

**Texas A&M International University  
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)  
for Academic Programs**

**Program: Master of Arts in History**

**Assessment Period Covered: March 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009**

**Program Coordinator (Preparer of Report): Dr. Deborah Blackwell**

**List Other Program Faculty:**

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**The Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review for Academic Programs is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:**

Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services, to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in their chosen careers.

**Institutional Mission**

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

**Academic Program Mission**

The Department of Social Sciences enjoys a broad mission in teaching, research, creative activities, and service to our international community. The Master of Arts in History is a traditional liberal arts degree designed to provide a sound graduate education that helps prepare graduates to think critically, communicate effectively, and successfully transition to Ph.D. programs and/or the job market. In support of these goals, History program faculty are committed to 1) developing historical knowledge among our students; 2) fostering the development of critical thinking and writing skills; and 3) ensuring that our students are prepared for further study in history.

**Provide summary of the last cycle’s use of results and changes implemented**

*Program faculty should evaluate the former cycle. This statement should specify if the outcomes addressed were a continuation of previous ones, new outcomes, or modified versions of previous outcomes. In addition, the statement should include a concise analysis of the assessment data collected during the previous year, a brief explanation of actions taken to address specific outcomes, an evaluation of how these actions contributed to the improvement of the program, and any recommendations formulated. Assessment data—including actual samples of student work—must be viewed and discussed by program faculty during this process.*

Because of small data samples, major changes were not indicated for 2008. We continue to monitor student writing and qualifying examination scores to watch for patterns of student performance.

**Selected list of program-level intended student learning outcomes** *It is recommended that programs rotate through their entire set of outcomes over a multi-year period. Programs may focus on one or two outcomes each year, as deemed appropriate.*

1. Students will demonstrate accurate knowledge of historical facts and be able to explain historical changes over time.
2. Students will develop written historical arguments in a variety of formats, including conducting original research using primary historical documents.
3. Students will understand the evolution of historical scholarship and be able to discuss and critique a variety of historiographical debates.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

**Outcome(s):** *Identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year.*

1. Students will demonstrate accurate knowledge of historical facts and be able to explain historical changes over time.

**Please indicate if the outcome(s) is (are) related to writing (QEP).**

**Methods of assessment to be used:** *The explanation should identify and describe the type of assessment(s) that will be used (e.g., survey, questionnaire, observation instrument, test, rubric to evaluate performance, standardized examination, action research, interviews, etc.), who will provide the information, and how the data will be obtained.*

All comprehensive examinations given to History MA candidates are evaluated using a rubric that considers the student’s proficiency in knowledge of and ability to interpret historical information. At the conclusion of this cycle of comprehensive exams, an evaluation of multiple semesters’ comprehensives will be undertaken to discern what patterns might emerge to help us improve the program.

**Indicate when assessment(s) will take place**

At the conclusion of the fall semester/after fall comprehensive examinations have been evaluated.

**Criteria/Benchmark(s):** *Specify, if deemed appropriate to assess outcome(s). Criteria/ benchmark(s) may be optional, especially if qualitative measures are used for data collection.*

No benchmarks have been set as yet, given that this assessment is still in its early stages. We will set benchmarks in FY 2009 based on the results of our initial experience.

Section II: Analysis of Results

**What were the results attained?** *Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness(es) of the program suggested by the results.*

Two MA candidates took comprehensive examinations in the fall 2008 semester. Both students passed those examinations at an adequate level (average score of 3 on our rubric) in historical knowledge, writing, and historiographical scholarship. This data indicates that the program continues to provide solid training to our graduate students.

**What were the conclusions reached?** *Should include a brief description of the procedure used for reaching the conclusion(s) based on the evidence collected and describe the process used to disseminate the information to other individuals. For example, if the discussion took place during the annual spring retreat, include a summary from those deliberations using the Meeting Minutes template found at <http://www.tamtu.edu/integrate/docs/Minutes-Template.doc>. Once completed, submit the minutes to [assessment@tamtu.edu](mailto:assessment@tamtu.edu).*

The History MA program is doing a good job preparing our students with the knowledge and analytical skills necessary for the attainment of the degree.

**Describe the action plan formulated. (The plan may be multi-year in nature.)**

*Based on the conclusion(s), describe the action plan to be implemented to improve or maintain student learning, including a timeline for implementation.*

Continue to lobby for another graduate-level faculty member in history to complement and expand our offerings. Complete previous project of a standard reading list for all history MA candidates.

Section III: Resources

**Resource(s) to implement action plan:** *Describe the resources that will be needed to implement the action plan. Also indicate if the resources are currently available, or if additional funds will be needed to obtain these resources.*

Funding

- New Resources Required
- Reallocation of current funds

Physical

- New or reallocated space

Other

- Primarily faculty/staff time
- University/rule procedure change only

**Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)**

History needs the ability to continue offering quality education to an increasing number of students. With initiatives like HB 1 and ECHS adding to the increased number of regular freshmen, the history faculty resources are strained in offering the senior-level and graduate level coursework necessary for our growing number of majors and minors. This assistance is also necessary to help expand the History MA program, which also benefits the freshman classes by providing content-specific graduate assistants. This is consistent with Strategic Plan Goal 1.7: Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

**Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:**

*Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation):*

*New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):*

Students in HIST 5380/Historiography will complete a required library research project, to be prepared and graded by a committee of History faculty, that will test their ability to locate, interpret, and use appropriate available sources for research in History. The project will be team graded by History faculty, using the rubric provided on pages 78-82 of the QEP. The average score on the project will not fall below 3 on the rubric. Subscores from the QEP rubric will also be examined that will identify areas of strength and weakness in historical research. The average scores on the subscales will not fall below 3 (good) on any subscale.

*Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification):*

We will adopt the new outcome because we will be offering HIST 5380/Historiography in fall 2009.