

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Research units

HCERES report on research unit:

Institut de Recherche en Santé Digestive

IRSD

Under the supervision of the following
institutions and research bodies:

Université Toulouse 3 - Paul Sabatier – UPS

École Nationale Vétérinaire de Toulouse

Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique - INRA

Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche

Médicale - INSERM

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In the name of HCERES,¹

Didier HOUSSIN, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Nathalie DELZENNE, chairwoman 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)

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: Institut de Recherche en Santé Digestive

Unit acronym: IRSD

Label requested: UMR_S/UMR

Present no.: UMR_S1043 and UMR 5282

Name of Director
(2014-2015): Mr Roland LIBLAU

Name of Project Leader
(2016-2020): Ms Nathalie VERGNOLLE

Expert committee members

Chair: Ms Nathalie DELZENNE, Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium

Experts: Mr Denis ARDID, Inserm, Clermont-Ferrand

Mr Pascal DE SANTA BARBARA, Inserm, Montpellier (representative of the CSS Inserm)

Ms Teresa FRISAN, Karolinska Institut, Stockholm, Sweden

Mr Hervé PUY, Centre de recherche sur l'inflammation, Inserm, Paris

Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:

Mr Jean GIRARD

Representatives of the unit's supervising institutions and bodies:

Ms Emmanuelle MAGUIN, INRA, MICA department, Paris

Mr Alain MILON, ENVT - École Nationale Vétérinaire de Toulouse

Ms Anne ROCHAT, Inserm, Paris

Mr Philippe VALET (representative of the Doctoral School ED n°151 "Biologie Santé Biotechnologie")

Mr Alexis VALENTIN, Paul Sabatier University, Toulouse

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

The proposal consists in a restructuration of the CPTP (Centre de Pathophysiologie de Toulouse Purpan - Inserm laboratories located at the Hospital site of Toulouse Purpan), a center created in 2002 and renewed in 2007 and 2011. This center mostly focuses its research activities on immunology and to a lesser extent on infectious diseases. The proposal is to create a new entity (2016-2020): the digestive health research institute (IRSD: Institut de Recherche en Santé Digestive), that will be located for the next term in the same place (Toulouse Purpan). The unit was previously organized in 3 research teams: team “Mediators of Inflammation and Pain”, headed by Ms Nathalie VERGNOLLE; team “Molecular and Cellular Pathogenesis of E. coli infections” headed by Mr Eric OSWALD and team “Genetics and Iron Metabolism” headed by Ms Marie-Paule ROTH and Ms H el ene COPPIN. Those three founding teams have a common vision of the scientific strategy that leads to the demand of creation of the IRSD institute. They will focus their research program (and have renamed their teams) in order to offer a strong research task force in their respective field: intestinal pathophysiology (Ms Nathalie VERGNOLLE’s team), host-microbe interaction (Mr Eric OSWALD’s team) and iron metabolism (Ms Marie-Paule ROTH/Ms H el ene COPPIN’s team) and will also integrate two new research groups: one on “intestinal neuro-immune interactions (Mr Gilles DIETRICH) and one on “intestinal barrier function: initiation and regulation” (Mr Fr ed erik BARREAU’s team - ATIP-AVENIR request). A research laboratory space has been requested in the next CPER (Contrat de Projets Etat R egion) to move onto the Langlade site, to have access to Langlade core facilities, and to gain visibility and accessibility.

Management team

The governance of the Institute is organized as follows: the director, assisted by the deputy director, designed by vote of the general assembly (all members of the staff) implements the strategy defined both from a scientific and organizational point of view. The steering committee (director, deputy director and team leaders) proposes the general scientific strategy and discusses it with the laboratory council. This laboratory council is chaired by the director, and composed of the steering committee, plus elected members representing each staff categories within the institute. The laboratory council also includes Health and Safety representatives and core facility representatives. The laboratory council defines organizational strategy and discusses the scientific strategy proposed by the steering committee. Experts within relevant fields of research could be invited (no right to vote). A Scientific Advisory Board will be constituted at the creation of the Institute and will provide advices both on scientific and organisational outputs. The governance and rules are detailed in a “IRSD Rules of Procedure” document.

HCERES nomenclature

SVE1_LS6 Immunologie, microbiologie, virologie, parasitologie

SVE1_LS4 Physiologie, physiopathologie, biologie syst emique m edicale

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	8 (3.2 FTE)	12 (5.4 FTE)
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions	14	16
N3: Other permanent staff (without research duties)	15 (10.8 FTE)	16 (11 FTE)
N4: Other professors (Emeritus Professor, on-contract Professor, etc.)		
N5: Other researchers (Emeritus Research Director, Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)	11	7
N6: Other contractual staff (without research duties)	7 (6.8 FTE)	6
TOTAL N1 to N6	55 (45.8 FTE)	57 (45.4 FTE)

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
Doctoral students	11	
Theses defended	13	
Postdoctoral students having spent at least 12 months in the unit	22	
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) taken	6	
Qualified research supervisors (with an HDR) or similar positions	17	19

2 • Overall assessment of the unit

Global assessment of the unit

This is a very relevant proposal of restructuration to favor interactions of researchers with complementary backgrounds, who share a common vision of promoting digestive health. All research activities focus on a better comprehension of key pathological events related to digestive diseases. The diversity of competences of the IRSD allows to addressing key questions in the fields of both human and veterinary medicine in the context of digestive health.

Strengths and opportunities in relation to the context

- This is a unique research structure on digestive health, that has the strong support of all governing/funding bodies (Inserm, ENVT, Inra, University Toulouse 3);
- all the members of the future institute have been involved in the decisions related to the project of creation of the unit;
- the new constellation will provide multidisciplinary and complementary research disciplines within the field of the digestive tract physiology and pathology, and will reinforce the translational research in the field of digestive health;
- the objective to attract and recruit several people with key novel expertises has been reached;
- all members of the unit have a good policy in obtaining funding from different sources (national, international, industrial);
- very strong scientific recognition at the international level, with adequate scientific proposals for the future, encouraging the independency of young and promising researchers;
- strong leadership of the director and management skills that promote the motivation and create a positive atmosphere.

Weaknesses and threats related to the context

- Two options have been proposed concerning the expected location in 2020, that should be clarified as soon as possible to keep the visibility;
- the facilities (personal, material, facilities) that could be kept from the previous research center might be clarified.

Recommendations

- There is a need to reinforce the means to promote the translational research in each group;
- if space is available, it would be nice to attract new groups with complementary expertise;
- future recruitment might take into account the generation turnover.