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LPNC - Laboratoire de psychologie et de neurocognition

Rapport Hcéres

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HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Research units

HCERES report on interdisciplinary unit:

Laboratoire de Psychologie et NeuroCognition

LPNC

Under the supervision of
the following institutions
and research bodies:

Université Pierre Mendès France - Grenoble - UPMF

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - CNRS

Université Savoie Mont Blanc

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Research units

In the name of HCERES,¹

Didier HOUSSIN, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Régine KOLINSKY, chairwoman of the committee

Under the decree N°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)

Evaluation report

This report is the result of the evaluation by the experts committee, the composition of which is specified below. The assessments contained herein are the expression of an independent and collegial deliberation of the committee.

Unit name:	Laboratoire de Psychologie et NeuroCognition
Unit acronym:	LPNC
Label requested:	CNRS UMR5105
Present no.:	
Name of Director (2014-2015):	Ms Monica BACIU
Name of Project Leader (2016-2020):	Ms Monica BACIU

Expert committee members

Chair: Ms Régine KOLINSKY, Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgique

Experts: Ms Muriel BOUCART, Université Lille 2

Mr Yann COELLO, Université Lille 3 (representative of the CNU)

Ms Cheryl FRENCK-MESTRE, Université Aix-Marseille (representative of the CoNRS)

Scientific delegates representing the HCERES:

Ms Céline SOUCHAY

Mr Jean-Marie ZAJAC

Representatives of the unit's supervising institutions and bodies:

Mr Jérôme GENSEL, UPMF Grenoble

Ms Anne GUERIN (director of the Doctoral School, EDISCE n°215)

Mr Roman KOSSAKOWSKI, Université de Savoie

Mr Jean-Louis VERCHER, CNRS

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

Originating from the very well-known LPE (“Laboratoire de Psychologie expérimentale”), created in 1975, the LPNC unit (“Laboratoire de Psychologie et NeuroCognition”) is located at Campus Universitaire de Saint Martin d’Hères, Bâtiment des Sciences Humaines et Mathématiques (BSHM) of the Université Pierre Mendès France, Avenue centrale Domaine Universitaire, Grenoble.

The LPNC officially exists since 2002. At that time it included 3 teams: “Espace, action, perception” (resp.: Ms Sylvie CHOKRON); “Perception et mémoire” (resp.: Mr Christian MARENDAZ) and “Langage” (resp.: Ms Sylviane VALDOIS). In 2007, Ms Sylviane VALDOIS was named Director of the unit, which then included two teams: “Psychologie et neurocognition des systèmes perceptive-moteurs” (resp.: Mr Edouard GENTAZ) and “Psychologie et neurocognition des systèmes mnésiques et langagiers” (resp.: Ms Monica BACIU). It now again includes three teams, as described below.

Management team

Following the resignation of Ms Sylviane VALDOIS for personal motives, Ms Monica BACIU (PR) became director of the unit in January 2013. Given the increasing number of affiliated researchers, and following the recommendations of the former HCERES committee, at the same time the laboratory was restructured into three teams: “Language/Langage” (resp.: Ms Marie Line BOSSE, MCF), “Memory and Cognitive Development/Mémoire et Développement Cognitif” (resp.: Mr Olivier PASCALIS, DR CRNS) and “Perception and Sensory-Motricity/Perception et sensori-motricité” (resp.: Ms Carole PEYRIN, CR CRNS).

HCERES nomenclature

SVE1

SHS4_2 Psychologie

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions PR, MCF	25 (12.5)	26
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions (CR, DR, PH, ITA-R) 10 chercheurs, 6 ITA recherche, 3 PH	19 (16.83)	19
N3: Other permanent staff (without research duties) ITA-administratifs	5 (3.23)	5
N4: Other professors (Emeritus Professor, on-contract Professor, etc.) PREM, ATER, PH	10 (2)	8
N5: Other researchers from Institutions (Emeritus Research Director, Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.) Post-doctorat, CDD chercheur	7 (7)	2
N6: Other contractual staff (without research duties)		
TOTAL N1 to N6	66 (41,56)	60

N1, N2, N3 = permanents (49 membres ; 32,56 ETPT)

N4, N5 = non-permanents (17 membres ; 9 ETPT)

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
Doctoral students	33	
Theses defended	25	
Postdoctoral students having spent at least 12 months in the unit	8	
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) taken	4	
Qualified research supervisors (with an HDR) or similar positions	22	26

2 • Overall assessment of the interdisciplinary unit

Global assessment of the unit

Thanks to converging research areas between three distinct research teams, to an interdisciplinary approach and to share technological tools and human resources, the LPNC presents a solid program that is well integrated with the local environment. In addition to an impressive scientific track record (e.g., high-level publications), numerous other outputs (diagnostic or reeducation tools, patents, databases) show the unit's implication in society and its interaction with the social, economic and cultural environment. The contribution of the unit to the general research community is also invaluable, as it has developed and made accessible several tools aimed at helping experimental psychologists to design rigorous experimental materials. In addition, the LPNC is a quite convivial and collegial unit, and its involvement in training through research is strong, as it comprises a large effective of teachers who are associated to the coordination of several national masters and actively participate to undergraduate teaching programs. The team also seems very attractive to PhD students as they supervise numerous students with a financial support and training abroad. All these aspects contribute to make the LPNC one of the strongest national units in their field of expertise. In comparison to other teams in the field worldwide, the scientific quality and outputs of the LPNC are excellent (top 20%), its academic reputation and appeal is very good (top 40%), its social, economic and cultural interaction with the environment is outstanding (top 5%), its organisation and life is excellent, its involvement in training through research is excellent, and it presents several excellent scientific projects with a good 5 year plan and strategy.

Strengths and opportunities in relation to the context

The unit has developed several research programs in a collaborative and international context, using cutting-edge interdisciplinary scientific methods. The unit shows an impressive track record of PhD students, grants, publications in high impact-factor peer-reviewed journals and implication in society. Several topics are very original and highly promising.

Weaknesses and threats related to the context

The main risk is the number and diversity of the research topics addressed by the unit, which may eventually impact the visibility of its activity and the coherence of its strategy and five-year plan. While all of the various scientific sub-projects are related to a general theme developed by one of the three teams (e.g., language, perception and sensorimotricity, memory and development), their theoretical coherence, even within team, is not always clear. In addition, considering the diversity both of the topics and of the methods used, the support in terms of both full time researchers (without teaching commitment) and technicians/engineers is insufficient. Collaborative projects and fundraising at the European level, as well as the contribution to scientific responsibility on the international scene, could be enhanced.

Recommendations

Increasing the degree of cohesiveness across the (at least within-team) sub-projects would enhance the visibility of the obviously excellent scientific expertise of the unit. This could be achieved, for example, by reducing the number of research topics through reorganizing the existing ones as a function of theoretical approaches. This could be paralleled by an increase of the number of full time researchers (without teaching commitment) and technicians/engineers. Increasing the number of international financial supports and international visitors would help to achieve this aim.