

JOSÉ FERNANDO MENDES
University of Aveiro

**MESSAGE
FROM
VICE-RECTOR
FOR
RESEARCH
AND
DOCTORAL
SCHOOL**



Research can make a difference in a number of ways and be transformative in the society. Our robust, multi-disciplinary and collaborative research approach has driven innovation and delivered significant economic, social and environmental benefits for society. On the one hand, research should answer the most pressing needs of our local communities and environment, but on the other hand, it should also change the wider world, by making a difference in varied fields as health, information and communication technologies, environment, materials, culture, literature and so many other research fields that impact on society in general.

At the University of Aveiro, we have the opportunity to make a difference. Our range of research activities is broad and deep. We operate at regional, national and international levels and understand that a global field of action is needed for the global challenges we embrace. I am personally committed to internationalization of our University and research. It is my belief that a truly international cooperation brings about more knowledge, fosters innovation, attracts students and researchers and empowers the research potential.

One of the best mechanisms for enabling this international exchange of knowledge and ideas is through personal contact with academic and scholarly communities across the world. When I visit other universities, I try to learn through their leaders about their organization, their culture and their capacity. But, above all, I disseminate the brand “University of Aveiro” as a young, determined and open-minded university, encouraged to address widespread problems and challenges.

Another way to foster international cooperation is through the numerous high-level scientific conferences organized at the campus, which strengthen the international perception of the University of Aveiro and allow the dissemination of the extraordinary achievements of our researchers and scientific production, which has placed the University among the best universities in Europe and worldwide, according to different rankings published in 2015.

The participation in three Horizon 2020 TEAMING actions, of which two entered Phase II, will hopefully provide new opportunities to UA, with real prospects for growth in strategic research areas through the establishment of new scientific networks, links with local clusters and opening up access to new markets.

To this respect, efforts have also been developed at regional level to further develop these strategic research areas, following the closing of the MaisCentro five strategic projects held during 2012-2015. These new projects are interdisciplinary and basic research-oriented projects and aim at potentiate our research capacity in pivotal research areas for the next 3 years and allow the hiring of high-level staff. In this domain, the definition and contextualization of permanent research positions has also constituted a priority in 2015 and its operationalization this 2016 will foster our capacity to attract and retain the best researchers at the campus.

General collaboration or learning or research co-operation agreements were also intensified national and internationally in 2015, derived, naturally, from the work of the Doctoral School, which is expanding its important role in the national and international joint degrees and cotutelle agreements, providing students with a truly international environment during the doctoral programmes, and as result of the participation in several Horizon 2020 Marie Curie Training Networks.

Directly or indirectly, the recognition of a solid and capable research university potentiates the participation and approval of external funded projects, generating national or international research projects, contributing to the university sustainability and international positioning, and this is a task all UA researchers can perform. I hope that Research@UA 2015 may contribute to disseminate the research developed at our campus and bring about future collaborations.