

FINAL SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION ON THE RESEARCH UNIT:

Cancer research center of Lyon (CRCL)

Under the supervision of the following
institutions and research bodies:

Centre national de la recherche scientifique -
CNRS

Institut national de la santé et de la recherche
médicale - Inserm

Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1 – UCBL

Centre Léon Bérard

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2019-2020 GROUP A

Report published on June, 16 2020



In the name of Hcéres¹:

Nelly Dupin, Acting
President

In the name of the experts committee²:

Olivier Delattre, co-chair of the committee
Ellen Van Obberghen, co-chair of the
committee

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

¹ The president of Hcéres "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 experts committee". (Article 11, paragraph 2).

Tables in this document were filled with data submitted by the supervising body on behalf the unit.

UNIT PRESENTATION

Unit name:	Cancer research center of Lyon
Unit acronym:	CRCL
Current label and N°:	UMR Inserm 1052 CNRS 5286 mixte CLB
ID RNSR:	201119413H
Application type:	Identical renewal
Head of the unit (2019-2020):	Mr Alain PUISIEUX (up to Sept 2019), then Mr Patrick MEHLEN
Project leader (2021-2025):	Mr Patrick MEHLEN
Number of teams:	22 teams

EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Co-Chairs: Mr Olivier DELATTRE, Institut Curie, Paris
Ms Ellen VAN OBERGHEN, Université Côte d'Azur, Nice

Mr Reuven AGAMI, The Netherlands Cancer Institute, The Netherlands
Ms Leila AKKARI, The Netherlands Cancer Institute, The Netherlands
Mr Andréas BIKFALVI, Université de Bordeaux, Talence (representative of Inserm CSS)
Mr Boudewijn BURGERING, University Medical Centre Utrecht, The Netherlands
Mr Julien CAU, CNRS, Montpellier (supporting personnel)
Ms Chantal DESDOUETS, Inserm, Paris

Experts: Ms Julie GAVARD, CNRS, Nantes (representative of CNRS)
Ms Claire HIVROZ, Institut Curie, Paris
Mr Gaetan JEGO, Université Bourgogne Franche-Comté, Dijon (representative of CNU)
Mr Michael KANN, Gothenburg University, Sweden
Mr Spiros LINARDOPOULOS, Institute of Cancer Research, United Kingdom
Mr Tomi MÄKELÄ (Helsinki Institute of Life Science)
Mr Celio POUPONNOT, CNRS, Orsay

HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Ms Urszula Hibner

REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING BODIES

M. Yvan de Launoit, CNRS
M. Alain Eychene, Inserm
M. Jean-François Mornex, University of Lyon
Mme Marina Rousseau-Tsangaris

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The CRCL originated from the merger in 2011 of five Inserm, CNRS and University Lyon 1 research units (headed by A. Puisieux, P. Mehlen, M. Billaud, J-Y. Scoazec and F. Zoulim) located on the Lyon-Est site. The institute was created to join cancer research and training/teaching forces on this site and to foster the translation of basic research discoveries to clinical applications, in close collaboration with clinical partners in the Léon Bérard Cancer Center (CLB) and the Hospices Civils de Lyon (HCL). Administratively, the CRCL is affiliated to Inserm, CNRS, University Claude Bernard Lyon1 (UCBL) and the CLB.

From 2011-2019 the CRCL was directed by Alain Puisieux, until his departure to lead the Institut Curie Research Center. Since 2019 Patrick Mehlen (former Deputy Director with Charles Dumontet) has directed the CRCL. Following an international call, and with approval of the SAB, Patrick Mehlen was chosen to direct the unit during the 2021-2025 term, with Charles Dumontet as Deputy Director.

Since its creation in 2011 the CRCL has grown from 16 research teams (280 members) to a total of 24 teams in June 2019 (490 members). This increase attests to the attractiveness of the institute and corresponds to the arrival of new teams selected through the competitive ATIP-AVENIR program, recruited with LabEx support or through the emergence of groups from within the institute.

The institute is strategically situated on the Lyon-Est University-Health campus in close proximity to the Edouard Herriot hospital, the Faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the CLB. At present, nineteen teams are housed on the CLB site (in Cheney A, B, D buildings), 3 teams are located in the Inserm building (Cours Albert Thomas) and 2 teams are in the Rockefeller Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy, all within 500m of each other. The growth in CRCL personnel since its inception has been accompanied by extensive restructuring and surface expansion, including the construction of 2 new buildings on the CLB site. The most recent, completed at the beginning of the present term, bridges fundamental and clinical research by housing 5 CRCL research teams, joint CRCL/CLB platforms as well as the CRCL administrative and financial units. The institute benefits from a total surface area of more than 11,800m² of laboratory space and several top level technological platforms : cellular imaging, flow cytometry/sorting, genomics, bioinformatics, drug discovery, animal facilities, and others dedicated to investigation (in-/ex-vivo and in-situ) of mouse tumor models and patient-derived samples.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Director of the unit is Mr Patrick Mehlen and he is assisted by a Deputy Director, Mr Charles Dumontet.

HCÉRES NOMENCLATURE

SVE 5 : Physiologie, physiopathologie, cardiologie, pharmacologie, endocrinologie, cancer, technologies médicales

THEMATICS

During the current evaluation period (2016-2020) the main research topics in the CRCL, organized into three departments, have been 1) Tumour escape signaling, 2) Immunity, virus and inflammation and 3) Cancer cell plasticity. Teams of the "Tumor Escape" Department are interested in determining how pre-cancer and cancer cells escape from safeguard mechanisms that constrain tumor progression and spread (senescence and apoptosis). The "Immunity, Virus and Inflammation" Department has focused on immune subversion mechanisms, the development of therapeutic antibodies and the study of viruses involved in hepatocellular carcinoma, with the strong involvement of clinicians from the CLB and HCL. The "Cancer cell plasticity" Department investigates molecular mechanisms that underlie and regulate the reprogramming of cells and phenotypic outcomes in relevant non-pathological and cancer models. Translation to the clinic and industrial validation of research discoveries are common aims of all teams.

UNIT WORKFORCE

Cancer research centre of Lyon (CRCL)		
Active staff	Number 06/30/2019	Number 01/01/2021
Full professors and similar positions	27	32
Assistant professors and similar positions	27	25
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	16	15
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	43	47
Other scientists ("Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.")	16	20
High school teachers	0	0
Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)	75	74
Permanent staff	204	213
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	3	NA
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs (except PhD students)	54	NA
PhD Students	93	NA
Non-permanent supporting personnel	48	NA
Non-permanent staff	198	NA
Total	402	213

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The CRCL combines high-level basic research with a strong ambition of a fast transfer of their discoveries into clinical applications. Some of the Centre's achievements in both fields are remarkable, making the CRCL one of the most visible Cancer Research Centres in France. The research has been published as a large number of scientific and clinical articles, with many contributions in top-tier journals. The dynamic expansion of the unit during the last mandate bears testimony to its attractiveness, which materialized in recent recruitment of several excellent teams.

The scientific project for the next mandate builds on the recognized multidisciplinary expertise of the unit and excellent quality of technological platforms but also introduces new and complementary avenues of investigation. The translational ambition is maintained and even strengthened in the future projects.

Attesting to its local, regional and national recognition as a center of excellence in tumor biology and translational research, the CRCL has been extremely successful during the past decade in acquiring and maintaining support through competitive structuring programs that have enriched the CRCL basic and clinical cancer research community. Notably, with their clinical partners at the CLB and HCL, CRCL teams have actively participated in the Fondation Synergy Lyon Cancer, the INCa-labelled LYon integrated Research Institute in Cancer (LYRIC/LYriCAN), the Laboratory of Excellence (DEVweCAN/DEV2CAN) and the Institut François Rabelais for Interdisciplinary Research on Cancer (PLASCAN).

Since 2013 the CRCL has organized a biennial international Symposium with high-profile speakers which, together with international networking initiatives, has increased the international visibility of the institute. Moreover, in 2013 the CRCL in association with the UCBL launched the first Master program dedicated to oncology contributes to the attractiveness of the CRCL to trainees.

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