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**LUSEM response to the evaluation of the PhD program in Research Policy**

The PhD program in Research Policy underwent an evaluation by an external peer-review panel in the Spring semester of 2022. It was based on the program self-evaluation report and interviews with the program management as well as a selected number of teachers/supervisors and doctoral students at a site visit in April 2022. The results of the evaluation were presented in a report, and based on the suggestions by the panel, the department has outlined several measures to further improve the quality of the program. The doctoral students were invited to nominate a member of the peer-review panel as well as to write a response to the self-evaluation report and they accepted the latter.

Overall, the peer-review panel was positive towards the PhD program in Research Policy and found it to be working well despite its small size. The panel pointed to several strengths, including committed staff and a suitable research environment, good routines in place for admittance of students and assignment of qualified supervisors. The panel also mentioned a high level of integration of PhD candidates in externally funded research projects, which give students first-hand experience in conducting and communicating high-quality research as a positive aspect, and placement data showing that PhDs from the Research Policy program get good jobs, primarily outside of academia. The panel found that the goals of the program, including the intended learning outcomes were fulfilled.

The panel also identified some weaknesses and causes for concern and suggested how to improve various aspects of the program. One concern was that the small size of the program, and that senior faculty involved in the program are few. This is, partly compensated for by interdisciplinary collaborations but calls for action to create a critical mass of PhD students and safeguard supervision resources. Relatedly, the panel mentioned that the information to students in general, and more specifically regarding expectations and quality control through seminars at the start and the end of the program, should be more elaborate and further formalized by adding a Research Plan seminar so that there are three compulsory checkpoints where the doctoral students can receive feedback: Research plan, mid-term, and final seminar. This could help students in their research progress over the course of the program. As for content, the panel recognized a varied and high-quality package of courses available to PhD candidates in Research Policy and noted that the opportunity to search for knowledge and input from other disciplines was important given the interdisciplinary character of the subject. The panel also made several suggestions regarding the inner workings of the program, directed at those responsible for the program at the departmental level.

In their response to the evaluation report, the program and department management addresses all points of concern and suggestions for improvements and offer some solutions and further developments of the program. Their response testifies that they will use the result of the evaluation as a tool to improve the program, both when it comes to course content, administrative routines, and other aspects. This reflects that the program management and the department is responsive to suggestions from both external reviewers and students. Given that there is continuity in management to secure that this is followed up on, the program will likely be strengthened in the foreseeable future.

The LUSEM management agrees with many of the judgements made by the department in response to the peer-review panel. When it comes to proposed improvements, we would like to stress that while external funding is important and encouraged for the sake of competitive research, the department should try to foster a strong research community alongside with the research education program. The department should better utilize internal funding to enlarge the program and to balance recruitment over years and across subdisciplines, including Research Policy. The Research Policy unit should try to draw more on externalities of belonging to a big department (Business Administration) to compensate for being a small PhD program. The admittance process and allocation of supervisors should be further formalized and aim for admittance of a group of PhD candidates once a year, well integrated with the larger cohort of PhD candidates in Business Administration, preferably in September so that they can benefit from activities for all new PhD candidates at LUSEM. The research education program in Research Policy should also try to become part of a national network to ensure that the PhD students become part of a larger specialist community. The introduction of additional quality checks, for example through a compulsory Research plan seminar should be effectuated as soon as possible, alongside with an exit talk to fit with the routines for the program in Business Administration (and made explicit in the General Syllabus for Third-Cycle Studies in Research Policy at LUSEM). Finally, faculty involved in the small program is encouraged to make sure that students get adequate information and support to ensure that students do not feel left alone and isolated. Faculty should also try to develop collaboration within LUSEM and LU to strengthen the program in Research Policy.

On behalf of the LUSEM management team,



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