



SABHAL  
MÒR OSTAIG

Ionad Nàiseanta Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig

## **Aithisg Adhartais Cho-ionannachd**

## **Equality Mainstreaming Report**

**2013-2017**

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## Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's **Equality Mainstreaming Report**

### Principal's Foreword

We at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig are committed to ensuring that everyone in the College's community should be able to access education.



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.

As Principal of this College, I welcome the development of the Equality Report and Mainstreaming Plan which aims to embed equality into everything which we do. By using this Report and Plan, we will continue to build on our successes and develop strategies, policies and practices which make a positive difference to our learners, staff and our community. We warmly welcome our new legal duties to promote equality and to take account of equality in our decision-making across the whole organisation.

*A G Boyd Robertson*

Professor A G Boyd Robertson  
Principal

## Executive Summary

The Single Public Sector Duty (April 2011) seeks to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across the protected characteristics. These being:

Age  
Disability  
Gender reassignment  
Marriage and civil partnership (does not apply to FE/HE and PED)  
Pregnancy and maternity  
Race  
Religion or belief  
Sex  
Sexual orientation

Our Equality Report is in four parts:

Section 1 gives a summary of the Equality Report, and provides brief information about Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's background.

Sections 2 and 3 detail our mission, our vision and our commitment to equality. They look at the equality roles within the College, and outline specific responsibilities.

Sections 4 and 5 detail how we have progressed the Equality Duty with regard to Staff and Students.

Section 6 shows evidence of Equality matters from Education Scotland reviews.

Section 7 gives information on Contractual and Service Providers.

Section 8 shows how we will progress equality. It looks at continuous involvement, and how we will gather and analyse information.

We also summarise our approach to equality impact assessments, training and development, and publishing, monitoring and reviewing this Equality Report.

**The appendix** outlines our student profiles.

Should you require any further information in relation to this report please do not hesitate to contact Ian Graham, Equality and Diversity Adviser, 01471 888 326, [ig.smo@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:ig.smo@uhi.ac.uk)

## 1 Introduction

We at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig believe that discrimination on any grounds is unacceptable in our College. We welcome the duties introduced by the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) and will continue to work towards improving our performance as an Equalities employer and 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 practice.

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.

This report highlights the progress that the College has made in mainstreaming equality through all its service functions as well as leading us, through our Action Plan and future experience, into a cycle of improvement and progress which enables us to meet and, we hope, to exceed, the general and specific duties imposed upon us by the Act.

The Single Public Sector Duty (April 2011) seeks to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across the protected characteristics. These being:

- Age
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- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (does not apply to FE/HE and PED)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

## **2 The College**

### **2.1 Background**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, which has continued as an independent educational institution since it was founded in 1973, is unique in that it is the only college of FE/HE in the United Kingdom offering advanced courses solely through the medium of Gaelic. As such, it has a critical role to play in ensuring the development and support of the Gaelic language, culture and heritage through educational, cultural, promotional and economic programmes and activities.

Though a relatively small and new institution, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has been characterised by rapid expansion of activities within the past few years. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig became a founding member of the UHI project in 1994 resulting in university title being awarded in January 2011. Since its inception, the College has welcomed learners from varying backgrounds and lifestyles and it is our aim to ensure that this continues and is built upon.

### **2.2 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.

### **2.3 Our Vision**

Our vision is to be a college of excellence, which positively engages, develops and enriches the communities and individuals it serves. We are intent on supporting the creation of opportunities for learning, development and access to Gaelic-medium learning for all. We use innovative approaches to teaching and learning, utilising the best aspects of new technology to underpin all delivery. As part of our vision, we aim to build positive and supportive pathways for learners to assist them in the transition from school to further and higher education, training and employment.

Inclusion is one of our core values, whereby we respect each other and our difference, and we work hard to create a community which cares and offers opportunities for all.

### **2.4 Our Community**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is a Gaelic College. Our community comprises not only local learners and users of the College in Skye and Lochalsh and the Highlands, but

also the wider national and international group of learners and potential learners who wish to develop their skills in and understanding of Gaelic language and culture

## **2.5 Commitment to Equality**

Our commitment to equality goes hand in hand with our vision. We are dedicated to the provision of a safe and supportive environment in which everyone is able to learn or work to the best of their ability. We seek to engender a culture of courtesy, respect and understanding for all. Each person is seen as an individual and the College wishes to respond to individual needs.

In terms of learning and teaching, our courses, materials and quality assurance procedures all reflect a commitment to the principles of equality and diversity. We confirm an entitlement to equality for all people irrespective of race, gender, gender re-assignment, disability, age, religious belief or sexual orientation, marital status or pregnancy. We condemn all expressions of discriminatory attitudes and have a zero tolerance approach to harassment.

## **3 Equality Roles and Responsibilities**

Everyone connected with our College has a part to play in making equality a reality. More specifically:

### **3.1 Board of Directors**

All members of the Board of Directors are responsible for making sure that the college complies with equality legislation, meets all its duties and ensures that our Equality Report and its procedures are followed.

### **3.2 Principal**

The Principal is responsible for giving a consistent and high-profile lead on equality issues, promoting equality inside and outside the college, and making sure that our Equality Report and its procedures are followed.

### **3.3 The Senior Management Team**

Our Senior Management Team is responsible for putting the Equality Report and its strategies and procedures into practice. Their role is to make sure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and that they receive support and training in carrying these out. It is their responsibility to follow the relevant procedures and take action against staff or learners who may be discriminating unlawfully. They are also responsible for ensuring that resources are made available to deliver the proposed action points.

### **3.4 Equality and Diversity Committee**

Our College's Equality and Diversity Committee includes active representation from the Senior Management Team, the Student President and staff from all areas of the College.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and monitoring of our College's equality policies and practices, including this Equality Report.

### **3.5 Equality and Diversity Adviser**

Our Equality and Diversity Adviser will be responsible for the project management of implementation of our equality agenda. Our Adviser will also champion best practice throughout the College.



## 4 Mainstreaming the Equality Duty - Our Staff

The following section includes information on our progress and achievements in mainstreaming the Equality Duty with regard to our staff.

### 4.1 Our Staff

The following tables show summary information on the gender composition of our current staff and Board of Directors. More detailed information is available as an appendix.

**Table 1**

Department	2013	
	Male	Female
Education	21	12
ICT	3	0
Corporate Services	6	9
Facilities	8	25
Lifelong Learning	5	7
Research	4	2
Tobar an Dualchais	4	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>59</b>
	46.36%	53.64%

**Table 2**

Hourly rate by Gender	Male	Female
£	20.38	14.50

The Gender Pay Gap is 28.86% in favour of male employees.

### Membership of Board of Directors and Senior Management Team

**Table 3**

Senior Management Team	Male	Female
Members	6	2
Percentage	75%	25%

**Table 4**

Board of Trustees 2007	Male	Female
Members	11	0
Percentage	100%	0%

**Table 5**

<b>Board of Directors 2013</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Members	4	6
Percentage	40%	60%

There has been considerable progress made in addressing the gender imbalance identified in the composition of the Board of Directors, formerly Board of Trustees.

#### **4.2 Staff Development**

All staff have received interactive training from representatives of RNIB, RNID, Skill Scotland, Equality Forward and Scotland's Colleges. Our academic staff have also participated in awareness training with regard to the Teachability and QELTM projects and also Dyslexia awareness.

All staff are informed at induction, training and awareness raising that they are responsible for promoting equality and being able to recognise and tackle discrimination. However there is a need to renew and improve the training provided, in line with current legislation and adopt an online training package which will complement face-to-face and subject specific training.

All staff have a legal obligation with regard to equality and to attend training to enhance their understanding of the commitment to equality and diversity and the elimination of discrimination.

#### **4.3 Staff feedback and attitudes towards Equality and Diversity**

Extract from UHI Staff Survey results – July 2012

##### Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Equality and Diversity Statements

Overall agreement with attitudes statements about equality and diversity at the College was high. 90% of respondents agreed strongly/agreed that, 'I understand my personal responsibilities for ensuring and promoting equality at work' and there were also very high levels of agreement with statements relating to awareness of SMO's equalities Equality Reports and what action to take if there were concerns about equalities.

The lowest levels of agreement were with statements on the effectiveness of equalities training and the effectiveness of actions to deal with equality concerns, but three quarters of respondents agreed with these statements and only 2% disagreed, suggesting that these are not major concerns.

## 5 Mainstreaming the Equality Duty Our Students

The following section includes information on our progress and achievements in mainstreaming the Equality Duty with regard to our students.

This section contains information about the role of Student Services and the Student President in mainstreaming the Equality Duties.

Statistical information on our student profile is available in the appendix.

All students are informed through induction, training and awareness-raising that they are responsible for promoting equality, fostering good relations and avoiding discrimination. Students should be aware of discrimination and / or harassment and feel able to challenge or report it if they witness it.

### 5.1 *Student Services*

Student Services offers information support and guidance to all students on issues which may affect their studies and is available to all students, including international students, whether studying full-time or part-time and both those on campus and those learning at a distance.

This includes information on:

- additional support needs
- alternative exam arrangements
- careers
- child care
- disability
- finance and budgeting
- health and welfare
- homesickness
- procrastination
- stress
- study skills
- time management

#### Disability and/or Additional Support Needs

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is committed to equalities and welcomes applications from students with disabilities and additional support needs. Students are encouraged to contact the Student Support Team at the earliest opportunity so that their support needs are met as well as possible whilst studying at SMO.

Reasonable adjustments are made appropriately in consultation with individual students and Personal Learning Support Plans are in place for students with disabilities and additional support needs including visual and hearing difficulties, dyslexia and dyspraxia, mental health difficulties and physical disabilities.

Appropriate on-going support and one-to-one support is available to all students.

### Counselling Service

A confidential and professional counselling service is available to students and staff of the college and also to members of the community in both Gaelic and English. The service is offered in collaboration between SMO and NHS Highland.

### College Environment

The atmosphere on campus is fairly informal with staff and students eating together in the canteen. As a small college we know our students on an individual basis and we are able to identify potentially vulnerable students and respond quickly to students' needs. Attendance at classes is monitored and absences flagged up to Student Services.

### Accommodation

The vast majority of students live in on-campus accommodation and there are good links between Student Support Services and housekeeping, kitchen and warden staff who are encouraged to share concerns about students with Student Support Services staff.

### Gaelic

As a specialist college which operates through the medium of Gaelic, staff are encouraged to learn Gaelic and attend classes, often along with students. Student Services staff are fluent Gaelic speakers and so are able to support native speakers in their first language. In supporting learners of Gaelic in Gaelic we adopt a holistic approach to learning the language. Student Support is available in English if that is what students prefer.

### Clubs and Activities

A wide range of activities take place on campus most evenings in the week including Pump FX, Circuit Training, Karate, Abair Thusa (Gaelic conversation circle), Cèilidh Dancing, Film Club, Badminton, German Class & Poetry Discussion etc. which bring staff, students and members of the community together encouraging students to feel part of the college community ensuring that they do not become isolated.

### See Me

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has signed the *See Me* pledge which campaigns to end the stigma and discrimination of mental health. SMO was the first organisation to sign the pledge in Gaelic.

### Awareness Raising

Student Services raises awareness about equality and diversity events. As part of University Mental Health Day on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013, a Gaelic Writing Competition was organised which was open to both staff and students and encouraged writers to raise awareness of mental health difficulties.

### **5.2 Student President**

The role of Student President was established by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig as a paid position in academic year 2012-13, with the aim of liaising better with the student body and further developing the student association and links with the external student community. The current Student President was awarded College Officer of the Year 2013 (NUS Scotland).

The student president is an active member of the following committees, thereby ensuring effective representation and liaison between the college student community and College and UHI and UHISA (UHI Student Association) committees and national student bodies:-

- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Student Consultative Committee (Chair)
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Student Representative on Board of Directors
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Equalities Committee
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Quality Assurance Committee
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Library Advisory Group
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Health and Safety Action Group
- UHI LGBT Forum
- UHI Student Engagement Group
- UHI Mental Health Awareness Group
- UHISA Executive Committee (Gaelic officer and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig representative)
- UHISA Regionalisation working group
- Comataidh Gàidhlig UHI (UHISA representative)
- UHISA Gaelic Learners Society (Adviser)
- Association of Celtic Students of Britain and Ireland

Membership of ad-hoc panels

- UHISA representative on UHI Governance review panel
- NUS Small and Specialist Unions

- Local Community Council meetings

The Student President also liaises regularly with college Heads of Department to ensure that there is regular bilateral communication between students and the college management and that any issues are dealt with quickly.

Links with other UHI colleges have also been strengthened by organising sporting events and attendance at other colleges' social events, as well as attendance at other institutions which deliver Gaelic/Celtic studies provision. Through attendance at NUS conferences, the Student President is seeking to develop links with other small specialist institutions across the UK and is advising NUS UK on its first 'small and specialist' training workshop this summer. He is also helping to develop NUS Scotland's Gaelic strategy.

#### Training and Awareness Raising

In addition to student training at induction, the Student President has undertaken training in First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, SPARQS (Student Participation in Quality Scotland) Quality training, College Board of Governors' training. He has also attended the LGBT Scotland conference in 2013.

#### Equalities within the student community

The Student President reports that there are no significant concerns regarding awareness of equality issues and of the equality duties. Our close-knit student community, all of whom receive Equalities training at induction, are able to challenge and deal with any minor instances of undesirable behaviour, amongst their peer group, and this ensures that the college provides a welcoming environment to all.

With increased emphasis on sport, there have been no barriers regarding participation of LGBT students, in fact this has been encouraged by the student community and has done much to foster good relations. It has been noted however that there is a need to increase opportunities for female students to be involved in team sports and the Student Association will seek to ensure that there are no attitudinal or other barriers discouraging female participation.

The students attending the short courses and college conferences over the summer months are always a diverse group representing all the protected characteristics. These students report that the college has a welcoming environment where their needs are fully met.

## 6 Evidence on Equality matters Education Scotland (HMle)

This section includes evidence on Equality and Diversity matters from Education Scotland.

### 6.1 Extract from Annual Engagement Visit – May 2010

High Quality Learning: Equality and Diversity

The college reports equality and diversity issues to two committees: the UHI *Equality and Diversity Committee* and its own internal *Equality and Diversity Committee*. Equality schemes and action plans are approved by the senior management team and the Board of Management. Key staff undertake some monitoring of actions within the schemes. Recent monitoring has shown that the gender split of learners is in line with that of UHI, and the age profile of learners is changing, reflecting an increase in school leavers. Inspectors did not view the college's equality schemes, action plans or impact assessments during the AEV. Overall, there is an increasing awareness of wider equality issues within the college.

All new staff undertake training in equality and diversity and staff have attended mandatory training provided by *Scotland's Colleges*, a specialist consultant, UHI and other external providers. Staff are working towards incorporating equality and diversity issues further into programme team meetings and discussions.

During recruitment of staff, the college undertakes equal opportunity monitoring and is planning to anonymise application forms during the short-listing stage. The college takes proactive steps to ensure equality of access to distance-learning programmes. Five years ago, teaching staff took part in some training in *Quality and equality in learning and teaching materials (QELTM)*. Managers recognise that this training should be revisited and that there is a need to promote further equality and diversity in learning and teaching materials and approaches.

Although the college's mission is to promote the Gaelic language and culture, its programmes attract learners from an international market. Currently, managers are missing opportunities to promote diversity of race, nationality, age and gender through their teaching materials and marketing of provision. There are opportunities to bring together very diverse categories of learner through the college's global provision of Gaelic.

The college should monitor and record its existing practice in equality and diversity, including at programme level, and identify clear leadership and priorities for its further promotion.

## **6.2 Extract from Annual Engagement Visit – May 2012**

Quality culture: responding to changes in legislation - Equality and Diversity;  
PVG

The college ensures that all staff and tutors undertake training in safeguarding and equality and diversity. A few staff also take the opportunity to extend this through attending events at *Scotland's Colleges*. All compulsory training is available to staff in on-line packages and the college intends to offer these as a bilingual suite of packages in the near future.

The college is developing its single equalities report and all its new policies and procedures will be on the new college website. The college is supported and advised in this by the UHI Compliance and Equalities Officer and is confident that it meets all legal requirements. With regard to promotion of those with protected characteristics, the college is developing new policies and recently produced a clear policy on the production and display of posters. The college has effective procedures in place to support learners with additional support needs, including ensuring that learners have additional time in assessments where required.



## **7 Contractual and Service Providers**

All contractors and service providers on behalf of the college are responsible for following the Equalities Report and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements. The College aims to ensure that the appropriate conditions are inserted in contracts or agreements with any external providers of services.

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.

## 8 How We Will Progress Equality

### 8.1 Equality Impact Assessments

We are always conscious of the positive nature of equality duties and we wish to be proactive, and prevent discrimination before it occurs – that is, from the outset we consider our decisions and policies to make sure that they are fair for everyone – staff and students alike.

The systematic way in which we do this is by producing Equality Impact Assessments, which thoroughly analyse our practices, and establish whether the practice affects different groups of people in different ways.

The assessments involve gathering information to help identify the effect of a policy or practice and taking action to eliminate any actual or potential discrimination or disadvantage which is identified. Impact assessments also look for opportunities to promote equality.

### 8.2 Equality Outcomes

In line with the Public Sector Equalities Duty to publish information:-

- We will publish our Equality Report by 30 April 2013.
- We will report on progress made in achieving our Equality outcomes by 30 April 2015.
- We will renew our Equality outcomes by 30 April 2017.

We must publicise and raise awareness of our Equalities Report to all staff, students and members of the college community.

Copies of our Report will be made available via the College's internet and intranet sites. Published copies of the Equality Report will also be made available in a variety of strategic locations within the College. References to the Equality Report and Action Plan will be included in our induction materials, regulations, policies and statements.

We will promote the publication of this Equality Report on the News Section of our website and in our College newsletter.

The Equality Report will be made available in accessible formats by contacting:

Marketing Manager

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Teangue

Isle of Skye

IV44 8RQ

Telephone: 01471 888 219 or email [eni.smo@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:eni.smo@uhi.ac.uk)

Equality Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Milestones/ Timescale	Reference to Equality Duty	Protected Characteristics
<b>1. All staff have knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity issues and of their obligations, as employees of the college, under the Equality Act,</b>	1.1 Face-to-Face and online training provided to new and existing staff.  1.2 Awareness raising sessions to be provided during staff training days.	Equalities Committee/ Human Resources	April 2013, then annually	Eliminate Discrimination Advance Equality of Opportunity Foster good relations	All

<p><b>2. Staff and students with all protected characteristics find that the college has a visible promotion of equality and diversity and that it celebrates its strengths and achievements in this regard.</b></p>	<p>2.1 Equalities Report to be publicised on College website, college e-newsletter.</p> <p>2.2 Equalities resources available on college intranet will be publicised.</p> <p>2.3 College website and other publicity materials will highlight achievements with regard to Equality and Diversity.</p> <p>2.4 Communication of the Colleges Equalities Policies to Contractors.</p> <p>2.5 Further awareness raising and highlighting of diversity issues within the student community.</p>	<p>Marketing/Equalities Committee</p>	<p>April 2013</p> <p>Apr 2013</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity Foster good relations</p>	<p>All</p>
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<p><b>3. All students with relevant protected characteristics have equality of opportunity to participate in college life and achieve positive outcomes</b></p>	<p>Student data on Protected Characteristics will be analysed in terms of retention and achievement.</p>		<p>September 2014 then annually</p>	<p>Advance Equality of Opportunity Foster good relations</p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b>4. All staff with relevant protected characteristics are represented and treated fairly</b></p>	<p>Staff data collection will be improved and will be analysed in terms of employment practices such as Staff Recruitment and Selection –Staff pay Staff training and development Staff promotion Staff Disciplinary and Grievance issues</p>	<p>Human Resources/ Senior Management team</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity Eliminate Discrimination</p>	<p>All</p>

<p><b>5. Staff and students with all protected characteristics, including in particular disabled students and staff have access to buildings, facilities and resources that are free from unnecessary physical, environmental, geographic and attitudinal barriers.</b></p>	<p>5.1 Review of Accessible rooms and improvements made.</p>	<p>Estates/Senior Management Team</p>	<p>April 2015</p>	<p>Eliminate discrimination Advance equality of opportunity Foster good relations</p>	<p>Disability</p>
	<p>5.2 New College building as Phase 1 (a) of the development of Kilbeg Village to replace the ageing Arainn Ostaig facilities , featuring student teaching rooms, social spaces and office accommodation .</p>		<p>February 2015</p>		
	<p>Feasibility study and public consultation into new College and community sporting facilities.</p>		<p>September 2015</p>		