Deadline Extended: Call for Expressions of Interest for Short-Term Research Internships at the University of Texas at Austin under the UT Austin Portugal Program

2025/2026

(Version updated on July 17, 2025, to include a new evaluator for the area of Nanotechnology)

The present Call for Expressions of Interest (EoIs) is launched according to Regulation no 913/2021[1] of the Portuguese Foundation of Science and Technology, I.P. (FCT), which sets out the rules and requirements for awarding financial assistance to individuals undertaking Knowledge and Technology Transfer Activities.

The Call is aimed at faculties, researchers, and Master's or PhD students affiliated with institutions in Portugal who wish to be considered for short-term research internships at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin).

The EoI submission period will run from **June 2 and ~~July 1~~ July 7 (23:59 UTC+1), 2025,** and all visits must start between **October 15 and December 31, 2025 and be completed by June 30, 2026.**

Context

The **UT Austin Portugal Program** is a Science and Technology partnership between FCT and The University of Texas at Austin, supported by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, in close collaboration with the Council of Rectors of the Portuguese Universities (CRUP). The Program was renewed at the end of 2024 for a new six-year period by the 24th Portuguese Constitutional Government, launching Phase IV with four autonomous yet closely interconnected scientific areas: Nanotechnology, Advanced Computing, Space-Earth Technologies, and Clean Energy.

Through the Management and Coordination Agreement "*Acordo para a Gestão e Coordenação do Programa UT Austin Portugal 2025| CoLab"*, signed between FCT and the **Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores, Tecnologia e Ciência – INESC TEC**, the latter is the Program's host organization in Portugal, being accountable for the overall management and implementation of the Program's activity plan, including this Call for EoIs.

1. Purpose of the Call

Through this Call, the Program will be selecting faculty, researchers, and Master's and PhD students affiliated with a Higher Education Institution, R&D center or an R&D-performing company established in Portugal to undertake R&D activities at UT Austin in one of the following areas of the Program:

- **Nanotechnology: Advancing critical materials discovery through Nanotechnology advancements**

  Nanotechnology is a long-standing area of the Program and was first introduced in 2013. Nanotechnology research and commercialization have contributed to the development of advanced lithium-ion batteries, nanomaterials for medicine, and smart nano-based fabrics, among others. Significant new opportunities exist in accelerating materials discovery and rational design of new critical materials for a myriad of applications.

  The Priority Research Topics to tackle under this area are:
  - *Advanced batteries.*
  - *Green hydrogen-based economy.*

[1] "Regulamento de Atribuição de Subsídios a Atividades de Transferência de Conhecimento e Tecnologia"

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- *Advanced environmental technologies.*
- *Semiconductor packaging.*
- *Smart textiles.*

- **Advanced Computing: *Scaling tools for energy-efficient Advanced Computing***

  Advanced Computing has been instrumental in placing Portugal at the forefront of the European HPC landscape. Through its collaboration with UT Austin's Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC), Portugal has become a leader in high-performance computing. Advanced Computing will continue to focus on topics such as AI, machine learning, and quantum computing, leveraging Portugal's digital infrastructure and research expertise. The rapid growth of artificial intelligence has led to an unprecedented need for computing power. Sustainable Advanced Computing, focused on promoting efficient large-scale computing for artificial intelligence and scientific discovery, emerges as a natural, overarching challenge.

  The Priority Research Topics to tackle under this area are:
  - *Low-precision hardware built for AI for scientific computing problems.*
  - *Greener, more efficient, and sustainable AI tools.*
  - *Translational AI research.*
  - *Future computing paradigms.*

- **Space-Earth Technologies: *Exploiting Space technology and data for Earth applications***

  Space-Earth technology became a core area in the third phase of the Program. It involves collaboration between Portuguese and US researchers to improve our understanding of Earth systems, natural disasters and climate change through satellite and space-based observation technologies. The Program envisions future partnerships between Space-Earth technologies and other scientific fields, such as advanced computing and nanotechnologies.

  The Priority Research Topics to tackle under this area are:
  - *Terrestrial applications enabled by Space.*
  - *Technology for sensing and solutions in Space.*
  - *Future energy networks & systems.*
    Technology for enabling space activities and engineering operations.

- **Clean Energy: Addressing climate neutrality through Clean Energy**

  This area focuses on leveraging the complementary expertise between Portugal and UT Austin in sustainable energy systems, hydrogen production, and renewable energy integration. It mobilises complementary scientific competencies in Portugal and at UT Austin in areas such as sustainable energy systems, energy market modelling and simulation, advanced simulation of cyber-physical systems, and reliability analysis of energy systems.

  The Priority Research Topics to tackle under this area are:
  - *Climate-neutral cities.*
  - *Greening industry.*
  - *Future energy networks & systems.*

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Expressions of Interest from eligible individuals who have been engaged in national or EU projects fitting in at least one of the previous areas will be strongly encouraged, with the goal of maximizing outcomes and synergies with other public investments.

2. Objectives and Duration of the Short-Term Research Internships at UT Austin

Applicants admitted to the scheme will benefit from an immersive experience in UT Austin's ecosystem to explore and develop institutional/faculty/departmental-level collaborations, engage in interdisciplinary and collaborative research with scientific peers and acquire and transfer new knowledge. Funded internships should offer a springboard to collaborative work (e.g. joint publication, joint applications) between hosts and visiting researchers well beyond the visiting period at UT.

Internships must last from **three months (minimum) to six months (maximum)** and **start between October 15 and December 31, 2025, and be completed by June 30, 2026.**

3. Beneficiaries and Eligibility Rules

To be eligible for internships, **applicants must comply with the following criteria at the time of submission of their EoIs** and **throughout their stay at UT Austin**:

a) Hold Portuguese nationality or, in the case of non-Portuguese citizens, have permanent residence in Portugal;

b) Hold a Master's or Doctoral degree or, if not, be enrolled in a Master's or Doctoral Program in Portugal;

c) Be officially affiliated with a research institution, university or R&D-performing company established in Portugal.

Applicants who do not meet the required criteria for EoI submission and fail to submit any of the mandatory documents listed in the section **"Application Procedure and Deadline | Mandatory Documents"** of this announcement will be ruled ineligible. Their EoIs will not be evaluated.

By the time the placements commence, interns must also be allocated to the exchange under a scheme of exclusive dedication. Nevertheless, the Program is not in a position to prevent the organization of an admitted candidate from providing them with financial assistance in addition to the allowance received through the Program.

It is the participants' sole responsibility to check and notify the UT Austin Portugal Program about potential conflicting issues concerning their full-time participation in the exchange and the receipt of other funds prior to signing a contract with the Program. The same holds true for any changes in the mandatory requirements for which the applicants were ruled eligible at EoI submission.

Candidates with fellowships funded directly or indirectly by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology must check directly with this entity, not the Program, whether they can receive additional funding under this mobility initiative.

Failure to comply with the eligibility rules may result in the non-allocation or cancellation of the financial assistance foreseen under this Call.

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4. Identification of Hosts at UT Austin

Before EoI submission, applicants must have identified at least one UT Austin faculty or researcher **who could act as their scientific host during their stay at UT Austin**. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to proactively look for potential hosts at UT Austin and contact them in advance. Research staff **affiliated with the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC) can also host visiting researchers under this Program.**

- UT Austin's faculty directory can be found **here** – Academics tab
- TACC's staff directory can be found **here**
- UT Austin Energy Institute's staff directory can be found **here**

The Program is also available to assist candidates in this search through one of the following contacts:

- **Marco Bravo** | UT Austin Portugal - UT Austin Office (bravo@austin.utexas.edu);
- **Andreia Passos** | UT Austin Portugal - PT Office (research@utaustinportugal.org).

5. Financial Support to Admitted Applicants

Admitted candidates will benefit from financial support made available through funding secured in both Portugal and at UT Austin.

5.1. Support through the Program's Office in Portugal.

In Portugal, the support provided will take the form of a **mobility allowance** for the duration of the exchange, corresponding to **€ 2100/month** (two thousand one hundred euros).

Additionally, the Portuguese office will **reimburse visiting researchers for mandatory health insurance** during their stay at UT Austin, up to €168 per month, with a maximum of €1000 for a six-month period. Researchers will also be covered by **Personal Accident Insurance**, extendable to the U.S. under INESC TEC's insurance plan.

Admitted applicants will be granted **Visiting Researcher** status by INESC TEC and will sign a contract outlining the support provided.

The financial package granted by the Program's office in Portugal in the form of a mobility allowance may be used to cover mobility-related expenses, and no receipts will be required as proof of spending. Only health insurance reimbursements will be processed by INESC TEC upon submission of the reimbursement form. Claims submitted after December 31, 2025, will not be accepted.

Costs exceeding the mobility allowance are the responsibility of the participant.

5.2. Support through the Program's Office at UT Austin

Local Accommodation in Texas - In addition to the mobility allowance and health insurance granted through the Program's office in Portugal, admitted candidates will be offered free housing by UT Austin. UT Austin will guarantee free accommodation for the entire residency, thereby providing participants with a safe and enjoyable place to stay while in Austin. Participants opting for other accommodation options, such as private rental housing, will not be receiving additional funding, though.

Travel - UT Austin will arrange and cover the cost of one round-trip airfare (economy class).

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SEVIS Fee - SEVIS stands for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It maintains current information on nonimmigrant students, exchange visitors, and their dependents (i.e., all those in F or J status). To travel to the USA and participate in the Program's internships at UT Austin, admitted candidates will need to apply for a J-1 Scholar Visa at the US Embassy in Portugal. To this end, they will need to get a SEVIS Number, a unique identifier assigned by the US Government. UT Austin will cover the SEVIS fee.

(Kindly note that the SEVIS is different from VISA fees. The Program will not cover Visa fees).

6. Call Total Budget

The total funding for this Call on the Portuguese side is **€ 104,000 (one hundred and four thousand euros).**

7. Application Procedure and Deadline:

Mandatory Documents:

To apply for an internship, applicants must fill out this **online application form** with the following documents attached:

- **Detailed Curriculum Vitae**.
- **Statement issued by the applicant's primary affiliation institution/employer or funding entity** authorizing their extended leave if the Program selects them.
- **One-page Motivation Letter** outlining the **applicant's research objectives**, **the relevance of the proposed work at UT Austin to Portuguese and European research and innovation agendas**, and **the anticipated impact of the exchange on their academic or professional trajectory.**
- **At least one Recommendation Letter up to a maximum of two**.
- **Highest Degree Certificate**[2].
- **Evidence of Portuguese Citizenship** (or **Proof of Permanent Residence in Portugal for Foreign Nationals** only).
- **Proof of Enrollment in Master's or PhD Program in Portugal** (for applicants applying as Master's or PhD Students).

8. Proof of English Proficiency:

Candidates should be proficient in English. Although no proof of evidence will be required at the application stage, admitted candidates will be asked to attest to their proficiency for visa application. Refer to section **14. Establishing English Proficiency for the J-1 Scholar Visa** of this Call to learn more about this requirement.

9. Deadline:

EoIs must be submitted no later than ~~**July 1**~~ **July 7 (23:59 UTC+1), 2025.**

[2] For degrees earned from foreign Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), candidates will be required to present proof of degree recognition by a Portuguese HEI as laid out in Article no. 8 of Regulation no 913/2021.

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10. Evaluation criteria, selection and notification process

The evaluation, selection and notification process will be implemented strictly according to Articles 11 and 12 of Regulation no 913/2021. Eligible EoIs will be evaluated by **a panel of three experts per Scientific Area. Experts will look into the applicant's scientific curriculum**, **personal motivation** and **reference letter(s).**

List of Experts per Scientific Area:

Nanotechnologies

- Killian Lobato (University of Lisbon)
- Fátima Montemor (Instituto Superior Técnico)
- André Pereira (University of Porto)
- Hugo Águas (NOVA University Lisbon)

Advanced Computing

- Ricardo Fonseca (ISCTE – IUL)
- Pedro Alberto (University of Coimbra)
- Diogo Gomes (University of Aveiro)

Space-Earth Technologies

- Vasco Mantas (University of Coimbra)
- Maria João Costa (University of Évora)
- Anna Guerman (University of Beira Interior)

Clean Energy

- Pedro Salomé (International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory)
- Paulo Branco (Instituto Superior Técnico)
- Bernardo Silva (University of Porto)

During the evaluation process, the panel appointed per Scientific Area may need to interview applicants to clarify any information provided through the EoI. Applicants should be available to meet with the panel or a panel member.

Based on available funding and maximum cost estimates per visiting researcher, each area can potentially accommodate one to two placements. If an area does not fill in its allocated placements, the Program may reallocate those resources to the other areas. Furthermore, should the total funding allocated to this Call not be exhausted, additional placements may be awarded beyond the initially indicated number, regardless of the area.

To be eligible for funding, an Expression of Interest (EoI) must receive a minimum qualifying score of 10. Only EoIs meeting this threshold will be ranked in descending order based on their final score and considered for funding, subject to area-specific availability. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the evaluation criteria and scoring methodology here.

The evaluation process is expected to take approximately five weeks. The final ranked list will be shared with FCT for consultation, after which applicants will be notified by the Program Leadership of their final score and funding decision. Notifications will be sent via email with a delivery receipt confirmation.

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11. Filing of complaints or appeals after notification of the decision

Under paragraph 9, Article 11 of Regulation no 913/2021, the period for preliminary hearings will be dismissed. Nevertheless, applicants have the right to lodge a complaint or an appeal by at the latest 15 working days after receiving the notification email. Complaints or appeals must be submitted in writing to the Program's Board of Directors (leadership@utaustinportugal.org).

12. Requirements for granting financial support

For the period of the internships, INESC TEC will confer upon admitted applicants the **status of Visiting Researchers,** whereby they will be subject to INESC TEC's applicable internal policies. Additionally, before the commencement of their internships, they **will sign a Financial Assistance Contract with INESC TEC that complies with Article 13 of Regulations no 913/2021 and will entitle them to receive financial support as laid out in No. 6 of this Announcement**.

Contract signing and granting of financial support are dependent on admitted candidates providing proof that they still meet the eligibility requirements for which their EoIs were deemed eligible for the selection process. Additionally, they must submit a **statement issued by their primary affiliation institution/employer or funding entity authorizing their extended leave.**

All visits must start between October 15 and December 31, 2025, and be completed by June 30, 2026.

13. Financial Assistance Contract

The Financial Assistance Contract sets out the **rights and duties of admitted applicants**, **INESC TEC and designated supervisors** according to Articles 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 of **Regulation no 913/2021.**

Admitted applicants must sign the contract before the start of their internship at UT Austin in order to receive an up-front instalment intended to support their initial settling-in. The remaining amount – representing the total mobility allowance for the period abroad and the initial payment - will be paid in a single instalment during the first month at UT Austin.

In the event of withdrawal or early termination of the mobility period, applicants must return the portion of funds corresponding to the period not completed.

Also, if admitted candidates fail to comply with any requirements established by this Call and **Regulation no 913/2021**, sanctions will be applied, according to Article 22 of the same regulation.

14. Work Plans in Research Exchanges under the UT Austin Portugal Program and Program's Supervision

Translational research plans must underpin all internships supported through this mobility scheme. Before an internship starts, the host at UT Austin should meet with the admitted candidate to discuss both parties' expectations regarding the work plan and its outcomes. The host should devise a realistic work plan and share it with the admitted candidate and the Program - through INESC TEC - before the internship.

Work plans must:

- Fit the candidates' research needs and goals;
- Identify the host or hosts at UT Austin;

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- Foresee, during the mobility period, the candidates' integration within a team or group at UT Austin, participation in projects and communications, advanced training activities, outreach activities and/or relevant networking events offered by the host teams/centers/ schools at UT Austin.
- Contribute to specific challenges and priorities laid out in national agendas aligned with European goals.
- Set the proper context for a two-way transfer of knowledge between the candidate and the host team/center/ school and for potential collaborations extending beyond the duration of the placement.

After approval of the work plan by the host at the American counterpart, the activities developed by admitted applicants will be subject to the supervision of UT Austin Portugal's Directors in Portugal, José Manuel Mendonça and Rui Carlos Oliveira, both affiliated with INESC TEC.

15. Establishing English Proficiency for the J-1 Scholar Visa

To apply for a J-1 Scholar Visa, UT Austin will accept from admitted candidates the following as proof of English proficiency in one of the following ways:

- Copy of a diploma, or other signed documentation, that confirms the exchange visitor earned a degree from an institution of higher education that operates in English.
- Approved English test score taken within the last five years:
  - TOEFL score of at least 79; or
  - IELTs score of at least 6.5.
- Texas Global English Language Center (ELC) interview: You will receive an email with instructions to sign up for an exam time with the ELC. The cost of the interview is $80 and will be covered by the Program's office at UT Austin (contact person: Julia Nelson - julia.nelson@austin.utexas.edu).

To learn if you are from a country exempt from the English Proficiency Requirement, refer to this page.

Proof of English Proficiency will be requested by the Program only after participants are notified of their admission into the Program.

16. Reporting and Acknowledgements

At the end of internships, admitted applicants will be asked to write and submit a report (maximum two pages) detailing their progress against the goals set in the work plan. The report should include pictures and an overall comment by the host at UT Austin on the participant's performance and achievements.

UT Austin Portugal's Directors in Portugal, acting as supervisors of admitted applicants, should provide an overall assessment of each internship based on the reports submitted by admitted applicants and on the comments of UT Austin's hosts.

Publications or any other scientific outputs resulting from this funding must include an acknowledgement of FCT and the UT Austin Portugal Program.

17. Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

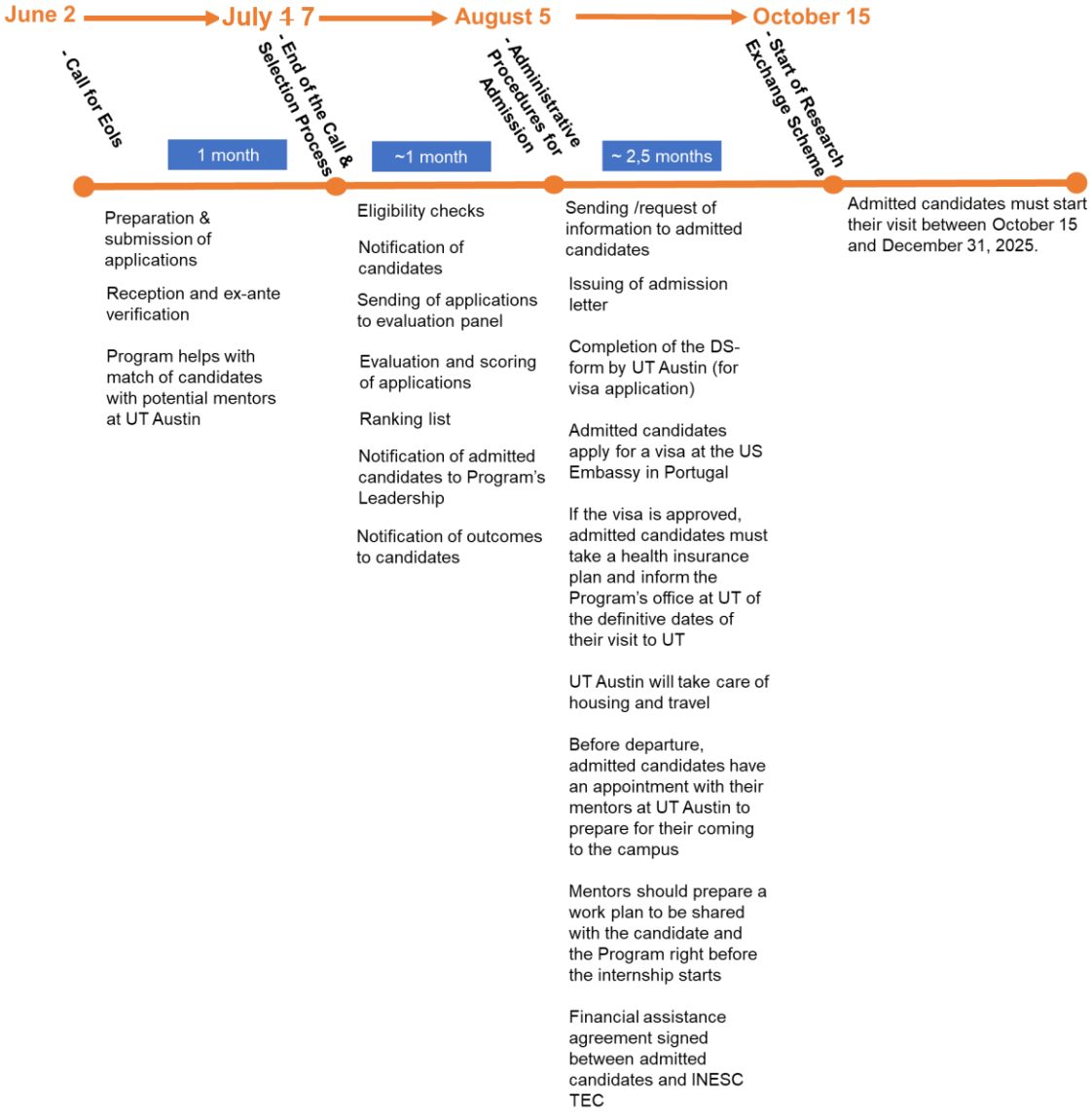
Before proceeding with EoI submission, applicants are advised to read the **Program's Privacy Policy** carefully.

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18. Contacts

- For help with UT Austin host searching: Marco Bravo, bravo@austin.utexas.edu | Andreia Passos, research@utaustinportugal.org
- For inquiries regarding the compatibility of this mobility scheme with an FCT scholarship, please contact: bolsas@fct.pt
- For general inquiries about the Call: research@utaustinportugal.org

19. Indicative Timetable



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