

# ERASMUS+ BLEND INTENSIVE PROGRAMME

Universidade Lusófona Lisboa + ISMAT Portimão (Portugal)

Polo CIUAD – Lusófona e ISMAT

**1 – 5 September 2026 (Tuesday to Saturday)**

## LIVING WITH EARTHQUAKES

**“Learning from the historic town for a contemporary sustainable agenda.  
A community-centered approach”**

This program addresses the architectural and urban legacies of seismic events, reflecting on how historic towns can inform a sustainable and resilient design agenda today. It explores the interplay between built form and landscape, while critically examining strategies of reconstruction and transformation in the aftermath of historic earthquakes. By revisiting these processes, the discussion aims to frame methodologies that bridge heritage values, community engagement, and future-oriented architectural practice.

**Case studies: Faro and Vila Real de Santo António (Algarve)**

## THE PLACE

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The Algarve region, in southern Portugal, forms a culturally layered landscape shaped by both natural forces and human settlement. Its coastal and fluvial topographies, marked by estuaries and the Atlantic horizon, have produced urban forms that embody resilience and adaptation.

**Faro**, with its historic nucleus enclosed by medieval walls, reveals the palimpsest of Roman, Islamic, and Christian presences. The old town, structured around the *Arco da Vila* and the Cathedral, still reflects its fortified past while opening towards the Ria Formosa lagoon, a unique natural park that mediates between city and sea. Narrow cobbled streets, whitewashed houses, and enclosed patios form a Mediterranean fabric where climate and architecture are interwoven. The 1755 earthquake left profound marks on the city, yet reconstruction integrated Baroque elements that today coexist with earlier layers. Faro’s urban identity lies in this balance between heritage, landscape, and its role as a regional capital.

**Vila Real de Santo António**, founded in 1774 by order of the Marquês de Pombal, is one of the most emblematic examples of Enlightenment urban planning in Portugal. Conceived as a model town for the Algarve’s Guadiana frontier, it was built in record time, applying the modular, prefabricated construction methods tested in Lisbon’s Baixa after the 1755 earthquake. Its orthogonal plan unfolds from the central *Praça Marquês de Pombal*, a perfectly proportioned square surrounded by civic and religious buildings, extending in a rational grid towards the river and the sea. This clarity of design, allied to its economic and military functions, expresses the Enlightenment ideals of order, hygiene, and social organization embedded in urban form.

Together, Faro and Vila Real de Santo António embody two complementary narratives of Portuguese urbanism: one rooted in layered history and adaptation to the landscape, the other as a

deliberate project of modernity and resilience after disaster. Their comparison highlights how architecture and planning mediate between memory, catastrophe, and the future.

## **CONTENTS, METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND GOALS OF THE WORKSHOP**

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The workshop will address the construction and transformation of urban space at different scales, with a focus on the historic cities of Faro and Vila Real de Santo António. It aims to provide students with methodological tools to critically analyze the relationship between architecture, urban form, and social practices, in order to envision strategies for sustainable and resilient urban futures.

Participants will be introduced to established approaches in the study of urban life, including methods inspired by Jan Gehl, that emphasize the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of public space. Spatial analysis, mapping, and overlay techniques will be employed to interpret urban morphology and to explore new possibilities for contemporary urban density. Case studies in Faro and Vila Real de Santo António will serve as laboratories to identify exceptional spatial conditions in historic environments and to reframe them as drivers for innovative design responses.

The pedagogical framework is structured around three interrelated categories:

1. **The physicality of space** – material, tectonic, and morphological dimensions.
2. **The narrative of space** – historical layers, memory, and representation.
3. **The practices of space** – everyday uses, community appropriation, and social rituals.

Together, these categories foster a holistic understanding of place and support the integration of heritage values into future-oriented design methodologies.

### **Participants**

The minimum number of international student participants is 20. The program will also involve Portuguese students, who will collaborate in mixed groups with their international peers, ensuring interdisciplinary exchange and cross-cultural dialogue.

## **DIGITAL SESSION (before the workshop)**

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*An online session on 28 August presenting:*

- *The content on the workshop*
- *The place*
- *The methodology*
- *Introduction to readings*

**ECTS POINTS: 3**

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## PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATIONAL OFFER

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application:

Day	Date	Activity
Arrival Day	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2026	Arrival in Faro. Introductory seminar introducing the place, its cultural qualities, and the workshop methodology. <b>Welcome dinner</b>
Day 1	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2026	Group organisation and site investigation in Faro, structured around the three categories: - Physicality of space - Narrative of space - Practices of space Meeting with the local community and first work review.
Day 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2026	Full-day comparative study in Vila Real de Santo António, exploring its unique cultural and urban values. Work review in the afternoon. - Physicality of space - Narrative of space - Practices of space Meeting with the local community and first work review. <b>Sunset party at Cacela Velha</b>
Day 3	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2026	Workshop activities in Faro, with continued application of the methodology. Work review in the afternoon.
Day 4	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2026	Group preparation of presentations. Afternoon session for presenting preliminary findings to the local communities.
Day 5 – Closing Day	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2026	Final site visits to Faro and Vila Real de Santo António to capture the spirit of place using the workshop methodology. Closing dinner in Faro to celebrate the outcomes and exchange reflections. <b>Closing Dinner</b>