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LSP - Laboratoire des systèmes perceptifs

Rapport Hcéres

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Research evaluation

REPORT ON THE RESEARCH UNIT:
Laboratoire des Systèmes Perceptifs
LSP

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND
RESEARCH BODIES:

École Normale Supérieure - ENS

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique -
CNRS

ÉVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2017-2018
GROUP D



In the name of Hcéres¹ :

Michel Cosnard, President

In the name of the experts committees² :

Simon Thorpe, Chairman of the committee

Under the decree No.2014-1365 dated 14 november 2014,

¹ The president of HCERES "countersigns the evaluation reports set up by the experts committees and signed by their chairman." (Article 8, paragraph 5) ;

² The evaluation reports "are signed by the chairman of the expert committee". (Article 11, paragraph 2).

This report is the sole result of the unit's evaluation by the expert committee, the composition of which is specified below. The assessments contained herein are the expression of an independent and collegial reviewing by the committee.

UNIT PRESENTATION

Unit name:	Laboratoire des Systèmes Perceptifs
Unit acronym:	LSP
Requested label:	UMR
Application type:	Renewal
Current number:	8248
Head of the unit (2017-2018):	Mr Pascal MAMASSIAN
Project leader (2019-2023):	Mr Pascal MAMASSIAN
Number of teams or themes:	Two

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	Mr Simon THORPE, Université de Toulouse
Experts:	Mr Pascal BELIN, Aix-Marseille Université Mr Michael HERZOG, Ecole polytechnique de Lausanne, Suisse Ms Marion LUYAT, Université de Lille (representative of CNU) Ms Delphine PINS, Université de Lille (representative of CoNRS) Mr Marc THEVENET, Université de Lyon (representative of supporting personnel)
HCERES scientific officer:	Ms Céline SOUCHAY
Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:	Mr Yves LASZLO, Ecole normale supérieure Paris Mr Bernard POULAIN, CNRS (INSB)

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The Laboratoire des Systèmes Perceptifs (LSP) is a Mixed Research Unit (UMR) affiliated to the Ecole normale supérieure, Paris (ENS) and the CNRS. It was created in January 2014 after the division of the Laboratoire Psychologie de la Perception (LPP) directed at the time by Kevin O'Regan.

The LSP is located within a building belonging to the ENS at 29 rue d'Ulm, 75005 Paris.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The director of the LSP since 2014 has been Pascal Mamassian, a research director with the CNRS. He is the proposed director for the future laboratory.

HCERES NOMENCLATURE

SHS 4 – 2 Psychology
SVE 1 - 4 Neurobiology

SCIENTIFIC DOMAIN

The LSP is a relatively small laboratory, but with a very focussed research theme centered on Visual and Auditory perception. Its aim is to understand the fundamental principles of perceiving by studying this behavior and its physiological mechanisms

UNIT WORKFORCE

Unit workforce	Number 30/06/2017	Number 01/01/2019
Permanent staff		
Full professors and similar positions	2	2
Assistant professors and similar positions	1	1
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	3	4
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	1	1
Other scientists ("Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.")	0	0
High school teachers	0	0
Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)	2	2
TOTAL permanent staff	9	10
Non-permanent staff		
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	1	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs	9	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	2	

PhD Students	10	
TOTAL non-permanent staff	22	
TOTAL unit	31	

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

Strengths and opportunities

The LSP was only created recently (2014), and so this evaluation does not cover the full 5 year period normally used to assess a laboratory. Nevertheless, it is clearly succeeding in its ambition to develop an internationally visible research center that integrates researchers in both vision and audition. Although small, it has a number of leading researchers who are well known internationally and have been involved in a number of cutting edge research projects that have a very distinctive flavour. The unit is very actively involved in training students, and has the advantage of being closely linked with the ENS, allowing it to attract some excellent students. There are also strong links with a number of industrial partners and there are significant implications for society and health. The ability of the unit to attract new talent is also demonstrated. It is also a key component of the DEC (Departement d'Etudes Cognitives), an impressive grouping of four different labs interested in various aspects of Cognition. The overall level of satisfaction amongst staff and students is remarkably high especially given the cramped conditions.

Weaknesses and Threats

The members of the lab are well aware of the gender imbalance amongst the PIs, but are doing what they can to rebalance the situation, as illustrated by the recent recruitment of a junior woman scientist. The other main threat comes from the limited space available on site. Space is so limited that it seems difficult for the lab to expand significantly. Even the lab members consider that one additional PI would be a maximum. Renting space locally could be option to help with the space restrictions, but it was clear that this is not an attractive solution for the lab's members. They would clearly prefer to stay together. Another threat is the dependence on soft money - particularly in the case of the Neuro platform, where a key technical support staff member is currently on soft money.

Recommendations

The committee strongly recommends that the members of the LSP continue to develop their innovative and cutting edge research programs. Given the pyramid of ages, the panel thinks that it is important to ensure that the number of PIs does not drop below a critical level.

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