

Assessors' report on William Rispin's application for upgrade to full PhD status (re-submission)

After the first upgrade viva the assessors were approached by the supervisor to request that the materials to be resubmitted be amended to: (a) a revised research proposal; (b) a sample portion of the Europe chapter. This was agreed and the materials were submitted by the deadline.

Research proposal

This is much better than the original version submitted. The argument and direction are clearer and the focus is more substantially on the challenges faced by Les Républicains in the Hollande *quinquennat*. The direction and analysis appear more convincing and this document clearly addresses our concerns that the thesis risked being outdated very quickly with little by way of an 'afterlife.' Instead, a tight focus on the role of and the challenges to the centre-right under Hollande is more likely to give the analysis longevity beyond the immediate present and thereby to meet the requirements of the degree of PhD. There is useful contextualisation in relation to Trump and Brexit and there is much more by way of historical analysis, without which the thesis simply will not work—though more on Rémond is needed to demonstrate how much the centre-right and the challenges it faces have changed since the 1970s. The referencing is much better here than in the original and the literature review remains extensive. There are more 'why' questions that will help to make the thesis more analytical.

Nevertheless, some of our original concerns persist. While there appears to be more of a general focus on the Hollande presidency and the challenges to the centre-right, there are times when the document dips back into the minutiae of the original without very much analysis. This is particularly the case on p.4 in the discussion of the FN's opposition to the liberal economic model proposed by the centre-right. Further evidence and analysis would be informative here—what does the FN propose instead? This seems particularly unclear, given that the FN's programme for 2017 has yet to be revealed, and the 2012 programme is a muddle of statist and liberal economic ideals. Moreover, the international aspects on p.1 are clear, but again we feel that the particularity of France needs to be made more explicit. What is it about France under Hollande that has been so important in encouraging anti-establishment ideals?

Sample chapter on Europe

Again, this is better than the original. There is more of a focussed analysis and the direction and argument are clearer. The focus on how Les Républicains / the UMP have addressed Europe during the Hollande presidency is sufficiently analytical for us to be able to recommend upgrade to PhD status. The referencing is better, though the discussion of the historical dimension on p.1 requires more by way of references. The chapter is, of course, a work in progress, and we would hope that the subsequent sections will maintain an analytical approach through examining *why* the centre-right stands for its views on Europe and *why* it faces challenges in this regard from the far-right.

Recommendation

Upgrade to full PhD status.

Dr Oliver Davis & Dr David Lees

15th December 2016