



Centre Director:	Thomas DEVINE	Host Institution:			Aberdeen			
Title of Research Centre:	AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies							
Dates:	Start date of Centre	1	1	2001	End date of Centre	31	12	2005

Please note that your comments will be forwarded in an anonymised format to the Centre Director.

1. Changes

With reference to the Strategic and Operational Plan (attached) and to any significant changes indicated in the end of award report, please comment on the impact of any changes during the lifetime of the Centre, particularly the extent to which such changes:

- might have been anticipated by the Centre Director at the time of application
- were due to factors beyond the Centre Director's control
- were made following appropriate consultation with the AHRC
- had an impact, positive or negative, on the outputs and outcomes of the Centre.

	Comment
Aims and Objectives	Very minor changes resulting from staff and logistical issues were dealt with effectively.
Research Programme and Activities	There were some changes of focus, stimulated largely by closer knowledge of and better adaptation to the research materials. However, there were no major changes and generally the programme was excellent.
Outcomes and Targets	The proliferation of activity beyond what was originally planned testifies to the productive and dynamic atmosphere which developed at the Centre.
Dissemination/Exploitation and Outreach	A particular point of excellence - again far surpassing what was originally planned.
Collaboration	Maintained and once again extended.
Institutional Support	Very good indeed

People	No major problems, and a high level of staff retention is worth noting
--------	--

2. Achievements

A. Please comment on the main achievements or highlights of the Centre **for the final project year**, relative to those anticipated in the Centre's Strategic and Operational Plan. You are asked to comment both on those achievements that relate directly to the Centre's Strategic and Operational Plan and to any that were not anticipated when the Centre commenced. If possible, please refer to each achievement in turn as identified by the Centre Director.

Achievements	Comments
a) major publications	a) An extremely impressive tally in quantity and quality
b) PG recruitment and training	b) A solid performance in an area where time is required to show results
c) conference etc programme	c) extremely impressive performance, again in terms of calibre and standing as well as quantity
d) dissemination	d) solid and substantial efforts were made, though not always matched with the kind of success one might have hoped for
e) strategy	e) real vision shown, and excellent strategic planning.

B. Please comment on the main achievements or highlights of the Centre **for the whole award period**, relative to those anticipated in the Centre's Strategic and Operational Plan. You are asked to comment both on those achievements that relate directly to the Centre's Strategic and Operational Plan and to any that were not anticipated when the Centre commenced. If possible, please refer to each achievement in turn as identified by the Centre Director.

Achievements	Comments
As above	An extraordinary achievement, crowned with international marks of recognition (esp the accolade from the Smithsonian).

	<p>The strike rate among the projects was truly excellent, and highlights top-quality management. Worth highlighting the extension of the portfolio of funding agencies for the centre's work; and the way in which a balance has been very effectively maintained among the multifarious activities of the Centre.</p>
--	---

3. Importance

Please comment on the Centre Director's self-assessment of the potential importance of the Centre's research activities and how its findings will advance creativity, knowledge and understanding. Taking account of the evidence provided in the report, your comments should incorporate an evaluation of whether you consider the Centre Director's self-assessment to be credible. You should, if possible, refer separately to the potential importance to the subject area(s) as a whole, to non-academic audiences and what the strategic impact of the Centre's achievements has been.

	Comments
Subject area(s)	<p>We can look benignly on the element of hyperbole in the Director's report. The Centre's work does seem to have made a difference, countering (if not initiating) an ambient anglocentrism in much earlier work; internationalising perspectives; and opening up promising and fruitful dialogues between scholars of Scotland and Ireland.</p>
Outside academia	<p>A performance well above the norm, and one which has remained true to scholarly values, as far as one can see.</p>

Strategic impact of the Centre's achievements on the institutions' strategies for the research area	Again, highly impressive. The support maintained and extended by host institutions has contributed to this. The Centre has also acted as a seedplot for scholars many of whose careers will take place away from the Centre.

4. Continuation: projects and structures

With reference to the end of award report, please comment on the Centre Director's plans for the continuation of the AHRC-funded Research Centre after the end of AHRC funding.

The award of phase two funding is already a feather in the Centre's cap, and fuller assessment of this area of work will probably best await completion of this second phase. The extensions of work anticipated are both sensible and imaginative outgrowths from past achievements. The emphasis on diaspora fits in with existing AHRC interests as well as current intellectual preoccupations across the humanities and social sciences.

--

5. People

A. Staffing

With reference to the end of award report, please comment on the extent to which the Centre has helped to realise the career potential of all those who were employed using funds from the AHRC Award, including both the more established academic staff working on projects/research activities, as well as researchers, project students and administrative and technical staff. Please also comment on the role of, and effectiveness of management and supervisory arrangements for, any post-doctoral researchers or project students (if applicable), including training provision.

	Comments
Academic, technical and other staff	The record looks extremely strong as regards the beneficent impact of the Centre on the careers of individual researchers.
Post-doctoral researchers	Information may not be as full as it might be and there are some questionmarks over the future of certain staff. But the general record looks good.
AHRC funded PhD students (for Phase 2 Centres only)	N/a

B. Interactions – Collaboration & Networking

With reference to the end of award report, please comment on the range and effectiveness of the formal collaborations and the less formal networking activities within the Centre. Taking account of the evidence provided in the report, your comments should incorporate an evaluation of whether you consider the Centre Director's self-assessment of the significance of these interactions to be credible.

	Comments
Formal collaborations	Extremely well-balanced and effective between the two localities in which the Centre is grounded - plus the fact that many international linkages have been forged.
Less formal networking activities	Impressive, with a multiplier effect evidently kicking in.

--	--

6. Governance/Management

A. Formal partnerships

With reference to the end of award report, please comment on the Centre Director's self-assessment of the strength and weaknesses in the relationship between the host institution and the partner institution(s).

No weaknesses identifiable. An extraordinarily impressive record of success.

B. Structure of the Management Committee

With reference to the end of award report, please comment on the Centre Director's self assessment of how effective the Management Committee has been at overseeing the management of the Centre.

It is doubtful whether such first-class management could have been attained without wholehearted support for the Director's activities coming from an effective and committed management committee.

--

C. Academic Advisory Board

With reference to the end of award report, please comment on the Centre Director's self assessment of how valuable a contribution the Academic Advisory Board made in advising the Director and Management Committee on significant questions relating to the academic priorities of the Centre.

The high quality of the Centre's management seems to have obviated the need for the Board to contribute in a major way to the centre's successes.

7. Outputs/outcomes

With reference to the end of award report, please comment on the delivery, nature and range of outputs and outcomes, considering both those that were anticipated in the original Strategic and Operational Plan (including any direct replacements) and those that were in addition to those originally envisaged.

You should also comment on the effectiveness of dissemination and knowledge engagement activities, in terms of whether they have been, or will be, adequate to make the research findings available to both the research community and any relevant audiences beyond academia. If you consider that there might be opportunities for further such engagement that could be considered by the Centre Director or by the AHRC, please highlight these below.

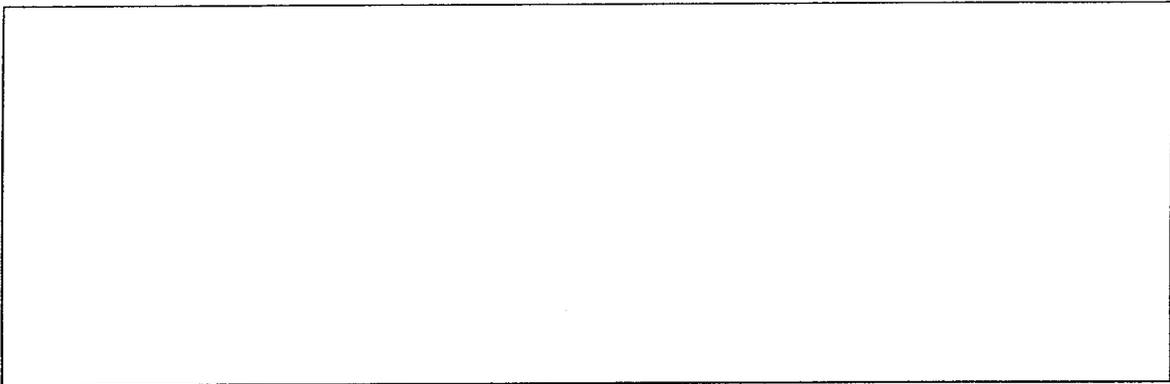
	Comments
--	----------

Outputs and outcomes indicated relative to those initially anticipated and/or any direct replacements (please refer to section 7A in the End of Award Report)	exemplary in all respects
Outputs and outcomes in addition to those initially anticipated (not direct replacements) (Please refer to section 7B in the End of Award Report)	again a tremendous record of achievement across the board
Effectiveness of dissemination and knowledge engagement activities	As noted above, extremely good
Please list any further opportunities for dissemination and knowledge engagement activities	None springs to mind

8. Electronic Resources

If the Centre Director has indicated one or more electronic resources as an output arising from the Centre's research programme and activities, please comment on the strategy proposed for their storage, dissemination and maintenance in the longer-term.

Not relevant in terms of outputs



9. Value for Money

In light of your comments in the sections above - particularly in relation to achievements, importance and outputs/outcomes - and the information on the total cost of the Centre in the end of award report (section 9D), please comment on the Centre's overall value for money. Do you consider that the Centre represents an effective investment of the AHRC's funding? You should not comment on the detailed budgetary information in the end of award report as this will be analysed by Officers of the AHRC.

A superb investment on the part of the AHRC. It is difficult even to imagine how the performance might have been bettered. The laudatory unanimity of the assessors on the Centre is the best testimony we can have to the real impact which the Centre is perceived as having made.



Centre Director:	Professor Thomas DEVINE			Host Institution:	Aberdeen University			
Title of Research Centre	AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies							
Dates:	Start date of Centre	1	1	2001	End date of Centre	31	12	2005

Please note that this section of the form will be sent to the Centre Director.

Using the four point scale below, please provide an overall grade for the Centre. Your grade should take into account all aspects of the Centre and the information provided by the Centre Director.

If you consider that, relative to its aims and objectives and the Strategic and Operational Plan, the conduct and delivery of the Centre was satisfactory, you are asked to provide an indicative assessment of the quality and the potential importance and value of the Centre's achievements by grading it Satisfactory, Good or Outstanding.

If you do not consider that the conduct and delivery of the Centre was satisfactory, you should indicate a grade of Unsatisfactory.

A space has been provided for you to provide a rationale for the grade allocated. If you require further information before you are able to provide a final grade, you should indicate Incomplete Form and clarify the information that is needed in the box provided.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Outstanding	A Centre that has satisfactorily addressed its major aims and objectives (subject to any changes that have previously been agreed), where the approach and research activities suggest an outstanding level of achievement with the potential for results of the highest quality and value.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	A Centre that has satisfactorily addressed its major aims and objectives (subject to any changes that have previously been agreed), where the approach and research activities suggest a good level of achievement with the potential for results of a high quality and value.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Satisfactory	A Centre that has addressed its major aims and objectives (subject to any changes that have previously been agreed), where the approach and research activities suggest a satisfactory level of achievement with the potential for results of a satisfactory quality and value.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory	A Centre that has not satisfactorily addressed its major aims and objectives (subject to any changes that have previously been agreed), and/or where the approach and research activities have not been satisfactory.
--------------------------	----------------	---

Rationale for Grade	<p>I believe this represents the best value for money project funded by the AHRC which I have ever seen (and I have seen more than a few). An important area of study, broken down into a solid number of significant research projects, have been thoroughly investigated, and important results have been achieved. The dissemination of activities has been excellent and the work of the Centre extremely inclusive. Much must be owed to a management style which appears effortlessly to combine the visionary with the Stakhavonite! In my view, the efforts of this Centre supply the best argument the AHRC could have for the value of its 'Centres' initiative.</p>
---------------------	--

Incomplete Form	The following further information is required from the Centre Director:
<input type="checkbox"/>	