

RPTU | Erwin-Schrödinger-Str. 57 | 67663 Kaiserslautern

Prof. Dr. Thomas Lachmann
Cognitive and Developmental Psychology
Center for Cognitive Science

Building 57
Erwin-Schrödinger-Str. 57
67663 Kaiserslautern

Sekretariat +49 (0) 631 205-5032

Fax +49 (0) 631 205-5034

E-Mail lachmann@rptu.de

Kaiserslautern

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Evaluation of

The University Center for Research in Psychology (CUIP)

The University Center for Research in Psychology (CUIP) comprises 44 members from four Portuguese universities, with a focus on both basic scientific psychology and applied psychology. The CUIP has a Coordinating Committee of nine members. It follows to general regulations and specific documents, emphasizing rigorous criteria for membership integration and scientific productivity. Researchers engage in projects within their areas, aiming for international collaboration and competitive funding. CUIP strengthens the scientific landscape, fostering innovation and collaboration with public and private entities in addressing modern societal challenges in psychology.

The CUIP aims to establish itself as a high-quality research and development entity, leveraging the strengths of its affiliated researchers and fostering collaboration across institutions whereby a synergy is expected to be achieved. The basic psychology group specializes in cognitive and computational neuroscience, while the applied psychology group focuses on health and well-being research. Both, basic and applied psychology fields work towards enhancing research quality, fostering collaboration, and internationalization efforts to contribute to advancements in psychology.

In their presentation on April 4th, the representatives of the initiative were able to impressively illustrate the center's development potential. The focus was on five contributions, which clearly demonstrated the high scientific quality and further development goals of this initiative.

Firstly, regarding advanced training activities, CUIP emphasizes integrating research and teaching, offering degree programs in Psychology and various master's programs across its affiliated universities. From 2018 to 2023, CUIP members supervised numerous master's and doctoral theses, with several students benefiting from FCT and CAPES scholarships. Currently, there are ongoing doctoral projects, including one achieving the highest score in a recent FCT scholarship competition.

Internationalization was highlighted as a second important point, with UAlg being recognized for its strong international projection and commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But also, all other participating universities can already point to achievements in international activities that can be further expanded through this initiative. The necessary infrastructure is available.

In my opinion, a particularly important point that has been emphasized as a further contribution is on activities linked to scientific research projects including domestic and international competitive research grants. The presentation provided examples and indicators of impressive successes in this respect, including an EU Horizon project.

Scientific output in terms of publication was presented as a fourth contribution point and a vital indicator of scientific productivity. Only indexed contributions were considered. With a table of publication activity, the presentation made it impressively clear that, without exception, all members of the initiative regularly publish in national and international journals. Also, there was a notable increase in publications, alongside a strong rise in citations. Several members received awards or distinctions, highlighting recognition within the scientific community, including prestigious honors like the Atlas Elsevier Prize and various career awards, which demonstrates highest standards of scientific activities and achievements. The journal "Psique," managed by CUIP, is an online journal, publishing biannually and indexed in EBSCO and DOAJ. Another notable publication is "Psychology for Psychologists," edited by CUIP members, summarizing research findings for practical use. CUIP members actively participate as reviewers and editorial board members in Scopus-indexed journals. Additionally, CUIP members engage in institutional management activities, including action research projects, participation in national forums, and coordination of research centers, contributing significantly to the advancement of psychology.

Transfer was a final point emphasized in the presentation. I think that this point in particular is important for assessing the center's chances of success and the added value of clustering. Numerous knowledge transfer activities, including annual "Algarve Psychology Meetings," have been conducted from 2018 to 2023, facilitating the exchange of research findings and practical interventions in psychology. Action research projects, such as "School of the Future, Learn +," directly benefit communities and institutions. Engagement in extension projects funded by regional entities in Madeira and the Azores enables interaction with local stakeholders.

Other points that I would like to highlight here as strengths of the project are the promotion of young researchers and the consideration of gender aspects. Young researchers play a significant role in CUIP's activities, with the integration of CIP Research Center and engagement in various


fellowships. Initiatives like Research Initiation Internships (RIIs) and Junior Research Symposiums foster research skills among students. Extension activities include Doctorate Lectures and weekly conferences, enhancing knowledge sharing and community engagement. Notable events like national congresses provide platforms for academic exchange and collaboration. Female researchers are in the majority in this initiative.

The successes described so far form the foundation for the future success of the center and allow synergies and added value of the planned cluster to be exploited. Specific goals and expectations were presented in detail. CUIP's activity plan for the next five years focuses on four main points: consolidating scientific excellence, developing an international network, offering quality advanced training, and expanding scientific dissemination. This involves promoting collaboration among members, prioritizing internationalization, aligning training programs, and enhancing communication to specialist and non-specialist audiences while emphasizing ethical considerations and contributing to Sustainable Development Goals. Each point was outlined in the presentation.

I can summarize that the planned center is of the highest scientific quality and that, based on the impressive successes already achieved, it has great potential to generate synergies and achieve top international success through the planned clustering and structuring.

The locations of the participating universities also have excellent infrastructure (e.g. airports) as an advantage for international networking. The members already have extensive experience and are successful in scientific output. A certain lack of facilities and equipment could be leveraged through targeted funding. It can be expected that the center will foster the collaboration among researchers from the four universities (and within the universities), spanning both basic psychology and applied psychology domains. This collaboration presents avenues for joint advanced training proposals, research projects, and the establishment of a cohesive PhD student network, particularly benefiting from those with FCT scholarships.

I would like to congratulate the initiators on the development of such a complex and promising research center.



Prof. Dr. Thomas Lachmann