

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Department of Research Evaluation

report on research unit:

Control of the B Cell Immune Response and
Lymphoproliferations

CRIBL

under the supervision of the following
institutions and research bodies:

Université de Limoges

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - CNRS

Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche
Médicale - INSERM

Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Limoges – CHU
Limoges

Evaluation Campaign 2016-2017 (Group C)

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and Higher Education

Department of Research Evaluation

In the name of HCERES,¹

Michel Cosnard, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Cristina Rada, 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 sole result of 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 name:	Control of the B Cell Immune Response and Lymphoproliferations
Unit acronym:	CRIBL
Label requested:	UMR
Current number:	7276
Name of Director (2016-2017):	Mr Michel COGNÉ
Name of Project Leader (2018-2022):	Mr Michel COGNÉ

Expert committee members

Chair:	Ms Cristina RADA, MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge UK
Experts:	Mr Ulrich BLANK, Centre de Recherches sur l'Inflammation, Hôpital Bichat, Paris (representative of the CoNRS) Mr Ahmed EL MARJOU, Institut Curie, Paris (representative of the supporting personnel) Mr Simon FILLATREAU, Institut Necker, Paris (representative of the CSS INSERM) Mr Wolfgang HAMMERSCHMIDT, Helmholtz Zentrum München, Germany Ms Catherine LACOMBE, Institut Cochin, Paris (representative of the CNU)

Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:

Mr Kamel BENLAGHA

Representative of supervising institutions and bodies:

Mr. Pierre-Marie PREUX, Université de Limoges

Head of Doctoral School:

Mr Bertrand COURTHOUX, Doctoral School n° 524, "Biosanté"

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

This research unit is located in a dedicated building within the Limoges Health and Life Sciences research campus that includes academic research institutions as well as the university teaching hospital.

Management team

The unit is directed by Mr Michel COGNÉ.

HCERES nomenclature

Principal: SVE3 Microbiologie, Immunité

Secondaire: SVE2 Biologie Cellulaire, Imagerie, Biologie Moléculaire, Biochimie, Génomique, Biologie Systémique, Développement, Biologie Structurale

Scientific domains

The unit is strategically focused on B cell development, the molecular control of immunoglobulin synthesis and the molecular mechanisms of B cell lymphoproliferative disease.

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number on 30/06/2016	Number on 01/01/2018
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	13	15
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions	5	6
N3: Other permanent staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	5	4
N4: Other researchers (Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)	9	
N5: Emeritus	0	
N6: Other contractual staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	10	
N7: PhD students	13	
TOTAL N1 to N7	55	
Qualified research supervisors (HDR) or similar positions	15	

Unit record	From 01/01/2011 to 30/06/2016
PhD theses defended	18
Postdoctoral scientists having spent at least 12 months in the unit	6
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) obtained during the period	3

2 • Assessment of the unit

Global assessment of the unit

The unit is dedicated to the study of B cell biology in health and disease. The research strategically focuses on B cell development, the molecular control of immunoglobulin synthesis and the molecular mechanisms of B cell lymphoproliferative disease. The specific areas of research include investigating the pathways that control immunoglobulin (Ig) genes in mature B cells and plasma cells, dissecting the cell biology mechanisms that regulate transcription and quality control of antibody production and, uncovering the consequences of aberrant immunoglobulin remodelling and development leading to cancer and disease.

The unit has strong links with the clinic and makes essential contributions to clinical diagnosis through its involvement with the immunology lab and the haematology lab, but more crucially the unit is intimately involved in experimental medical research, translating research from clinical biopsies, providing flow cytometry diagnosis/prognosis and studies on B cell malignancies and immune deposition diseases.

Over the last five years the unit has developed further links to enable translation of its basic research. As an example, it is part of the National Reference Centre for Immunoglobulin Deposition Diseases, which has facilitated the development of potential therapeutic applications of basic research on the antibody mediated removal of amyloid deposits. They recently became integrated in the collaborative Carnot Institute “CALYM” working on lymphomas. In addition, since the last evaluation report in 2012, their interaction with the hospital has been reinforced through the Center for Clinical Research (CIC) and the Biological Resource Center (qualified ISO 9001) providing human samples of lymphomas.

Since its last evaluation, the unit has also strengthened its collaborations with industry, making the most of local facilities and driving their development. Through the CUTE-12 project (a partnership with the University Innovation Agency), it has developed strategies for the exploitation of intellectual property. The translational track record is outstanding, with the CARAT project resulting in further applications related to imaging and diagnostics. Links and further developments with the local spin off company are also on going.

Despite its location in Limoges, far from the national centres dedicated to immunology, the unit has an outstanding international reputation and is one of the world leaders in the study of immunoglobulin production based on sophisticated and highly relevant transgenic animal models. The unit has an outstanding basic research output evidenced by its strong publication record and the contribution of its leaders to international meetings.

The unit has developed a closer synergy between teams 1 and 2 with the involvement in the CIC of Limoges hospital. This is leading to innovative shared projects such as (i) the search for novel genetic drivers in B cell lymphomas based on Ig gene rearrangements in patients, (ii) the study of Ig crippling mutations in Hodgkin lymphoma and (iii) the role of the “Locus Suicide Rearrangement” (LSR) in autoimmunity or the study of B cell lymphopenia in patients suffering from sepsis.

The unit already had a very good track record in training students and independent researchers. This is still the case as indicated by its ability to attract new students and researchers at national level. Recruitment at international level remains a challenge given the geographic location of the unit.

The overall assessment of the unit is excellent with many aspects of the unit deemed outstanding, in particular the scientific output in the area of antibody regulation and the successful translational research. The unit has excellent links with its local environment and a very positive internal dynamic. The scientific progress of the unit over the last few years, together with the development of novel management tools to promote scientific exchange within the unit, provides an excellent warranty of further success in the next term, and of increased visibility at international level.