



FCT/5952/22/11/2023/S

Vice-President for Research
The University of Texas at Austin
Office of the Vice President for Research,
Scholarship and Creative Endeavors
P.O. Box 7996
Austin, TX 78713-7996

20th November, 2023

Dear Vice President for Research
Professor Daniel Jaffe,

For more than 16 years the collaboration between FCT and the UTA has promoted the scientific and technological development encouraging researchers, students, and industry professionals from various disciplines to work together.

The UTA Portugal Program has been a facilitator in the exchange of knowledge, ideas and perspectives, and this interdisciplinary approach has led to breakthrough innovations and solutions that have had a profound impact on a wide range of fields, from Digital Media and Mathematics, back in 2007, to Medical Physics, Nanotechnologies, Space-Earth Interactions and Advance Computing, in recent years. Also, it is worth mentioning the impact of UTEN (Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network) on Portuguese Transfer Technologies Offices.

By leveraging the strengths of both UTA's and Portugal's academic and industrial ecosystems, the program had a transformative effect on the national educational landscape and has served as a catalyst for international cooperation and cultural exchange. We value the relationships and achievements that have been supported through our collaboration, and the opportunities it has provided for academic growth and cross-cultural understanding.

FCT is currently conducting a careful and deep assessment of its collaborations with several international partners considering the natural evolution of the needs, the priorities and the capacity of Portuguese research and innovation ecosystem. Through this inclusive exercise, FCT will reflect and make sustainable decisions to reinforce and reshape FCT's international cooperation worldwide.

Considering the above and taking into account point 2 of Amendment Nº 5 to the Research and Education Collaboration Agreement amended the Section 1.1. of the aforementioned Agreement dated 2nd March 2007, FCT notifies Your Excellency of its intention to terminate the contract in its current form with effect from

December 31st, 2023, without prejudice to the continuity of the activities provided in the Technical Annex of the aforementioned Amendment Technical Annex.

We would like to explore with UTA the possibility of reshaping our long-term cooperation by establishing a new contract that should consider the following guidance principles.

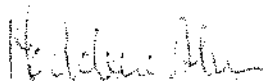
- 1) A strong commitment to **advanced training activities**, by introducing a **Dual Degree scheme**, offering the possibility for Doctoral students to conduct their studies both in Portugal and in the United States, co-advised by faculty from UTA and from the Portuguese partner higher education institution, thus allowing PhD students to obtain a degree conferred both by UTA and by the affiliated Portuguese University.
- 2) The strengthening of a dedicated **mobility program** to be jointly built between FCT and UTA. The program would involve two sub-programs: one for staff and another for PhD students. PhD students' mobility for a minimum duration of one academic year would be a pre-requisite for a Dual Doctorate degree. These mobility schemes would result in greater promotion of international cooperation between the academic and research communities of the two countries.
- 3) The launching of regular **bilateral calls for joint research and innovation projects**, funded by FCT (Portuguese teams) and UTA (United States Teams), to promote collaborative research between UTA and Portuguese universities, research institutes, laboratories and companies, fostering innovative high-impact ideas and research projects with the potential to address complex challenges of global and societal impact.
- 4) The launching of a **training program on marketing and internationalization** of RTD-based products from the Portuguese infrastructures that links academia and the business sector, such as the Collaborative Laboratories (CoLABs) and the Technology and Innovation Centers (CTIs). Support to the creation and development of Deeptech start-ups, ideally with founders and funding entities from Portugal and the USA, would further extend the scope of the training program.
- 5) Establishment of a set of future **scientific areas of focus** of common interest to both countries.

These are preliminary proposals that should be further explored and detailed, with the hope that they will contribute to the continuation of our joint venture through a reciprocal obligation mindset, thereby consolidating our historical cooperation.

Portugal and UTA possess valuable expertise and resources that can be utilized in various ways to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, preserving international cooperation beyond the termination of this specific agreement. We believe that by establishing a new agreement based on revised terms, we can create a more targeted and impactful collaboration that benefits both institutions, nevertheless and taking into account the current political situation in Portugal makes it impossible for the current government to take on any kind of responsibility, in particular the assumption of multi-annual responsibilities.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. Once again, we express our deep interest in continuing to cooperate with you and our willingness to engage in further discussions.

Yours sincerely,



Madalena Alves
President of the Board of Directors

Cc:

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Annexes:

- *Education Collaboration Agreement dated 2nd March 2007, further extended on June 20, 2011*
- *Amendment No. 1 dated July 27, 2012.*
- *Amendment No. 2 dated November 5, 2012*
- *Amendment No. 3 dated April 2023*
- *Amendment No. 4 dated December 16, 2014*
- *Technical Annex of Amendment Nº 5*