

SABHAL
MÒR OSTAIG

Ionad Nàiseanta Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig

EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING REPORT AND EMPLOYEE INFORMATION 2017

SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG - APRIL 2017

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Background

Created in 1973, initially as a Gaelic library, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has grown to become the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture and the only Higher Education Institution delivering its courses through the medium of Gaelic. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is a founding academic partner of the University of the Highland and Islands. The College currently delivers five honours degrees, and a variety of language courses from ab initio level through to Doctorate level. There is a full programme of weekly Short Courses throughout the Easter and Summer months and in 2016 we attracted students from 24 countries around the world.

Our Mission

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is committed to being a centre of excellence for the development and enhancement of the Gaelic language, culture and heritage, by providing quality educational, training and research opportunities through the medium of Scottish Gaelic; and by interacting innovatively with individuals, communities and businesses, to contribute to social, cultural and economic development. The College is an all-Gaelic educational institution and business, and the College's prime objective is to defend, support and develop the Gaelic language.

Our Mainstreaming Vision

Our mainstreaming vision is to be an inclusive community in which everyone, whatever their background, age, nationality or identity is able to participate without constraint.

Commitment to Equality

At Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, we believe that discrimination on any grounds is unacceptable. We welcome the duties introduced by the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") and will continue to work towards building on our performance as an Equalities employer and education provider within the relevant legislative framework.

We will continue to seek to make Equality a central part of the way we work, by putting it at the centre of our policy-making, service delivery, and employment and recruitment practices.

We will strive to improve the information which we collect about our staff and students and to become more effective at monitoring and reviewing data accordingly.

We are always conscious of the positive nature of Equality duties and we wish to be proactive, and prevent discrimination before it occurs which is why we ensure Equalities is mainstreamed so that all our decisions and policies are fair for staff and students alike, from the outset. We achieve this by applying Equality Impact Assessments to our practices and policies and arrange actions to alleviate any negative impacts.

This report highlights the progress that the College has made in mainstreaming Equality in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The additional reports highlight our progress in terms of our revised Equality outcomes, published in April 2015 and list our outcomes and Action Plan for 2017-21.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (April 2011)

The general Equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- Advance Equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Mainstreaming Activity at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

The following section shows actions taken in respect of mainstreaming the Equalities duties

Seachdain Slàinte nan Oileanach/Student Health Week

Equality Duties

- Advance Equality of Opportunity
- Foster Good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected Characteristics

- All

This is an annual week-long series of activities held as part of the UHI initiative 'Healthy Happy You' in which Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has always participated. However, this year the college's participation was increased to a full week of health-related activities.

This week was a great success and saw a series of events promoting physical and mental health, exercise and social events and included different themes such as sport, health, music and reading. Collaborative Planning ensured that students of all ages, backgrounds, interests and abilities were able to participate fully and learn about the beneficial effects of such activities, not only in terms of physical and mental health but also in terms of study skills.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig also participated in 'Bi Sprogail/Be Active' the UHI Initiative to encourage exercise and participation in sport among the UHI partner colleges. This initiative involved both students and staff and was a great success both in bringing people together and in promoting the benefits of exercise in terms of physical and mental health.

Cèilidhean nan Oileanach/Student Cèilidhs

Equality Duties

- Advance Equality of Opportunity
- Foster Good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected Characteristics

- All

Student social events are planned to encourage and allow participation from all age groups and those with caring responsibilities. Family cèilidhs are held earlier in the evening to enable students and staff with children or those members of the college community who prefer early evening entertainment to be able to attend and participate. These events have also forged links with the Parent Council at the local primary schools. Later during the evening the focus is on dance parties aimed at students in the 18-25 age group. All our cèilidhs are open to the wider community.

Buidheann Coiseachd/ Walking Activity Group

Equality Duties

- Advance Equality of Opportunity

- Foster Good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected Characteristics

- All

Students can participate in guided walks led by a staff member who is a qualified mountain leader. These walks, to the surrounding area, take place on Friday afternoons, weather permitting, when students are usually free from classes and appreciate the opportunity to get together informally and enhance their Gaelic language skills, whilst undertaking an activity and also learning about history, environment, flora and fauna.

Students receive detailed information on the type of terrain, level of fitness required and the necessary clothing and equipment while the benefits of walking in a group, in terms of physical and mental health, are emphasised. These walks are popular with students of all ages and in particular provide students who normally live out-with the Highlands with an opportunity to appreciate and admire the local landscape.

There are additional outdoor activities available to students and staff on some weekends which include longer walks and hill climbs. These events are organised and led by the same staff member and provide further opportunities for students and staff of all ages and backgrounds to get together and support each other in terms of enhancing their Gaelic language and also in terms of participation in the chosen activity.

***'Is tusa an Còcaire'* International Cookery workshop activity**

Equality Duty

- Foster Good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected Characteristics

- All

This event, open to all staff and students on campus, is held monthly during the student term and is particularly well attended by international students and staff members who are able to showcase their culinary talents by preparing dishes from countries throughout the world. This event has also been successful in bringing together students of all ages.

***'An Tac an Teine'* Gaelic Story Telling Activity**

Equality Duty

- Foster Good Relations

Protected Characteristics

- All

This event is held every semester and is open to students, staff and others. While the focus is on story-telling from the Highlands and Islands, students from all backgrounds are encouraged to contribute with a story or song from the Highlands or other parts of the world. This has been well-attended by students and encourages members of the community, especially older members, who enjoy sharing their wealth of folklore with interested students, some of whom are from out-with the Highlands and have a keen interest in Highland culture.

Seirbheis Comhairleachaidh/Counselling Service

Equality Duty

- Advance Equality of Opportunity

Protected Characteristics

- All

A confidential and professional counselling service is available, free of charge, to all college students and staff in both Gaelic and English.

The service is well-publicised throughout the college, in posters and leaflets, on the website and by word of mouth. Students and staff members may self-refer or seek referral through a tutor, the Student Services and Engagement Co-ordinator, their line manager or Human Resources.

The College Counsellor offers both a face-to-face service to on-campus students and staff and an online service to those studying or working at a distance and to those on placement or on the Honours Year Exchange Programme.

The service is part of the wider Student Services which aim to support students to complete their studies successfully and to help all students and staff to bring about effective change and enhance their wellbeing.

Distance Learning Course Provision

Equality Duties

- Eliminate Discrimination
- Advance Equality of Opportunity

Protected Characteristics

- All

Provision of access courses, certificate, diploma, degree and Masters level courses by distance learning enabling participation by students who could not attend college full-time. This includes course delivery by Video-conference, Telephone-conference and Virtual Learning Environment with some classes being scheduled during late afternoons and evenings to enable greater participation.

Distance learning provision ranges from level SCQF 6 to SCQF 11 with most distance-learning students choosing to study part-time. However, at Levels SCQF 8 and above, the study options range from one module per academic year to full-time, six modules. This flexibility makes degree level study available to students who would not otherwise be able to access it whether due to geographical, personal circumstances or other factors.

Adaptations to Distance Learning Courses to support Students with Disabilities

Equality Duties

- Eliminate Discrimination
- Advance Equality of Opportunity

Protected Characteristic

- Disability
- Age

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, from its experience in adapting course materials for a small number of visually impaired students and students with other disabilities, learned that they would have to adapt written materials specific to each student's technical resources and abilities in the use of these to make written files accessible. These amendments, are done by course administrative and student services staff, on a student-by-student basis, to make the course materials compatible with screen-readers and other software.

Adaptations were agreed on almost all issues before students started the Course and others were dealt with as they were presented by students. Some students prefer to self-adapt the materials and receive advice and instructions enabling them to do so while the other students - receive course materials which have been adjusted to their specific requirements. The adaptations are not always regarded as reasonable adjustments; instead a holistic approach is taken, at the outset, to ensure that students' needs are met, as far as possible.

The success of this work depends on students receiving information about disclosing additional needs and their willingness to do so.

The staff involved have developed extensive knowledge and skills in terms of making the adjustments but also in terms of effective communication with students while seeking the best possible solutions.

These adjustments have enabled students to participate fully, complete the courses and in many cases, progress to higher levels of the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig degree programmes.

Ceitidh – Gaelic Text to voice Screen-reader

Equality Duty

- Eliminate Discrimination
- Advance Equality of Opportunity

Protected Characteristic

- Disability

Students with dyslexia and other disabilities are now able to benefit from the use of the new Gaelic screen reader 'Ceitidh' while undertaking examinations and other assessments as well as class-work and self-study. This screen-reader, funded by the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, SQA and SFC is available to all educational establishments and other public bodies, free of charge.

Students who disclose a relevant disability will be given information and advice by our student services coordinator and module tutors and will be given practical assistance and training by our ICT staff.

This is the first full academic session in which this resource has been available and it has enabled students, who may otherwise have been at a disadvantage, to achieve their full potential in their Gaelic medium studies.

Amendments to Curriculum

Equality Duty

- Eliminate Discrimination

- Advance Equality of Opportunity

Protected Characteristics

- All

Amendments have been made to ensure that examples and assessments used in both language and 'subject' classes reflect world events rather than solely focusing on the Highlands and Islands. This was due to feedback from international students.

Teaching staff have participated in many Equality and Diversity training events over the years, including QELTM and Teachability and they have gained considerable expertise in amending the curriculum, where appropriate, to ensure that students with Protected Characteristics are not disadvantaged. They also have experience in ensuring that all course materials and terminology used are entirely appropriate and representative of our diverse global community.

Short Courses Programme

Equality Duties

- Eliminate Discrimination
- Advance Equality of Opportunity
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Protected Characteristics

- All

The Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Short Courses have been running since 1973 and welcome hundreds of people from all over the world each year to participate in Gaelic Language & Culture, Traditional Music and specialised courses. The College is the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture and at the forefront of Gaelic learning and continuation of learning at all stages. The Short Courses Team deliver courses for complete beginners to fluent speakers, including a portfolio of traditional music and Gaelic song courses.

The courses continue to gain in popularity with many students returning year after year and on the last couple of years the attendances were as follows:-

Total Number of Attendees 2015: 853

Total Number of Attendees 2016: 901(5.6% increase on previous year)

These courses continue to attract students of all ages and from all over the world.

The college's commitment to Equality and Diversity is central to all aspects of short course planning and activity with students being encouraged to disclose disabilities at application stage.

This information is used to ensure that students are accommodated in the most suitable residential accommodation and classrooms.

All students receive printed information on equalities as part of their 'welcome pack' and their end-of-course evaluation includes questions relating to equality and diversity.

The majority of responses are overwhelmingly positive. However there have been matters raised such as a request for additional accessible parking spaces, a ramp with a handrail to improve accessibility to the main hall where many of the evening social events are held.

These actions and the installation of an induction loop system in a classroom were implemented before the Spring 2017 short course fortnight and were well received by the students attending the courses.

Equalities Training for Staff

Equality Duties

- Eliminate Discrimination
- Advance Equality of Opportunity
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Protected Characteristics

- All

E-module Training Package

All staff including new staff have been enrolled and, to date, the completion rate is over 70%, with the majority of those yet to complete being recent additions to the workforce.

Line Managers and other senior staff including the College Principal have encouraged staff to complete this training.

Equalities training in Gaelic

A Gaelic training package has been developed in-house, for staff who indicated that they wished to have Equalities training in Gaelic. This has now been delivered three times in the last two years.

Equalities Impact Assessment Training for Staff

Initially, all managers were enrolled on the Equality Impact Assessment training tool devised by UHI and delivered through Blackboard, the UHI Virtual Learning Environment. This training package has now been made available to all UHI staff as of March 2017 and this will be publicised throughout the college and staff will be encouraged to complete this training successfully.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig recognise the need to impact assess all policies, procedures and practices as well as new developments and initiatives.

Equality Impact Assessment is done at Committee level, assuming that those present meet the criteria for an effective impact assessment in terms of diversity, knowledge of the subject and people likely to be affected by the procedure in question.

Mental Health First Aid

In January 2017, a group of 12 staff members, across all college departments, completed a two-day course in Mental Health First Aid delivered by College Development Network. This follows on from similar training delivered in the last five years. College managers and staff recognise the importance of this training with additional sessions and follow-up training being planned.

Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Governance and Accountability

The Principal of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is responsible for the efficient running of the College and has overall responsibility for the delivery of its Strategic Plan. The Principal is also accountable to the Board of Directors in ensuring the College meets its statutory obligations.

Oversight of equalities matters was handled on behalf of the Senior Management Team by the College's Equalities Committee. Since then, the Chair of the committee has taken on the role of Staff Board Member on the Board of Directors and the Director of Corporate Affairs now also sits on the Equalities Committee. This ensures equality is given priority and the Board shall now be appraised of relevant equalities data and outcomes at each Board meeting. Further information on Board level engagement can be found in the *Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Board of Directors* section further down. These are positive recent developments, to help increase the equalities profile at the College, and we look forward to reporting on further progress in the next reporting cycle.

Procurement

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig works in partnership with APUC – Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges – to ensure that best practice in terms of equality, diversity, sustainability, ethics and value for money, is maintained throughout the procurement process. The College complies with its legal obligations regarding EU procurement directives and regulations on competitive tendering for purchases and contracts exceeding £25,000. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is responsible for meeting its legal obligations even when an external contractor provides its functions.

Our workforce and staff data

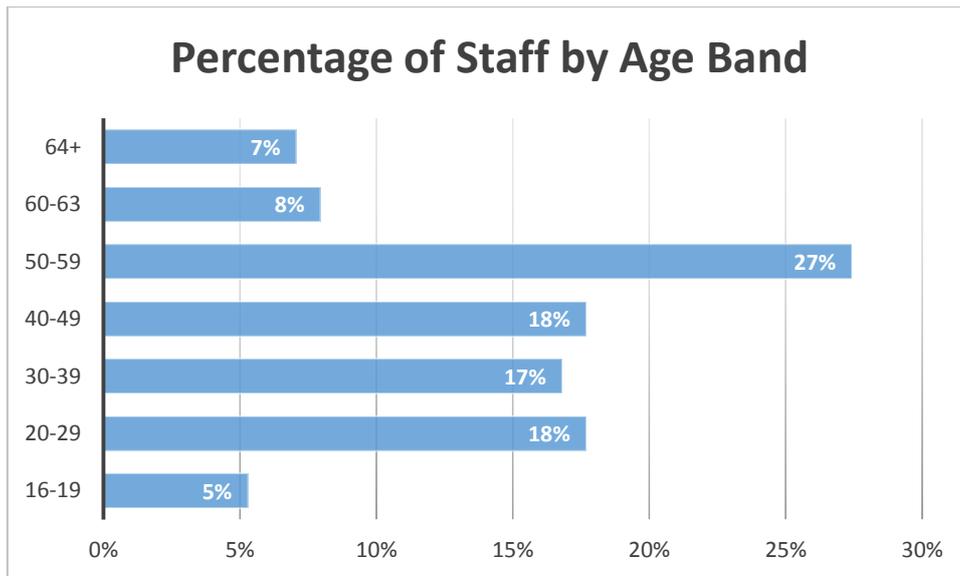
The College currently employs 113 members of staff, mostly based at the College but with some working remotely across Scotland, Ireland and Germany, mainly distance-learning lecturers. Our staff are involved in Higher and Further education, research, facilities, management, finance, academic and administrative support and projects. Staff are invited to complete a biennial Equalities survey and data is also collected from HR records as appropriate. Staff do not currently have access to a staff intranet in order to update these periodically but we are looking to put this in place.

We also collect monitoring data from job applicants and this is recorded in a database so that we are able to provide information on the recorded protected characteristics. Protected characteristic statistics are listed further on in this document for 2017. This information is voluntary although we generally have a high completion rate from applicants.

The following section gives an overview of our Staffing profile as at 31 March 2017:

Gender - our workforce gender split is 55% male, 45% female.

Age distribution of our staff is :

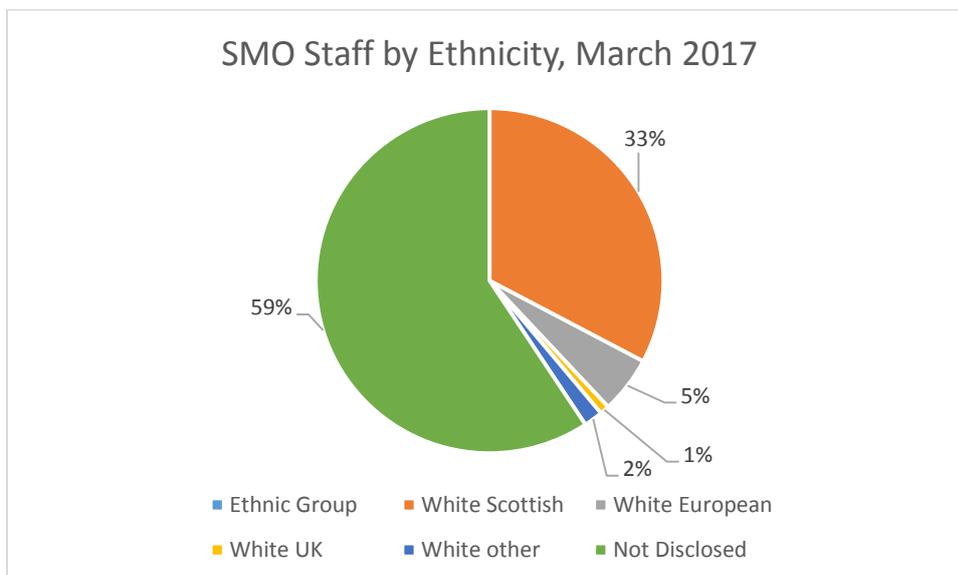


60% of our staff are aged 40 and over. Our largest percentage is within the 50-59 age bracket. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has a fairly low staff turnover within the Academic Department and within that Department alone, we have staff who have accrued up to 35 years' service at the College. This is the main reason for the largest group being in the over 40 age bands. We have increased the number of staff in the 16-29 age bands and most of those are employed in the Facilities Department (Hospitality and Estates).

Race/Ethnicity

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is currently composed of staff of White Ethnic origin, This year, we broke down the categories to include White European, White Scottish, White UK and White Other. We know that 100% of our staff are White. However, we did not have a high level of engagement with this question to be able to show a representative outcome for the breakdown within White ethnicity. We will consider how best to increase engagement about this category for the next cycle.

Race - The received responses are shown below for 2017:



Sabhal Mòr Ostaig welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds. However, as is seen in the *Applicants Data* (further on in this document) , 88% of applications to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig have been from White applicants, with an additional 9% not wishing to disclose). We are conscious that the majority of our vacancies at College are Gaelic essential or Gaelic desirable and this creates a pool of applicants who are, in the majority, White. It is worth noting, however, that we do have a more diverse range of students in terms of Ethnicity which could support a more diverse Gaelic workforce for the future.

The statistics may not highlight the fact that over 10% of our workforce is European/International and many of these staff have come to the College, initially to study, and have subsequently gained employment in the College. A substantial number of our graduates do go on to find employment at the college, therefore it is likely that the diversity of the student population will lead to a more diverse talent pool of potential staff in the future.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Staff Numbers

Data/Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Staff in Post (Headcount)	121	122	127	117	113

Numbers have fluctuated during the last four years due mainly to key projects coming to an end or reducing their core staffing, such as Tobar an Dualchais. Staff numbers are expected to rise slightly during the next financial year, including some newly established posts such as *Programme Leader for the new BA (Hons) Gaelic and Education* and an additional member of staff in the College's expanding library facilities. Additional academic staff levels are entirely dependent on student numbers, especially distance-learning where numbers increase significantly year on year. This proves that there are additional needs being met by our flexible, inclusive and accessible distance-learning programme which allows access to Higher education for students who would not otherwise have that opportunity. Facilities staffing levels also increase during the Summer period, where the College manages an extremely busy season of Short Courses and conferences. We do not expect the numbers to grow significantly during the next few years and with fewer than 150 employees, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig chooses to report staff data to reflect its openness.

Gender

SMO Comparative Staffing Totals (by gender)					
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
M	46%	46%	50%	52%	55%
F	54%	54%	50%	48%	45%

The percentage of male staff has increased by 3% on 2015-16. This is largely due to an increase in the number of males working within our Facilities Department (including Hospitality and Estates), which has historically had a much higher rate of female staff. As can be seen in the Table below, this has changed quite dramatically during the last 4 years.

Facilities Staff (by gender)	2013	2015	2017

M	24%	31%	50%
F	76%	69%	50%

Belief

Belief	2016	2017
Christian	32	24
Other	2	3
None	18	11
Prefer not to say	10	4
Blank	38	59

There is a higher percentage of staff giving no response or indicating “None” than in other categories. Action is required here to encourage staff to choose one of the categories, even “Prefer not to say”, to help understand the needs of our staff and inform future action.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	2016	2017
No response	38%	59%
Homosexual	2%	2%
Heterosexual	54%	37%
Prefer not to say	6%	2%

The *Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2014* recorded 1.6% as LGB or other. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has an above average number of staff declaring their sexual orientation as same sex. Again, there is a high percentage of staff giving no response. Reassurance is required that provision of this data will be useful in enabling us to understand the protected characteristics of our workforce. We aim to look at disclosure levels during the next two years.

Disability

Disability	2016	2017
Yes	3	3
No	92	37
None disclosed	5	59
Prefer not to say	0	1

We are concerned that there are members of staff who do not feel comfortable disclosing a disability. Reassurance is required that data about disability is useful for addressing specific needs of staff members and providing support as required. Confidentiality is assured and some further actions to emphasise this will be taken during the next reporting cycle.

Marital Status

Marital Status	2016	2017
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Civil Partnership	1%	2%
Divorced	3%	4%
Separated	1%	0%
Married	30%	17%
Single	21%	16%
Not disclosed	37%	58%
Prefer not to say	7%	3%

It is difficult to compare these figures given the higher incidence of no disclosure in this year's survey and we will be looking to amend how we collect this data in future. As mentioned previously, our Staff Intranet project will allow staff to update their own details periodically and as required.

Pregnancy and Maternity

This information is collected as it occurs and staff are then provided with the support that is appropriate to their situation. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig prides itself on its Family-friendly policies and Flexible-working practices which has meant that many members of staff are able to continue with their careers while working around school hours and to fit in with childcare requirements. The College is in the fortunate position of having a Childcare Facility on-site. The College is represented on the Board and provides in-kind support on a continuing basis. This has made the transition back to work much easier for many working parents.

Equalities Information gathered on Applicants, Interviewees and Job Appointments

The tables below give information about staff applications between 2015-2017. This is the first time we have reported on this information and, although voluntary, the level of engagement has been fairly high. Although a full analysis has not been carried out, there are no concerns about any bias in appointments being made relative to applications.

Gender	Applicants	Interviewed	Appointments
Female	57%	60%	52%
Male	34%	31%	40%
Prefer not to say	5%	4%	0%
No information	5%	4%	8%

Age	Applicants	Interviewed	Appointments
16-19	6%	6%	8%
20-29	28%	27%	32%
30-39	17%	15%	16%
40-49	18%	17%	12%
50-59	17%	19%	16%
60-63	2%	2%	4%
Prefer not to say	6%	8%	0%
No information	6%	6%	12%

Marital Status	Applicants	Interviewed	Appointments
Civil Partnership	3%	2%	0%
Divorced	3%	4%	4%
Married	31%	33%	32%
Separated	3%	4%	4%
Single	43%	38%	40%
Prefer not to say	8%	10%	4%
No information	9%	8%	16%

Disability	Applicants	Interviewed	Appointments
Disability Disclosed	0%	0%	0%
No Disability	88%	85%	80%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%	0%

No information	11%	13%	20%
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Sexual Orientation	Applicants	Interviewed	Appointments
Bisexual	0%	0%	0%
Gay Man	0%	0%	0%
Lesbian	0%	0%	0%
Straight Male/Female	83%	81%	79%
Other	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	8%	10%	4%
No information	9%	8%	17%

Religion or Belief	Applicants	Interviewed	Appointments
Buddhism	2%	2%	4%
Christian	42%	46%	40%
Other	6%	8%	12%
No Religion	23%	17%	24%
Prefer not to say	15%	17%	4%
No information	12%	10%	16%

Ethnicity	Applicants	Interviewed	Appointments
White	86%	90%	88%
No information	14%	10%	12%

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Gender Pay Gap Information

SMO Mean Gender Pay Gap	
2013	28.85%
2015	18.61%
2017	16.27%

SMO Mean Hourly Rate (by Gender)		
	M	F
2013	£20.38	£14.50
2015	£20.31	£16.53
2017	£20.74	£17.23

SMO Median Hourly Rate (by Gender)		
	M	F
2017	£19.71	£16.27

The Gender Pay Gap continues to fall from a high point of 28.85% in April 2013 and the College is committed to ensuring that the Pay Gap is reduced further.

There has not been a formal analysis of the reasons for the Pay Gap but it has been recognised that the majority of the most senior positions are held by males who have accumulated close to 35 years' service at the College and this has had a significant impact on the Gender Pay Gap.

The College introduced the Living Wage during 2015 and this had a very positive impact on the hourly rate for women. However, although historically there was a higher number of women in the Hospitality department, there has since been a marked increase in males working within these departments which has also impacted on the reduction of the Gender Pay Gap. In addition, College management, mindful of the need to reduce disparity between the lower and higher salaries, introduced a flat-rate pay increase to all staff in 2017.

It is expected that the Senior Management will change significantly within the next 5 years due to expected retirements, which will possibly result in a changing demographic. The Senior Management Team is currently made up of 5 males and 2 females. The broader College Management Team is a larger group with 13 males and 5 females. It is encouraging to have additional female representation although the percentage remains low.

Equal Pay Statement

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig supports the principle that all employees should receive equal pay for the same or like work or work rated as equivalent or of equal value. We aim to eliminate any sex bias in our pay system. We understand that equal pay between men and women is a legal right under both domestic and European law.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is committed to promoting equality within the College and recently appointed as its Staff Board Member, the Chair of the Equalities Committee, thereby creating a direct reporting line between staff and students and the Board itself. The Board incorporated equalities as part of its core values and has made this clear in its newly published Strategic Plan 2017-22. Full training is being undertaken by all Board members as part of our Board Development Plan and equalities remains a standing item in all committees from Board level down. We have identified a skills gap in equalities among our Board Members themselves and would be interested in identifying potential candidates with expertise in this field for appointment during 2017-18, when we are due to lose three members.

Gender Composition of Board of Directors

	2012		2015		2017	
Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Members	7	5	6	6	7	7
Percentage	58%	42%	50%	50%	50%	50%

The Gender composition of the Board of Directors remains at 50:50 and the Board has had a female Chair since October 2015. We have also signed up to the Government's 50:50 pledge campaign although we have already met this criteria. With regard to succession planning, we are mindful of the need to maintain the gender balance of the Board. The Board has currently been asked to consider potential candidates and we will consider them in accordance with our skills gaps priorities and gender respectively.

ⁱ SMO Short Courses Annual Report 2015-2016