup Portugal, Portugal's Startup Ecosystem Report 2026 (5,495 startups, around 30,000 jobs and €1.68 billion in exports).

(2) Startups and spinouts only: excludes companies outside the technology sector, mature companies, service providers, companies founded before 1990 and closed companies.

Source: Startup Portugal's Ecosystem Mapping Platform, powered by Dealroom, complemented by direct contributions from universities. Values as of November 2, 2026.

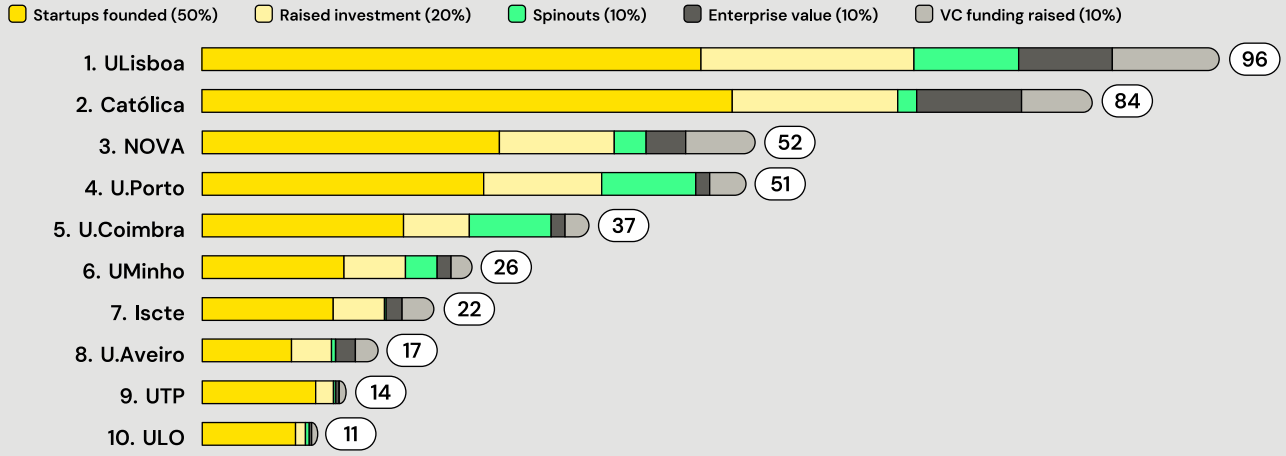
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# FACTS ON PORTUGAL'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM:

STARTUP PORTUGAL

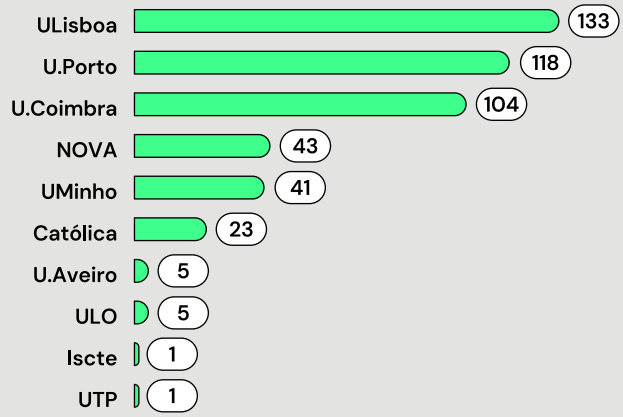
## CATÓLICA FOUNDS THE MOST STARTUPS | ULISBOA WINS ON THE FULL SCORE

Total score, weighted across five criteria




## THREE UNIVERSITIES LEAD ON RESEARCH SPINOUTS

Research spinouts per institution, Top 10




**1 in 5** of U.Coimbra's startups is a research spinout, **THE HIGHEST SHARE IN THE TOP 10.**
U.Porto 1 in 6 · ULisboa 1 in 9

## FROM LAB TO UNICORN

Europe produces world-class research but turns too little of it into companies. Closing that gap is now an EU priority: its Lab to Unicorn initiative aims to give university research a quicker journey from lab to market.

## INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

**NOVA IMS:** first Portuguese institution with ACEEU's Entrepreneurial University accreditation

**#2** **NOVA SBE** in the FT Masters in Management 2026, one of FIVE PORTUGUESE PROGRAMS in the top 100

**9** **PORTUGUESE UNIVERSITIES** in the QS World University Rankings top 1,000

## THE TALENT BEHIND THE STARTUPS

**107,997** HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES
+13% in two years

**24.8** STEM GRADUATES PER 1,000 AGED 20–29
up from 23.4

**#6** ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
worldwide, EF EPI 2025

## CONCLUSION:

The fifth edition of Portugal's Entrepreneurial Universities Ranking confirms stable growth in the entrepreneurship mindset in higher education institutions. The contribution of data to the report from several institutions and the validation from Startup Portugal and Dealroom have been key to improving the quality of information available from our ecosystem. The result: University of Lisbon leads again, the first institution to top the Ranking two years in a row. **We can already count two institutions with more than 1,000 alumni startups** (University of Lisbon and Catholic University of Portugal), and five count more than 500. About one in four of the startups has raised investment.

Spinouts add a new dimension and reveal two kinds of entrepreneurial universities: institutions with strong business schools lead on alumni startups, while research-intensive universities lead on spinouts, with the universities of Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra producing three in four of the Top 10's research spinouts. **The two newest universities, UTP and ULO, keep their place in the Top 10, and have the highest share of startups based in Portugal (79% and 75%).**

Portuguese institutions also keep gaining international recognition: nine universities now feature in the QS top 1,000, and Nova SBE ranks second in the FT Masters in Management. **NOVA IMS also became the first Portuguese institution to earn ACEEU's Entrepreneurial University accreditation.**

This Ranking was created in 2022 to map and boost the entrepreneurial mindset in universities; five editions later, the data clearly shows improvements. Universities were known as places for research and innovation, and now we know they're also where many of the country's startups begin. Let's keep showing and praising that.

Sources: Dealroom for Startup Portugal (November 2026); DGEEC; Eurostat; EF EPI 2025; QS World University Rankings 2027; Financial Times Masters in Management Ranking 2026; ACEEU; European Commission, EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy (2025). Spinouts as identified by Dealroom; institutions' own records may differ. UTP: Universidade Técnica do Porto, formerly Politécnico do Porto; ULO: Universidade de Leiria e Oeste, formerly Politécnico de Leiria.

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