

1. Introduction

We at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig believe that discrimination on grounds of race is unacceptable in our College. We welcome the duties introduced by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (RRAA), and will work to ensure continuous improvement of our performance as an Equal Opportunities employer and provider within the relevant legislative framework.

We will seek to make racial equality a central part of the way that 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 on ethnicity.

We will view our Racial Equality Scheme as a starting point which will lead us, through our Action Plan and future experience, into a cycle of improvement and progress and enable us to meet and, we hope, to exceed, the general and specific duties imposed upon us by the RRAA.

Under the general duty, we must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equal opportunities; and
- promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

We must also have due regard to the specific duties, which provide the steps or arrangements to help us meet the general duty.

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.

Since its inception, the College has welcomed learners from varying ethnic backgrounds and it is our aim to ensure that this continues and is built upon.

2.2 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 Aims

Develop the College as a major centre for the development of Gaelic language, culture and education

- Secure an equitable funding model, appropriate to the distinctive situation and role of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
- Enhance academic provision, increase student numbers and broaden the student experience
- Enhance the management, support and ICT infrastructure of the College

- Support staff in developing their personal and professional competence
- Develop further links with the local and wider community
- Seek resources to allow the capital expansion required for the achievement of the College's strategic aims.

The College recognises that these aims cannot be achieved without the contribution made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

2.4 Strategic and Operational Planning

The College's Strategic and Operational Objectives are identified through a corporate planning process, which is reviewed on an annual basis. Our planning and review will take account of our duties under RRAA and other relevant Equal Opportunities legislation.

3. The College's Duties under the RRAA

4. The Race Relations Amendment Act and the associated Scottish Statutory Instrument place a general duty on the College to: eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and, promote good relations between people from different racial groups. As well as this the College has a specific duty to prepare and publish a Race Equality Scheme by 30 November 2002.

The Scheme should identify how we intend to fulfil our duties in this area and also assess which of our functions and policies are relevant to our duties on race relations.

5. The Scheme should also contain our arrangements for: assessing and consulting on the likely impact of our proposed policies on the promotion of race equality; monitoring our policies for adverse impact on the promotion of race equality; publishing the results of the assessment; consultation and monitoring; ensuring public access to the information and services we provide; and training our staff and students in connection with our new duties on race relations.
6. We also have a specific duty to monitor, by reference to the ethnic groups to which they belong, the numbers of staff and students at the College, with results to be published annually.
7. We are required to review the assessment of our functions and policies by 30th November 2005 and every three years thereafter.

8. The Race Equality Scheme

- 1.1 This Scheme has been drawn up in response to the RRAA. It draws together for the purposes of the Act our priorities in this area and assesses which of our policies and functions have most relevance for race equality.
- 1.2 We have also identified areas where we will take specific action. These actions and priorities will also be reflected in our corporate and operational planning and will be taken forward through these means. By doing this we will make our Scheme central to the work of the College. We will report on progress in our annual report. We will also update and publish this Scheme annually with a report on progress in order to give greater focus to our work in this area and to make our stakeholders aware of our activities in promoting racial equality.
- 1.3 An action plan (See Annex B) brings together the actions described in the Scheme.

9. Working with Others

10. The College is one of the Academic Partners of the UHI Millennium Institute (UHI). We will work with other Academic Partners to meet the requirements of the RRAA across the Institute as a whole and will co-operate with and contribute to the development of the UHI's Race Relations Scheme.

11. We will liaise with other organisations and individuals to identify and promote good practice in Race Relations issues.

12. Relevant functions and policies

1.4 The table (see Annex A) identifies the College's functions and policies and assesses their relevance to Race Equality. Annex B, which is cross-referenced to Annex A, lists the actions we will take - or are taking - to ensure that we meet our duties.

13. Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of race equality

14. We will consult regularly with our key stakeholder groups on our proposed policies or on changes to our existing policies, practices and functions. We recognise that we may need to reconsider the stakeholders consulted in order to be sure that the impact of any change on minority ethnic groups is addressed.

1.5 We will work with UHI to ensure a consistent approach to Race Equality for our HE students.

1.6 We will review our consultation methods and the stakeholders that are included in our consultations to ensure that effects on race equality of proposed policies are adequately addressed.

15. Monitoring

1.7 We will review the outcomes of the actions described in this Scheme annually, through the College's existing operational monitoring arrangements. We will report annually on the outcomes of the annual review of the Scheme, and on progress against actions described in the Scheme. Our Corporate Services Department will also monitor our statistical collections on staff - including the monitoring required by our specific duty - and students in the College, in order to identify any areas for action. The outcome of this monitoring will also be included in our annual review of the Scheme.

9 Publishing

This Scheme will be published on our website and will be sent to the UHI Millennium Institute and to other stakeholders. The outcomes of the annual report on the Scheme will also be available publicly on our website and on our intranet.

10 Access to information and services

We make a wide range of information on the College and its work available on our website and through other forms of communication, which include newsletters, leaflets and prospectuses. This information is currently only available in English and

Gaelic. We do not believe it would be an effective use of public resources to translate all our material into community languages. We will, however, explore the possibility of referral to external translation services to ensure that our information is accessible to as many people as possible.

11 Monitoring policies for adverse impact

We have set out, in Annex A, the areas that we have assessed as relevant to the duties of the Act. Through the process of reviewing this scheme annually, monitoring the statistics we collect, and reporting to our Management Group, we will monitor for adverse impact.

12 Arrangements for monitoring staff by ethnic background

Our arrangements for carrying out this specific duty are set out below in the section on “Our Duties as an Employer”. We will ensure that these statistics are published annually.

16. How we will deal with complaints

This Scheme sets out our aspirations in meeting the general and specific duties. If anyone believes that any of our actions fall short of these aspirations we would welcome comments or complaint.

17. Responsibilities

18. Our Trustees are responsible for:

- making sure that the College complies with the RRAA, and meets all its duties, including the general duty and the specific duties; and
- making sure the Race Equality Scheme and its related policies and procedures are followed

19. The Director is responsible for:

- giving a consistent and high-profile lead on Race Equality Issues;
- promoting the Race Equality Scheme inside and outside the College; and
- making sure the Race Equality Scheme and its related policies and procedures are followed

20. Managers, including Section Heads are responsible for:

- putting the Scheme and its associated strategies, policies and procedures into practice;
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities, and receive support and training in carrying these out; and
- following the relevant procedures and taking action against staff or students who may be discriminating unlawfully for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins

21. The College Equal Opportunities Group is responsible for:

- co-ordinating work on Race Equality (and other Equal Opportunities Issues)
- working with each section in the co-ordination and mainstreaming of their Race Equality work; and
- ensuring that racist incidents are covered by our existing procedural framework for staff and students
- monitoring the operation of the Scheme and producing an annual report on it

22. All Staff are responsible for:

- dealing with racist incidents, and being able to recognise racial bias and stereotyping; for which training will be provided
- promoting Equal Opportunities and good Race Relations, and avoiding unlawful discrimination
- keeping up-to-date with the law on discrimination, and taking up training and learning opportunities

23. All Contractors and Service providers are responsible for:

- following the Race Equality Scheme and any Race Equality conditions in contracts or agreements

12.1 All Students are responsible for:

- promoting Equal Opportunities and good Race Relations, and avoiding unlawfully discriminating against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- complying with the College's Race Equality Scheme and related policies and procedures

24. Section 2 Our Duties as an Employer

Meeting our Employment Duties

25. The College currently employs about 60 staff on permanent contracts, with a varying number of short-term and contract staff being employed as and when required.
26. We will further revise the equal opportunity monitoring procedures to collect data on ethnicity at application and at the point of selection for interview. We will also collect data on the ethnicity of current staff.
27. We will monitor the data collected on ethnic origin at application and appointment stages of recruitment to identify any patterns of inequality taking action where appropriate.
28. We will revise the current personnel management information system to include information on ethnic origin in relation to current staff, and to monitor access to training and promotion.

29. We will publish annually the results of monitoring and discuss this with any trade unions that represent our staff.

30. Staff Training on the duties imposed by the Act

- 12.2 We will put in place mandatory training for all staff to raise awareness of the requirements of the Act and the duties it imposes on the College as a funding body and as an Employer.
- 12.3 We will put in place training for staff involved in recruitment and selection, which will address issues relating to diversity and race equality.
- 12.4 We will ensure that, where appropriate, training will address the issues of diversity and equality.
- 12.5 The Race Equality Scheme will be included in the induction for new staff and our actions and commitment to diversity and race equality will be highlighted.

31. Section 2 Our Duties with regard to Students

- 32. 102 full-time students are currently enrolled at the College. We also promote community access to the College via our learning centre, and offer short course and distance learning opportunities. At present, 75 learners are enrolled on our supported distance-learning course, An Cùrsa Inntrigidh, with an additional 11 overseas learners about to embark on pilot studies at a distance.
- 33. We will continue to collect data on ethnicity at application, and at the point of selection for interview, where appropriate. We will also collect data on the ethnicity of current students and improve the procedures for collecting such data from learning centre, distance learning and short course students.
- 34. We will monitor the data collected on ethnic origin at application and appointment stages of student recruitment to identify any patterns of inequality, taking action where appropriate.
- 35. We will revise the current student information system to include information on ethnic origin in relation to current students, and to monitor any changes in the ethnic composition of our student population.
- 36. We will monitor areas of the student experience identified as being relevant to Race Relations.
- 37. We will publish annually the results of monitoring and discuss this with any associations that represent our students.

If you have a query about this scheme or any of our activities that relate to race relations please contact: Alison Dix, Chair of the Equal Opportunities' Group, on 01471 888 216 or email sm00ad@groupwise.uhi.ac.uk in the first instance. Our Scheme will be an evolving document that feeds into our activities. We would therefore welcome comments at any time.