

Unidades de I&D

Resultado da avaliação 2007 na área de *Filosofia*

Unidade de I&D

Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa [PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678] visitada em 06/06/2008

Classificação: *Very Good*

Comentários do painel de avaliação

Sobre a unidade

The Committee has discussed in great detail the case of the Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa and has decided in a unanimous vote to give it the ranking of very good by virtue of the following reasons:

1. Due to its general objectives and the very possibility of its founding, the Centro de Filosofia das Ciências deserves the warmest and best-deserved congratulations. There are not very many research centres in Europe or America that, belonging to a science department, propose and develop a comprehensive programme which brings together and interconnects Natural Science and Moral Science, sparing through this approach the abrupt gap between what according to P. Snow is known as “the two cultures”. Spoken more schematically, this puts the centre in question, the Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa, in a leadership position, or at least in a position of great competence with respect to similar ideologies on a European scale.
2. In addition to this general assessment, some of the research groups particularly # 800, 1049 and 1052, dedicated to problems in the fields of quantum physics, biology and mathematics, respectively are working, in the eyes of the Committee, in accordance with the high quality standards, which can be perfectly compared with similar European groups. However, it must be pointed out that while these groups engage in researching specific subject matters, fundamentally epistemological, other groups of the same centre focus on more general issues, in which the point of view of “contamination” between scientific, historical and socio-political perspectives prevails. The Committee wishes to express that it has nothing against these latter models of analysis, and that in some cases, its assessment of certain projects being carried out is reflected by very positive rankings, as can be seen in the individual evaluations. However, for this same reason, the Committee would like to clearly state that it has some concerns regarding the amount of attention the centre wants to give these types of studies and the specific organization of the aforementioned, to the extent that the objectives the centre itself claims to reach and which are specifically directed at proposing regulatory or quasi-regulatory parameters capable of supporting (sic) unity between the sciences, do not appear to be able to grant such studies sufficient credibility to challenge or merely debate the validity of those same parameters.
3. The reservations felt by Committee, are explained hereafter. Accepting, at least as a hypothesis, the legitimacy of a general approach, which for this purpose declares itself from the beginning in favour of a scientific production that is universal and potentially unitary in character. That is, research that adopts a more descriptive point of view that tends to diagnose contamination phenomena of social and historical influences should 1) vigorously set how it coordinates with the general approach; 2) clearly define how the results appear as though they can be overcome by the proposed design of the normative unity of science; and 3) most importantly, integrate, all existing descriptive perspectives, instead of implementing a massive and systematic use of only one of them.

Starting by the latter, it must be recognised indeed that the only perspective of this type involved in the referenced research programmes is that set out by the works of Foucault. Nevertheless, it is obvious this type of perspective does not wear out the possible analyses revolving around the social and historical components of scientific production. Therefore, and for this reason, a more extensive consideration is missing that can include, among others, the point of view of Postkuhnian Epistemology or Sociology of Science in any of its aspects, or any of the different theories of methodological proliferation (either of the type of Feyerabend, pragmatic proposals based on the analysis of diverse and heterogeneous controversial models of the sciences, etc.) It is clear that this expansion of the field of study would not be a requirement for more specific research, and in any case, it cannot be demanded of pre-existing teams, whose specialisation is what it is. However, it is clear that there is no obligation to commit to specific general hypotheses, whereas if it happens to be the case, nothing absolves the analysis of theoretical perspectives that appear competent for the case.

4. The Committee believes that this is the central point. It should be noted that there is a clear disproportion between the groups dedicated to using and applying epistemological models for the analysis of determined sciences always with a specific and conceptually defined character and the groups that, on the contrary, aim at promoting historical studies in unspecified coordinates, which always bear a vague character and are very general in conceptual terms. Given these conditions, the centre's objectives appear more oriented at expressing a desideratum (and by the way a very ambitious one) than to following reasonable lines of research adjusted to the current resources and teams. The Committee understands that this causes constant ambiguity between what constitutes "fields of study" and what is presented as "research projects", without allowing the latter, as they are currently defined, to cover the expectations found in the first; and least yet, to propose a reliable solution to the general problem of unity in science.

In view of all of these considerations, the Committee wishes to reiterate its congratulations to the Centro de Filosofia das Ciências for the role it already fulfils, and above all, for that which it is trying to reach in the field of Portuguese philosophical research, as well as the spirit that encourages it and for the high quality of many of the existing activities. Nevertheless, with the same sincerity, we recommend 1) a revision of the ultimate aims, in the sense of proposing them with a softer and more hypothetical character; 2) a search for greater coherence and structure (in both methodological and conceptual fields) among its different work groups; and 3) a more realistic redefinition of its theoretical possibilities, taking into consideration the current available resources. With regard to this last recommendation, the Committee recognises, in all this, that the Centro de Filosofia das Ciências has earned sufficient merits and it advises a significant increase in the subsidies given by the Foundation.

Sobre os grupos de investigação

Discovery, Invention and Creation [RG-PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678-1052]

Philosophy of Human Sciences [RG-PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678-1050]

Philosophy of Life Sciences [RG-PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678-1049]

Philosophy of Nature Sciences [RG-PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678-800]

Science and Art [RG-PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678-1053]

Science, Ethics and Politics [RG-PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678-1051]

Unity of Science [RG-PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678-799]

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R&D Units

Evaluation of R&D Units 2007

Evaluation Results

Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa [PHIL-LVT-Lisboa-678]

Fundação da Faculdade de Ciências – Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa

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Filosofia

Coordenador Científico
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Discovery, Invention and Creation

Responsável: *Isabel Maria Ferreira Martins Serra*

Science and Art

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