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| Z:\HEReview\Logos\new logo Hope_Crest_CMYK_081116 (2).jpg**External Examiner’s Report** **Academic Year 2017-18**

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| **Provision Covered by this report:**  | **History BA and MA 2017-18** |
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| **Name of External Examiner:**  | **Roisín Higgins** |
| **Institution:** | **Teesside University** |
| **Year of Appointment:** | **2017-18** |
| **Address:** | **Room M4.18, Middlesbrough Tower, Teesside University, Middlesbrough, TS4 3SL** |
| **Email address:** | **r.higgins@tees.ac.uk** |
| **Date of Report:** | **10.8.18** |

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| Your comments are sought on the areas indicated below, although your report need not be restricted to these areas and you should feel free to comment on any other matters you consider appropriate. Please make your comments as full as possible so that Liverpool Hope may obtain as full a picture as possible with reference to the quality of programmes and associated assessment procedures in the area. You will appreciate therefore that particularly brief responses are not always helpful or appropriate, except where specifically requested. Please ensure that you do NOT include individual student or staff names in your report or any information by which individual students could be identified. Your report will be routinely shared with members of the teaching team, the relevant Head of Department, the Faculty External Examiner, students on the programme, the relevant Staff:Student Liaison Committee and may also be made available to other external persons or bodies, as appropriate. If you wish to comment in confidence on any matter concerning your role we would suggest that you first approach the Dean of the appropriate Faculty. However, should you wish to do so you do have the right to make a direct approach to the Vice-Chancellor, which will of course be treated with appropriate discretion. Please keep any such communication separate from the report itself. **Submitting the form** The form should be returned as soon as possible after the final meeting of the Board of Examiners and not later than the 18th July. Please submit your report electronically to the Faculty Executive Officer (or designee). Faculty of Arts and Humanities: Jane Reilly reillyj@hope.ac.ukFaculty of Education: FEO Mrs. Sarah Meir meirs@hope.ac.ukFaculty of Sciences and Social Sciences: FEO Mrs Jane Blackmore blackmj@hope.ac.uk ***Please note:*** *It is University policy to return any reports that fail to address questions with adequately detailed responses.**Reminder: the* ***University’s External Examiner webpages*** *can be accessed at:* [*http://www.hope.ac.uk/aboutus/governance/academicquality/externalexaminers/*](http://www.hope.ac.uk/aboutus/governance/academicquality/externalexaminers/) |

**1. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE /CONTENT**

*This section should provide informative comment and recommendations on the structure and content of the programme in relation to its stated aims, learning outcomes and programme specification and might also include comment on:*

* *the coherency and currency of the programme and its component parts;*
* *the extent to which the programme reflects any additional Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements.*

*For undergraduate programmes in particular, please provide a commentary on the operation of Liverpool Hope’s undergraduate curriculum*

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| The History BA at Liverpool Hope is extremely well designed and students are given a very wide range of subject options within the modern period. The programme works very well as a whole, with a great deal of attention being paid to the skills and knowledge students need to progress. The assessments are varied and staff teach across a range of subjects but also have the opportunity to teach within their own areas of expertise, giving the programme a dynamic and research-led framework.The MA is also very well constructed and pays close attention to engaging student across a range of topics and assessment strategies. |

1. **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

*This section should provide informative comment and recommendations on whether or not:*

* *the programme is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its award in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable benchmark statements;*
* *the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the External Examiner has experience.*

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| The standard of work at Liverpool Hope is certainly in accordance with that across the sector. Work at the upper end is very strong indeed but what is particularly impressive is how solid the work is across the board. Students have clearly been given a very good grounding in the key aspects of the discipline and all work produced at the pass level includes primary evidence, referencing and historiographical engagement. These strong foundations allow students to produce work to their full potential and there is no doubt that they graduate with an excellent understanding of the core skills in the discipline as well as a deep and broad knowledge base. I have experience of teaching at a range of UK higher education institutions and have been an external assessor for degree revalidations and can confirm the quality of both the BA and MA degrees at Liverpool Hope. |

1. **ASSESSMENT PROCESSES**

*This section should provide informative comment and recommendations on whether or not assessment:*

* *is appropriately designed and applied;*
* *measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes of the programme;*
* *is conducted in line with the University’s policies and regulations.*

 *It might include comments on whether:*

* *the assessment methods and balance between them, and volume of assessment, remain appropriate;*
* *assessment criteria, marking schemes and award classifications are set at the appropriate level;*
* *assessments at the same level are of a comparable standard.*

*For undergraduate programmes, please include a commentary by Level.*

*For postgraduate programmes, please include module specific comments, as applicable.*

*For programmes such as the BA Primary Teaching (QTS) and Social Work, please also comment on your involvement in moderating student progress/achievement whilst on placement and the processes for assessing student progress / outcome against relevant professional standards frameworks etc.*

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| Assessments are rigorous and provide students with consistent and constructive feedback.Level C: The portfolio for first years is a very good idea and the benefit is that the student has visible evidence of his/her learning and sees that it is an ongoing process rather than simply about the submission of one or two assignments. It is also good practice to link to the assessment to museum visits, opening up the idea of history outside the classroom and in the public domain. The assessments could be streamlined and some – like careers – shouldn’t really be part of an assessed piece of work. So there is room for revisiting the assessment criteria. The reflection on feedback on the formative essay is a very good idea. Students who engaged with the exercise clearly benefited. Level I: Students are tested across a broad subject range and demonstrate a very good level of knowledge. The critical analysis is a very interesting exercise and students had a good understanding of what was required of them. The feedback was generally very good and gave clear directions to students as to how they might improve. The attention to failing work was rigorous and scripts were seen by three examiners.Level H: There was some very interesting work in this group of essays and it is clear the best students can think conceptually and synthesise complex ideas and information. Feedback was very constructive. The dissertations demonstrated intellectual creativity and reflected the support supervisors provided to students in framing individual and very interesting topics. It was clear students really engaged with the work, even at the lower end of the marking range there was a merit in the work produced.Some assessors used sub-headings to organise their work and it would be worth considering having an agreed set of headings under which feedback is given to provide consistency and transparency across the whole degree.MA: This is a dynamic programme and students are being encouraged to think about a great range of primary evidence and also to be creative in how they approach and convey their work. The Object of History is an innovative module which encourages students to convey complex material in an accessible way using written text and visual material. The subjects across the posters (one of the assignment methods) are varied and engaging. Some students struggled a little with the format and it would be good to revisit this and perhaps adopt a broader sense of knowledge exchange, giving students more options in terms of how they communicate their research including, for example, blogs, newspaper articles, podcasts, panels for a museum exhibition, vlogs etc etc. This would alter the content of the assignment but would also mean that students are responsible for their complete assignment rather than relying on staff to produce the poster. Students on the MA were provided with a good variety of subjects from early modern to contemporary and had the opportunity to engage with a variety of primary source material and historiographical debate. The standard across the three option modules was very good and meets the expectations of a postgraduate degree. |

**3.1 FOR BA PRIMARY TEACHING (QTS) / PCGE PROGRAMMES ONLY**

*Please comment specifically on the teaching, learning, assessment and academic standards in relation to the National Curriculum Core Subjects if not captured above.*

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| **N/A** |

1. **ACTION SINCE PREVIOUS REPORT / YEAR-ON-YEAR COMMENTS**

*This section should be used to confirm whether issues raised in your previous reports have been addressed satisfactorily. (If this is your first year as an External Examiner, please refer to the report from last year).*

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| N/A |

1. **GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT**

*This section should be used to provide informative comment and recommendations on:*

* *good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment; Please include the reason* ***why*** *you think an aspect of practice is good. You may wish to focus your comments by Level / Module.*
* *opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students (drawing on the observations in this report, together wider learning and teaching practice across the sector).*

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| 1. Source base: throughout the BA and MA programmes students are encouraged to think about historical sources in the broadest sense. This is embedded in coursework through visits to museums in first year and primary sources analyses which include paintings, music, newspapers, oral testimonies and a wide range of written accounts.
2. Feedback is constructive and attuned to the needs of each student. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the feedback and the inclusion of this as part of a formative assessment in first year was an example of really good practice to promote active learning.
3. Assignments were organised each year to test relevant skills as well as knowledge and it was clear this was well conceived and organised with a view to the entirety of the degree.
4. The MA programme is very distinct from the BA degree, testing different skills and expecting a greater degree of analytical engagement. It shows creativity in its design and assessment structure.
5. The third-year dissertations are notable for the range of topics and framing of questions and indicate a very supportive and encouraging supervisory relationship.
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**7. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

*How effective were the administrative arrangements and, in particular, did you receive documentation (e.g. schemes of study, programme specification, marking criteria, student work) in good time?*

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| The administrative process was very efficient. I received everything in a very timely way and with access to Moodle I was able to download all the course handbooks and look at a variety of assignments and feedback. This gave me a very good sense of the degree as a whole. The accommodation and transport to Liverpool were organised with great care and consideration and the exam board was run very smoothly. |

1. **YOUR OWN PARTICIPATION IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

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|  |  | *YES* | *NO* | *N/A* |
| *i)* | *Are you satisfied that the assessment instruments (formal examination papers, coursework titles, etc.) are appropriate?* | *Yes* |  |  |
| *ii)* | *Were you invited to comment on draft titles/ examination papers?* | *Yes* |  |  |
| *iii)* | *Would you wish to comment on draft coursework titles?* | *No* |  |  |
| *iv)* | *Did you participate in oral examinations?* | *No* |  |  |
| *v)* | *Did you attend the Board of Examiners’ Meeting?* | *Yes* |  |  |

*(vi)  How satisfied were you with your overall level of involvement in the University’s processes for assessment and examining? (please comment, making recommendations for improvement as appropriate to your comments)*.

I was satisfied with the level of involvement and have no further recommendations.

(*vii)  To what extent did the External Examiners’ Handbook assist you in the discharge of your duties? Was there anything else that you found particularly helpful?*

The guides were very helpful particularly as it this my first experience of being an eternal examiner. I found the powerpoint slides outlining the university’s regulations and highlighting areas of significance for external examiners particularly helpful.

 *(viii) Would you like to suggest any revisions to the handbook or to policy and practice in general?*

No suggestions.

1. **ANY OTHER COMMENTS**

*Please comment on any matter not already covered, which you would like to bring to the attention of the University. External examiners who are in their final year of office are especially encouraged to comment on observations over their full term of office.*

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| This has been a very worthwhile exercise and I gained a very clear sense of how the MA and BA degrees operate at Liverpool Hope and the professionalism with which they are delivered. I am very grateful to the admin and teaching staff who did everything they could to make the process run as smoothly as possible. |

***Please return your form as soon as possble.***