



<b>Centre Director:</b>	Prof. T.M. Devine	<b>Host Institution:</b>			University of Aberdeen			
<b>Title of Research Centre:</b>	Research Centre in Irish Scottish Studies							
<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Start date of Centre</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	2001	<b>End date of Centre</b>	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	Fully met. Demonstrates a flexible and adaptable response
Research Programme and Activities	An adventurous programme that has been fully met
Outcomes and Targets	An increase on the original plan
Dissemination/Exploitation and Outreach	An impressive array of outputs in excess of the original plan. An impact on the Scottish Executive's programme on sectarianism. the Director's high public profile in the media and an extensive programme of international conferences and seminars.
Collaboration	Existing collaboration is being maintained at the same high level and has extended out to include Edinburgh University as part of the Irish Scottish academic Initiative
Institutional Support	good

People	Staff at the Centre have a very high standing in the international scholarly community

## 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
<p>outputs, post-graduate training, conferences and seminars, dissemination and long-term plans</p>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>The monographs by Murdoch and Macinnes are the main achievements. Both have made a major contribution to the understanding of Early Modern Scottish and British history. Murdoch has demonstrated in great detail the extent of Scottish European relations in this period and overturned much of the conventional wisdom that relations with Europe were in decline in this period. Macinnes has provided a comprehensive account of the 'British' dimension of the period of the War of the Three kingdoms and based much of it on original archival research. In particular, the focus on the beginnings of the Empire shows the importance of the regnal union between Scotland and England and shows how much the Empire was truly a 'British' project in this period. The edited collections of Harper and McCarthy show the impact that the Centre has had on inculcating links with other scholars in the field of emigration studies and how the Centre has maintained a key element of comparative history in its study of diaspora. Both collections are very useful contributions to the subject. The collection of essays by McIlvanney and Ryan have maintained the same high standard as previous edited comparative studies in Scottish-irish history and the collection of Kirk and Baoill tread sensitively over the contentious subject of Ulster-Scots. Alcobia Murphy's book on Northern Irish culture is a major contribution to the subject.</p> <p><b>Post-Graduate Training</b></p> <p>The Centre has attracted an admirable number of graduate students and has ensured that a new generation of scholars will perpetuate the study of Irish Scottish studies into the future. Of particular note is the interest shown by students fom outwith the United Kingdom.</p> <p><b>Conferences and Seminars</b></p> <p>The Centre has arranged an impressive calander of seminars, symposia and seminars and has attracted a distinguished set of internationally renown speakers.</p> <p><b>Dissemination</b></p> <p>The Director has been a bit modest here. In addition to the lectures in Aberdeen, Devine has had a major presence in Scottish media circles. Also, he took part in a number of high profile public speaking events such as the Festival of Politics in</p>

	<p>the Scottish Parliament and the Edinburgh International Book festival. Furthermore, Macinnes, Mackillop, harper, Delaney and McIlvanney have all been very busy on the domestic and international conference circuit.</p> <p>Long-term</p> <p>Having secured stage two funding and by continuing to invest in new staff, the future looks safe.</p>
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**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
	<p>outputs</p> <p>Over the whole period, there has been an impressive array of outputs. The target has been surpassed and only a few items have been delayed. By any reckoning, this is quite an amazing achievement.</p> <p>PG Training and Recruitment</p> <p>An impressive number of grad students. By my reckoning, almost ten per member of staff associated with the core of the Centre's activities. If I remember rightly, at the last RAE, the average for History Departments was just over one PG per member of staff. The continuing success of the programme is evidenced by its ability to maintain high recruitment levels, in spite of Aberdeen's relative isolation from many key archival sources.</p> <p>Conferences and Symposia</p> <p>By my reckoning there is almost one event every week throughout the five year period. This is a rate that few would believe possible, let alone sustainable. It is a grand testament to the organisational skills and the intellectual commitment of members of the Centre</p> <p>Dissemination</p> <p>The Centre has undoubtedly had its biggest impact here. The production of outputs does not necessarily equate with having an impact on the wider scholarly community. The outputs of the centre have all be published by reputable scholarly presses and</p>

	<p>have a dramatic impact on academic debate. The Centre has been the biggest factor in promoting Scottish Studies outside of Scotland in the last five years. The work of Devine, Macinnes and Murdoch, in particular, have had a major impact on their respective fields of study.</p>
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### 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)	I agree with the Director's assessment. The Centre has a major impact on the subject area and has firmly put Irish Scottish studies on the scholarly map. The team at Aberdeen have shook up previous cosy Anglo-Centric views of British history and had a quite startling impact on the study of British imperial history. The extensive use of comparative approaches have made the work much more relevant to scholars working outside the United Kingdom and indeed, have established an intellectual template for the study of other small nations in Europe. It is this ability to relate to the wider global picture that has made the work of the Centre so important
Outside academia	Here the impact has been considerable. Not only has the Centre pushed its work to scholars, it has targeted prominent public figures and politicians and (hopefully) expanded their cultural and intellectual horizons. The work of the director in promoting the subject in the media has been commendable and he has undoubtedly enhanced the public profile of the Centre. The appearances on television has obviously helped push the work of the Centre to the widest possible audience, not only in the United Kingdom, but overseas as well.
Strategic impact of the Centre's achievements on	Again there has been a considerable impact. The institution continues to invest in high quality appointments and the role of Scottish Irish Studies is similarly being maintained in Queen's

the institutions' strategies for the research area

and Trinity.

#### **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 plans are very well developed and the award of Phase Two funding in the face of stiff competition demonstrates that the Centre has a comprehensive and realistic scheme of work for the future. The externally funded Glucksmann Chair has shown that the Centre has the profile and standing that is associated with a research institution that is well established among the global scholarly community. The Centre will continue to attract post-graduates of the highest calibre and much of the momentum for the future will be carried along with the impressive achievement of the first five years. Indeed, it would take an idiot not to make a success of the Centre, given its track record.

The Diaspora programme is well thought-out and compliments the Language and Literature programme. The addition of Liverpool University and the National Maritime Museum to the collaborative project is a welcome development. A critical element in the plans for the future is the decision to increase grant applications to expand the centre beyond the resources of the AHRC budget. With the impact of Full Economic Costing, and given the wealth of research expertise at the Centre, this will enable a more extensive and ambitious programme of research. It is worth pointing out that this would enable the Centre to exceed its research targets for the second five year project, in much the same way that it did of the first.

#### **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 promotion and the fact that a number of staff have been poached to other institutions demonstrates that the Centre has been of great significance in enhancing the career opportunities of those involved with it
Post-doctoral researchers	Again, this has been very impressive with practically all ending up in full time academic employment. The Centre has clearly had an eye for picking out the best talent in the field and bringing them on. The fact that Steve Murdoch has been promoted to Reader in St Andrews within such a short space of time shows that the Centre not only has a considerable intellectual cachet, but it produces research outputs of the highest quality
AHRC funded PhD students (for Phase 2 Centres only)	

#### **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	The collaborations are more than credible and the fact that there has been a queue of other institutions coming on board shows that the collaboration clearly works. The high profile of the Centre and its international reputation has clearly enhanced the profile of Trinity and Queen's.
Less formal networking activities	These have been extensive and the ability of the Director to network at the highest level has undoubtedly helped to push Irish Scottish studies further up the academic agenda in North America and elsewhere. The extensive number of invitations to speak at conferences and seminars and likewise, the number of international speakers coming in to Aberdeen, has shown that such informal contacts are producing a wider academic audience for the subject.

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## **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).

**Flawless**

### **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.

**First Class. With the achievements of the Centre it could not be anything other.**

**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.

**Having the best in the field has obviously had a beneficial impact**

## 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)	The range and quality of outputs exceeded that of the original business plan. In part, this may be explained by the fact that there was an esprit de corps in the Centre in which colleagues egged one another on to achieve the best that they could. There were only a few items outstanding and were, in any case, compensated by the total for the Centre. Managing a large research project like this, particularly where much of research was speculative, is a very difficult task. At the outset, most would have thought that the Centre was doing well if it had achieved 70% of its outputs at the end of the five year period. No one - not even the Director - I suspect, would have believed that it would have exceeded its target and, crucially, maintained such levels of quality.
Outputs and outcomes in addition to those initially anticipated (not direct replacements) (Please refer to section 7B in the End of Award Report)	Five authored books, 9 edited collections and some 40 articles is more than impressive by anybody's standard!

<p>Effectiveness of dissemination and knowledge engagement activities</p>	<p>There have been direct hits right across the board. It has had a huge impact in the scholarly world and it has been particularly impressive in the international field. Its impact on governmental and non-academic bodies has taken the subject to new audiences and its public profile could not have been better.</p>
<p>Please list any further opportunities for dissemination and knowledge engagement activities</p>	<p>Apart from T.M. Devine getting his own Saturday night chat show on BBC One, I can not think of any.</p>

### **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.

N/A

### **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.

In the world of Full Economic Costings, what the Centre achieved on its budget was most impressive and represents best value for money. Indeed, its over-production of outputs represents an almost bargain basement price. I doubt if any other research Centre could have squeezed as much from a similar budget.