

GOOD

This is a special Unit because it consists of just one research group and it operates in a more isolated setting in Madeira. It is a large group (20 PhD researchers). A third distinguishing characteristic is the research orientation of the group, which focuses on ethnography as its main methodological approach.

The Unit has a good record of papers in peer-reviewed international research journals. The group has also developed many international co-operation links. Furthermore, the rating concerning the relevance and feasibility of their research projects is reasonable.

Their main weakness relates to the training of new researchers which should be looked more carefully in the future. In addition to this weakness two notes of caution should be added here:

- a. the methodological choice of the group, while absolutely valid in epistemological terms should not lead them to exclude the teaching of other methods, especially quantitative, in their post-graduate courses
- b. the work of foreign scholars with whom members of the group co-operate is considered, rightly by them, an important asset given the geographical isolation of the Unit. This co-operation however should be integrated in the functioning of the whole group so as all members of the group benefit and should aim at a pluralism of methodological approaches, especially for the sake of new researchers who are trained by this Unit.

In summary, the Unit has one group, one methodological approach and generally good performance.

The panel recommends that:

1. Publications in peer-reviewed international research journals should continue to be the focus for publications.
2. International networking activities should be integrated in the functioning of the whole group so as all members of the group are able to benefit.
3. Research students should be exposed to several methodological approaches, including quantitative methods. This recommendation is particularly strong in the case of this Unit given their overriding leaning towards ethnomethodology, and may need some additions to the group.