

**Institution:** Liverpool Hope University

**Unit of Assessment:** History

**a. Context**

Engaging the community has always been integral to Liverpool Hope, from its foundation as a religious educational institution in the mid-nineteenth century to its current status as a research-led university attracting both early career and established academics. Research is central to Liverpool Hope's strategic plan and the History subject team occupies the vanguard of efforts to engage four key non-academic user groups. These are: hard-to-reach societal groups, the policy-making and culture-informed public, the museum-going public, and educators working outside of HE.

During the assessment period History has benefited from significant investment in staffing. As a consequence of broader transitions in the HEI, the History unit at Hope has evolved. It has developed to house two main research clusters. The first of these concentrates on the history of the Republic of Ireland in the twentieth century and the second on maritime history in the early modern and modern periods. After a department review in 2013, the university affirmed that History would be the largest subject in a new department of History and Politics, headed by Williams.

The unit is home to four early career researchers working on the social and political history of twentieth century Ireland. The geographic reach of the Irish history strand concentrates on communicating the cutting-edge research of these young scholars to impact the above user groups among the 4.5 million people of the Republic of Ireland. This approach has been adopted because Ireland is a young state in which the areas of History and Policy are closely intertwined and because of Liverpool's historical, cultural and geographic proximity. Impact strategy has therefore been partly focused on reaching the policy and culture-informed public through targeting media. The significance of this approach lies in impacting public attitudes and awareness of the historical lineage of contemporary policies, issues, and politics. As well as citation in public debate, the impact of the Irish history strand seeks to engage hard-to-reach social and cultural groups, which are often overlooked or find their voices drowned out by hegemonic national media discourses.

Secondly, the unit demonstrates leading research on maritime history. The impact approach in relation to this research cluster is different, with impact seeking to achieve maximum regional resonance. This has seen the unit gradually adopt a strategic alliance with National Museums Liverpool (NML), and specifically the International Slavery Museum, which is based in Liverpool, in an effort to communicate research to the museum-going public and primary and secondary teachers. This strategy operates within the context of a highly interdisciplinary Arts and Humanities faculty, with colleagues in different subjects carrying out work on Liverpool's slaving history. Operating in this institutional context research on slavery, in particular, has featured in the work of Schwarz and maritime history, in general, is a live research strand within the History unit.

Additionally, the unit has carried out a range of activities that have engaged communities and sought to enrich the educational, cultural and social life in the broader Merseyside area. Examples include unit members' involvement in community engagement events and public lectures run by local historical societies. Unit members have also spoken at public lectures hosted at the university by the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies research centre.

**b. Approach to impact**

In facilitating impact, the unit has made good use of institutional support. Liverpool Hope University's mission is to impact the community, providing a 'life with more meaning'. Hope History is located in a community-facing faculty, previously the Deanery of Arts and Community, which continues to 'challenge imaginations and enrich lives' in the greater Merseyside area.

In following the maritime impact strand, the university's formal partnership with National Museums Liverpool has been strategically important. This partnership, which is part of the Faculty strategy of linking the university with cultural organisations within Liverpool, has enabled the unit to avail of the teaching space, public prominence and networks attached to the International Slavery Museum

**Impact template (REF3a)**

(ISM) in particular and National Museums Liverpool more generally. Indeed, broader links exist between Liverpool's International Slavery Museum and the faculty's main research centre, the Desmond Tutu Centre. The ISM has coordinated the establishment of a new initiative called the Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) enabling new thinking and initiatives on sensitive and controversial subjects in a supportive environment. The Tutu Centre operates as part of this network and Evans attended the FIHRM's annual conference.

The university has also provided strategic financial support towards impact from the university's central research budget to support unit approaches to impact. This has included funds, which are competitively bid for internally, which enable the dissemination of research at public events. This includes, for example, the award of money covering travel and subsistence expenses to Tiernan when she addressed the Galway international Festival of Literature and to Evans for his public appearance at the Roscommon Arts Festival (both 2012).

Institutional monies were awarded to sustain impact considered to possess considerable longevity. Evans's biography of Irish political figure Seán Lemass was published in 2011. It led to interest in a contemporary of Lemass's: controversial statesman Frank Aiken. The award of £1,500 to Evans and then postdoctoral scholar Kelly through the REF budget facilitated publicity on Aiken following on from the initial publicity of the Lemass book. This led to a blog article which in turn generated 12 pages of comment on public debate forums. Other examples of institutional support include the £1,000 awarded to enable Appleby to communicate his research-informed insights into pioneer of maritime exploration John Cabot via a youtube documentary.

Between 1993 and 2013, Hope History has sought to develop strategic relationships with groups holding public events or which facilitate public engagement and dissemination of research to end users. These groups were chosen as offering a bridge between academic output and the provision of accessible history to the general public. They include the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire; the International Slavery Museum; the Women's History Association of Ireland; and the Oral History Network Ireland. These links provide a mechanism for impact via public engagement in non-academic forums. The unit has also cultivated local schools as user partners, with unit members presenting their research to class groups.

**c. Strategy and plans**

Within the last sixteen months, impact approaches have evolved into impact strategy. A new strategy, developed in relation to the new appointments outlined in section 5, has seen the university's Research Facilitator, Colin Cooper, and Hope History unit coordinator, Bryce Evans, hold several meetings with staff in order to turn approaches into strategy. These meetings have functioned as 'think tanks' to identify and support impact criteria, allowing discussion on impact strategy and locating areas for impact maximisation.

*Hard-to-reach societal groups*

The publicity attached to Irish history events hosted by the unit (such as the Frank Aiken conference hosted by Evans and Kelly) has brought the unit regional prominence. Similarly, Tiernan recently delivered the keynote speech at the National Irish Studies Conference, as part of the UK's largest Irish festival in Manchester, an event which aims to engage the Irish diaspora in Britain. Hope History intends to build on such impact to fully engage the substantial Irish community in the English North West, a community which has declined in visibility over the last fifty years. It is anticipated that the pursuit of this strategy will enhance the sustainability of impact in this field by linking up with the many local Irish social clubs and Irish cultural events in the North West: the region which has historically been the hub of Irish migration to Britain. It is intended that the unit work closely with the HEI's research centres to achieve this goal. The unit's Irish Studies Research group already collaborates with the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool University and the Celtic Studies Network at Liverpool John Moores University in publicising events.

*The policy and culture-informed public*

Evans recently wrote a successful AHRC funding bid which attracted £10,000 in funding to support an EU FP7 bid attached to the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies. This

## Impact template (REF3a)

bid explored the historical role of the media in contested communities such as Northern Ireland. The unit plans to build on this work in enhancing the awareness and understanding of Irish cultural and political heritage amongst the Irish diaspora on Merseyside and further afield. It aims to attract press coverage from the national Irish media. Unit members also plan to work closely with the Tutu Centre in pursuing their research interests. Bryce Evans' research encompasses food history and food security and this was the subject of a recent funding bid through the ESRC's seminar programme call. If awarded, the public seminars will be hosted by the Tutu Centre.

*The museum-going public*

In September 2013 Hope launched a new MA in Museum and Heritage Studies. The programme has been developed in close consultation with executive directors, venue directors, curatorial, collection management and educational staff at National Museums Liverpool. The developmental phase of this partnership required substantial investment from the university in National museums Liverpool and substantial time in the drafting of memoranda of understanding and curricula. As a result, the content of the programme reflects the distinctive values of NML and of Liverpool Hope University, in particular the importance of museums as global actors in social justice. Using this key strategic link, the unit will build on the experience of new members such as Eric Grove, who has extensive experience in linking museum and heritage work with media exposure, having led numerous examples of cross-over work such as Nelson Trafalgar 2000 Portsmouth. Williams has well established links with the People's History Museum in Manchester and has carried out extensive collaborations to bring historical research into labour history to the public.

*Educators working outside of Higher Education*

The university has signalled its full support the History's subject through recent expansion, with the recruitment of Williams from the University of Central Lancashire and Grove from the University of Salford (both September 2013). Both have experience in communicating their research to groups of teachers. Grove, in particular, has led several CPD initiatives for naval educators at venues such as Britannia Royal Navy College, Dartmouth and HMS Collingwood. Williams' work centres on impacting educators based within Russian diaspora groups.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

In seeking to impact political and cultural awareness in Ireland, the unit has achieved some notable successes. The research of Evans has been aired on RTE's flagship mid-morning political discussion show (321,000 average listenership, 2012) with over 100 listeners calling and texting in to offer comments. Moreover, Tiernan was profiled on RTE's evening news bulletin (1,000,000 peak viewership, 2012). The degree to which such impact influenced public awareness of the history of national issues was evidenced in January 2012 when the lead editorial in national newspaper 'The Irish Independent' (average circulation 240,000 in 2012) instructed Irish policy makers struggling with the European fiscal burden to 'read Bryce Evans's new biography'. The impact strategy to engage hard-to-reach user groups has been realised clearly through Tiernan's two appearances on BBC radio's Woman's Hour programme. Tiernan was also involved in presenting 'Fiametta', a play by Eva Gore-Booth (her biographical subject), at the Dublin Gay Theatre Festival in May 2013. Hope historians have also been interviewed on regional radio stations, ensuring research is communicated to hard-to-reach groups in the Irish geographical peripheries.

The second case study also demonstrates success in communicating the impact philosophy as outlined above. This has been achieved, for example, through a National Teachers' Institute event, Teaching the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and through the performance of a theatrical piece, Slave Captain, based on the diary of Atlantic slaver James Irving (2010). The unit therefore achieved pervasive impact on schoolchildren via their teachers. These impact initiatives reflect the research interests of Suzanne Schwarz, who recently left Hope to take up a post at the University of Worcester. The research of Schwarz, who was an external consultant for the development of the International Slavery Museum from 2008 onwards, has been carried forward by unit members Appleby, Evans and Grove, all of whom research maritime history. Such research operates within a collaborative faculty-wide focus on slavery and exploitation, with interdisciplinary researchers coming together through the Andrew Walls Centre, which addresses the history of slavery.