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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the online Master's in Managing Digital Transformation in the Health Sector at Nova University of Lisbon.

I strongly believe in the added value of healthcare digitization for improving healthcare services across Europe and enhancing public health policies. I also believe that digitization can effectively address key healthcare challenges, including workforce shortages, an aging population with increasing care needs, and patient mobility across Europe.

However, digitization faces its own challenges, such as user acceptance, operability, and interoperability.

With extensive experience in healthcare policymaking and project management, as well as a deep understanding of healthcare settings—from primary care (such as general practitioners' offices) to hospitals and specialized services like mental health—I believe this master's program will equip me with the skills to drive digital transformation across various healthcare environments.

I have a background in sociology and over 23 years of professional experience, primarily in the healthcare sector and related fields such as social reintegration, employment disability, and food safety. As a natural technophile, I have closely followed healthcare digitization, particularly during my tenure at the Belgian Free Health Insurance Funds.

In Belgium, healthcare management is largely outsourced to insurance funds which provide income support for work incapacity and reimburse medical expenses. As key negotiators and managers of substantial healthcare budgets, the Free Health Insurance Funds play a central role in healthcare reforms, including digitization initiatives.

From 2020 to 2024, I have been able to follow important developments such as the European Health Data Space (EHDS) (and the TEHDAS action), AI Act and the integration of AI into healthcare and social security systems. Attending events such as ICT4Care and 'Shaping Tomorrow: AI in Social Security and Work Capacity Assessment' (organized during the Belgian Presidency of the European Council) has reinforced my commitment to technology, particularly AI in healthcare.

However, I have been following these developments mainly at the policy level and less on the field level.

My background is primarily in public policy and policy analysis, built on my sociology degree and multiple studies conducted, including for the Belgian Science Policy. However, I do also have a project manager profile, since I have been project and network manager in various settings related to healthcare.

One of my most significant experiences as a project manager was serving as CEO of a Brussels-based federation specializing in prevention, harm reduction, and treatment services for drug users. This experience brought me into regular contact with around 30 services struggling on several issues, among which the one on health data sharing. At the time, from 2013 to 2019, the EHDS was not developed yet. Although numerous local tools were available for healthcare practitioners, significant gaps remained, such as poorly connected hospitals and a lack of integrated services for marginalized populations, including drug users. After having prospected several private tools, we merged our data initiative with an open-source project developed by Belgian general practitioners. Given my limited technical expertise, I focused on defining key data elements while ensuring feasibility within the time constraints of healthcare professionals' daily routines.

Having worked extensively with various healthcare professionals and institutions—including primary care providers, hospitals, and specialized services such as addiction and mental health care—as well as in healthcare organization management, I am well aware of both the benefits and challenges of healthcare digitization.

The master in Managing Digital Transformation in the Health Sector would help me develop strategies aiming to implement digitization into the healthcare institutions and with the healthcare professionals.

As a Belgian citizen formally based in Brussels but frequently in Portugal, I would appreciate the opportunity to be affiliated with Nova University. In addition to being fluent in English and French, I have strong proficiency in Portuguese and other European languages.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to participate in the Master's in Managing Digital Transformation in the Health Sector, into the Specialization on Interoperability.

Sincerely,

Sébastien Alexandre