

## 1. Introduction

**College:** Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

**College regional grouping:** Highlands and Islands

### Funding

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig will receive a total of £762,702 from the Scottish Funding Council for academic year 2020/21 to enhance and develop the rate of Gaelic language acquisition through further education for a total of 799 credits to be delivered.

The College's Higher Education provision is funded by the Scottish Government and SFC and distributed to SMO through the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and this is detailed within the UHI Tertiary Regional Outcome Agreement. This includes £146,305 strategic funding which the College receives in recognition of its unique mission and activities in the delivery of HE provision through the medium of Gaelic.

The College will also receive £1.18m provided to the Scottish Funding Council by the Scottish Government under the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and is expected to deliver on the outcomes and targets of the grant as specified by the Scottish Government.

It is also important to note that SMO currently shadows the NRPA to the extent that Lecturers' pay is harmonised and Support staff receive the same increases as Support staff across the sector. SMO is not, however, a signatory to the NRPA and the above grant excludes all but the lecturers' pay harmonisation element of NRPA.

This funding is on the condition that the College Board of Directors signs and commits to deliver the outcomes detailed below.

***(NB: Please note that the current Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic is having, and will continue to have a severe impact on the work of SMO in the current session and during the span of this Outcome Agreement.)***

**Priority Outcomes** to be delivered through the period AY 2020/21 with longer term aims to AY 2022/23

By the end of AY 2022/23 the College will deliver the following priority outcomes, which align with SMO's Strategic Plan 2017-2022:

There will be increased levels of usage and quality, status and appreciation of, and for, Gaelic language and culture in the life of the Scottish nation by:

1. increased access to language acquisition and opportunities for usage; supported corpus development; and raised status of the language; thereby contributing to the National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP) 2018-2023 *(Ref SMO Strategic Objective 1)*
2. delivering excellent research and knowledge transfer to support Gaelic language and culture *(Ref SMO Strategic Objective 2)*
3. having enabled more people to access Gaelic culture, enhanced its development across a wide spectrum of artistic activity and fostered a philosophy of innovation and enterprise leading to increased creativity in Gaelic-related culture in Scotland and internationally through the implementation of our arts strategy *(Ref SMO Strategic Objective 3)*
4. fostering education, culture, and economic and community activity, having implemented a major part of the Kilbeg development *(Ref SMO Strategic Objective 4)*
5. developing a thriving local, and a wider Gaelic economy, based on delivery of skills development, business creation, employer engagement and creating value from knowledge exchange, demonstrated locally by increased income, jobs created and sustained and other economic KPIs; regionally by collaborative working with UHI partners in delivery of Gaelic and Related Studies and through the UHI Gaelic Committee and the UHI Gaelic Plan; and nationally by collaborative working with other institutions. *(Ref SMO Strategic Objective 5).*

#### **Priority Outputs to be delivered in AY 2020/21**

**[As noted above, the current Coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic will have a significant impact on SMO activity and its ability to deliver these outputs.]**

In AY 2020/21 the College will deliver the following priority outputs:

- maintain the number of learners undertaking SMO FE programmes at 855 credits in AY 2020/21 (actual budgeted 799 credits);
- drive forward the delivery of relevant NGLP outcome areas related to Education, Communities and Workplace through activity with schools, adult learners, UHI partners, other public sector organisations regionally and nationally to increase coherence in learning provision;
- increase engagement with schools at local, regional and national level through the further development of information, advice and guidance services, clarifying the learner journey, and leading to increased student recruitment and awareness of tertiary Gaelic education and employment opportunities;
- maintain the number of Gaelic-language FE short courses provided by the College to provide more opportunities to gain fluency and increased access to learning;
- ensure the continued sustainability of the College by sustaining commercial income and increasing non-Gaelic speakers' exposure to Gaelic language and culture.

***[Covid restrictions have impacted on this for 20-21].***

- participate in submission to REF2021, as principal contributor to a UHI submission to Unit of Assessment 26.

**Signed by SMO**

*Gillian Rothach*

**Date 08/02/21**

**Signed by SFC**

**Date**

## 2. Context Statement

### Background

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) was founded in 1973. Located in the Sleat peninsula of the Isle of Skye, it is a unique institution fulfilling a number of distinct functions. It is a national and international centre of excellence for the development of the Gaelic language, culture and the arts. SMO is unique in the United Kingdom, offering access, advanced and degree level courses solely through the medium of Scottish Gaelic. In fulfilling its mission, the courses offered are relevant to the specific socio-economic and cultural needs of the Scottish Gàidhealtachd and of the wider Gaelic community.

It has an international reach and reputation as the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture and is a specialist Academic Partner within the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).

SMO was a key partner in the delivery of the NGLP 2012-17 and has been instrumental since its inception in the revitalisation of Gaelic language acquisition. The College is committed to working in partnership with the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and other partners, towards achieving the aims of the NGLP 2018-23. SMO is committed to supporting the Scottish Government's Faster Rate of Progress initiative for Gaelic, the outcomes of the recent Gaelic Ministerial Summits, and SMO has a role to play across a range of other strategic areas.

The College aims to support and promote the use of Gaelic in homes and communities through increased community engagement, promote the use of Gaelic by young people, Gaelic in traditional and new media and Gaelic in the arts, publishing and creative industries.

SMO has a key role to play in Post-school Gaelic Learning and Gaelic Teaching, and the College will continue to work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to ensure that its Gaelic courses are provided through UHI partners and through partner institutions across Scotland. The College is working closely with the Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig to develop opportunities for adult learners of Gaelic, recognising the important role that the College can play in supporting this key area of delivery.

In line with Scottish Government guidance and priorities, this OA describes an intensification of activity in key areas such as widening access, articulation, attainment and retention, gender, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), skills, innovation and apprenticeships.

SMO is actively involved in creating more opportunities for communities and networks of Gaelic speakers to use Gaelic and increasing access to the language in community activities and services. The College works closely with Local Authorities and other community planning partners to take forward locality plans, providing advice and support in the delivery of relevant outcomes as well as supporting local authorities in the delivery of their Gaelic Language Plans.

The College also recognises the importance of the use of Gaelic in the workplace and continues to work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to create a positive attitude to Gaelic through awareness-raising and increasing opportunities for staff to learn Gaelic and develop their language skills. The College continues to build on its community links and work in partnership with local, regional and national bodies to increase the number of learning opportunities created in our communities.

The College is actively involved in the Gaelic Arts and Media and will continue to develop activities in this important area in partnership with Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, MG Alba and Creative Scotland to raise awareness of the language, supporting opportunities to showcase the Gaelic language and extending participation in the arts and media to support Gaelic language learning.

This Outcome Agreement, compiled in association with the Scottish Funding Council, encapsulates the many facets of the College's mission and sets out what SMO's specific objectives will be in each sphere of activity in AY 2020/21 and the Priority Outcomes to be delivered by the end of AY 2022/23.

### **National and International Context**

The College's specialist role as a provider of Gaelic-medium education has been recognised by successive Scottish Governments and its status as the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture has been acknowledged with the creation of a direct funding mechanism. This status means that the College has been and is an important player in the delivery and achievement of the targets set out in the NGLP, and the College has focused much of its educational development on those targets.

Since its inception, the College has adopted an international outlook and has established a range of links with the wider Gaelic diaspora. It has 5 MOUs with universities in Canada and Ireland and continues to develop links with a wide range of colleges and universities overseas. The College has recently established closer links with the Gaelic College, in St. Anns, Cape Breton. SMO will build on these links to create further opportunities to enhance the Gaelic language and culture and further develop its international impact. In 2017, the College launched its Alumni Association *Caidreamh an t-Sabhail*, with the aim of increasing engagement with SMO alumni all over the world, and this work will continue over the next three years.

### **Regional Context**

SMO contributes to regional outcomes through strategic partnerships with other colleges and within UHI. The College works with partner Colleges to further develop access to Gaelic learning opportunities across the region and has close links with The Highland Council, with which it has a Memorandum of Understanding to work in partnership to deliver a wide range of projects and initiatives, and with HIE, which has played a significant part in the development of the College campus and projects. The College is a member of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) West Highland and sees this a vital forum for taking forward its priorities in relation to this important area of operation.

The College is constantly developing its links with communities in other parts of the Highlands and Islands, most notably with the Staffin area of north Skye at Flodigarry, and with the Islay community, by working closely with Ionad Chaluim Chille Ìle (ICCI) to create Gaelic learning opportunities. SMO also has links with the community of Gairloch through the Gairloch Heritage Museum, with which it has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The College is also building links with the Uist

community through Taigh Chearsabhair Arts Centre which entered into an MOU with SMO in 2017, and with Comunn Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath (CEUT) which is working towards the establishment of a Gaelic Heritage Centre at Carinish, based at the former Sgoil Chàirinis.

#### **Local Context**

The College has very good links with the local community and has representation on bodies such as Seall Arts, Sleat Community Trust, and Sleat Renewables. Like a number of other local organisations, Seall Arts uses the College as an award-winning venue for its many events and runs a series of weekly ceilidhs during the summer to coincide with the College's short courses in July and August. Gaelic awareness sessions and Gaelic language classes are delivered on a regular basis for the benefit of the local community and are usually very well attended.

### **3. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig – Strategic Priorities 2017-2022**

#### **Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Strategic Plan 2017-2022**

The College links its Outcome Agreement for 2020/21 - 2022/23 to its aims and objectives as outlined in its Strategic Plan for 2017-2022, and describes how we will progress the delivery of these objectives, based on the shared values and wider aims of the College.

#### **Strategic Objective 1 - Learning and Teaching**

Promoting the College as a national and international centre of excellence by delivering education at the highest level and increasing student numbers on courses on campus, via distance learning and on short courses. We will do this in conjunction with partners such as the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) by developing the College's curriculum and by creating new learning opportunities of the highest quality. *(Linked to Priority Outcome 1)*

#### **Strategic Objective 2 - Research, Scholarship and Knowledge Transfer**

Raising the College's profile as a national and international centre of excellence by conducting the highest levels of research and scholarship and utilising knowledge gained from that research creatively in order to build upon development opportunities. *(Linked to Priority Outcome 2)*

#### **Strategic Objective 3 - Cultural, Creative and Community Development**

Raising the College's standing as a national and international centre of excellence by creating attractive projects and ventures with the Gaelic community through language and work skills development, through development of the opportunities available for co-operation and through the strengthening of links between education and the community. *(Linked to Priority Outcome 3)*

#### **Strategic Objective 4 - Estates and Services**

Raising the College's standing as a national and international centre of excellence by creating a Gaelic environment where Gaelic is established as the language of everyday use on campus and where facilities and buildings, services and accommodation maintain and support that philosophy. *(Linked to Priority Outcome 4)*

#### **Strategic Objective 5 - Sustainability and Governance**

Raising the College's standing as a national and international centre of excellence by contributing to infrastructure and governance structures that are robust and sustainable and that adhere to the philosophy of the College. *(Linked to Priority Outcome 5)*

### **4. The Learner**

**Scottish Government strategic priority:** *To provide the best student experience, seamlessly connected for learners of all backgrounds.*

**SFC core objective:** *To invest in education that is accessible to learners from all backgrounds, gives a high-quality learning experience, supports them to succeed in their studies, and equips them to flourish in employment, further study, and fulfilling lives.*

### **Access and Learning**

The College is currently developing its Access and Inclusion Strategy through its Safeguarding Group and the new strategy will be published in 2021. Priority Outcomes related to Access and Inclusion to be delivered through the period AY 2020/21 to AY 2022/23 include:

- increased access to language acquisition and opportunities for usage and increasing the number of learners undertaking SMO FE programmes
- enabling more people to access Gaelic culture, through the development of a new arts strategy
- increased activity with schools, adult learners, UHI partners, other organisations regionally and nationally to increase coherence in learning provision, specifically working with the BBC and other bodies on the development of Speak Gaelic.
- increase the number and location of Gaelic-language FE short courses provided by the College to provide more opportunities to gain fluency and increased access to learning
- continue the delivery of Seachdain nan Teaghlach (Family Learning Week) in partnership with local authorities through Community Learning and Development (CLAD)
- establish a scholarship scheme to support students from under-represented groups.

### **Areas of multiple deprivation (Fair Access and Transitions)**

As a National Centre, SMO recruits students from across Scotland and further afield and so delineated areas of deprivation are not distinct targets for the College. Recognising the changing demographic of Gaelic speakers, it is important to the College that it ensures equality of access and inclusion. However, in common with other island and remote rural locations, it is recognised that there are fewer public services where the College is located, that the rural cost of living is higher than urban living, and that these can cause barriers to access. Our supported distance learning provision is geared towards both reducing barriers to access for rural students and increasing access for students throughout Scotland and beyond to Gaelic language learning. This creates opportunities for progression into Further and Higher Education.

The College looks to increase participation from the most deprived areas, where possible. However, it is important to recognise that there are significant challenges in terms of providing access to Gaelic language learning opportunities, particularly in remote rural areas and that the College has utilised a range of strategies, including scholarships, to overcome these challenges. The College will continue to develop programmes which are appropriate to its learner community and to investigate the most appropriate methods of delivery of these programmes. It will also seek to establish a scholarship scheme to support learners from deprived areas.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing (Quality, learning, teaching and participation)**

Mental health is one of the most challenging public health issues of our time. Approximately one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year, and around three quarters of adults with mental illness first experience symptoms before the age of 25. The Institute for Public Policy Research has found that *'over the past five years, 94% of universities have experienced a sharp increase in the number of people trying to access support services, with some institutions noticing a threefold increase'* (BBC, 2018).

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is acutely aware of the need to address this issue and to provide every possible support to students and staff suffering mental health issues. It has recently expanded its Counselling Service, with the appointment of a new member of staff. It has adopted the UHI Mental Health Strategy 2019-22 and has produced its first Mental Health Strategy for SMO staff and students, which will be launched in the current session.

SMO has also recently subscribed to The Big White Wall (BWW) for students and staff. The BWW is a multi-award winning digital mental health and wellbeing service, offering safe, anonymous online support available 24/7. It offers a range of therapeutic pathways, including peer and professional support and creative self-expression.

### **Student Safety (Quality, learning, teaching and participation)**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig works closely with its staff and with *Comunn nan Oileanach*, its Student Association to ensure that there is a common understanding of acceptable behaviours and that effective mechanisms are in place to respond to allegations of harassment or behaviours that do

not meet the values of the institution. In 2020, this included the agreement of a Covid-19 disciplinary procedure for breaches in Covid-19 rules.

#### **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

The College is aware of its obligations under this important Convention and will continue to raise awareness amongst staff regarding the rights of the child. During the period of this Outcome Agreement, the College will complete an audit of all relevant policies and procedures to ensure that they are consistent with the requirements of the Convention.

#### **Cyber Resilience**

The College is aware of the need for cyber resilience and is currently working with UHI partners to gain accreditation under the Scottish Government's Cyber Resilience Strategy.

#### **Gender-based Violence (GBV)**

The College is aware of the need to tackle gender-based violence on campus and will encourage staff and students to report unacceptable behaviour. We note the publication by the Scottish Government of guidance for colleges and universities to tackle GBV and have incorporated this guidance into our policies and procedures, as appropriate. The College has recently translated and published a bilingual guidance note on GBV with a list of resources for students and staff who may be affected by GBV.

#### **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has worked hard to ensure the safety of its students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is making every effort to ensure their well-being over the duration of the pandemic and the following period, in partnership with local, regional and national agencies. This work continues in 2021 through the College's Buidheann Covid (*Covid Committee*), chaired by the Principal and including student representation through the Chair of Comann nan Oileanach (*The Student Association*), which has been developing additional measures to support student engagement and staff and student wellbeing. This committee has developed extensive Covid policies and procedures for the safe functioning of life on campus as well as working from home. The committee meets weekly to process changes in Covid requirements, monitor compliance and wellbeing support and communicating with students on Covid matters.

#### **The Student Voice (Quality, learning, teaching and participation)**

SMO is committed to working with all students, either as individuals and/or as groups, to help them develop the skills and confidence to be actively involved in the organisation of their own learning and student experience, regardless of their mode of study, age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexuality or transgender status. The College's independent student association, Comann nan Oileanach SMO (CnO), that operates entirely in Gaelic, is actively engaged in the governance of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and is consulted on draft policies and key educational and strategic developments.

The College Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and this Outcome Agreement have been developed in consultation with learners with a view to ensuring that they are actively engaged in enhancing their own learning and in the work and life of the College. Student representatives are actively participating in the development of our new Strategic Plan. All students are actively encouraged and supported to be involved in student engagement activities to improve quality processes in a manner and at a level that is appropriate to them.



The College has an active Student Consultative Committee / Comataidh Co-chomhairleachaidh nan Oileanach, which meets on a regular basis. There are regular consultative sessions with students and staff to develop collaborative actions for recruitment and promotion, and for improvements to student life at SMO. Students have been involved in our virtual open-week facebook sessions at the end of 2020, and will be involved in this year's Latha nan Tagraichean which is being held online in May 2021.

The College will continue to provide student engagement opportunities, which ensure equality of access for our student community, both collectively and as individuals.

This includes:

- student representation on the College Board of Directors and other committees, including the Covid Committee
- support for Comann nan Oileanach (*The Student Association*)
- course representation
- cross College Student Voice
- online student surveys

Further to SMO's appointment of an alumni Board Member in 2020, the College is now in the process of recruiting an Alumni Officer, a development which will create further opportunities for recent graduates to feed into College activity..

The College will continue to deliver its Learner Engagement Policy and will renew its Learner Engagement Action Plan in the coming session, with the aim of:

- further enhancing learner engagement and responding to learner needs
- continuing to work with SPARQS to ensure effective student representation at all levels. We conducted one training session in the past session for student representatives and will deliver further training opportunities in the coming session
- continuing to work with HISA (Highlands and Islands Student Association) to facilitate opportunities for Gaelic speakers in other Academic Partners to participate in Gaelic medium CnO events and to build working relationships with student groups which support the objectives of CnO
- working with regional and national partners to identify best practice and to further develop learner engagement.

### **Equalities and inclusion.**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was established in order to address a significant inequality within Scottish society – the complete lack of opportunity to study at FE/HE level through the medium of Gaelic at that time. It is, therefore, acutely aware of the need to be alert to, and to provide for, the needs of learners from different protected characteristic groups. Equalities is key to all College activities and participation from the different protected characteristic groups is monitored and analysed to identify strategies, where appropriate, to engage further with learners from these groups.

In line with the Public Sector Equalities Duty, the College published its Equality Report in April 2013. It reported on progress made in achieving its Equality Outcomes by 30 April 2015 and renewed its Equality Outcomes in April 2017. The College also published a report on progress

against its Equality Outcomes in April 2020.

The College has worked closely with Advance HE, formerly the Equalities Challenge Unit (ECU), to further raise awareness of Equalities issues. The College continues to promote Equalities across its range of activities and is further developing its curriculum, its learning and teaching strategies, learning resources and marketing materials to reflect this commitment.

The College published its Gender Action Plan in July 2017, recognising that there is a gender imbalance in that males are under-represented in the majority of its programmes, and is looking to develop ways to encourage males to enrol on GME programmes. This has included the development of case studies for My World of Work, in conjunction with SDS, to highlight potential career opportunities for male Gaelic speakers. It is also hoped that the Foundation Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media, delivered from September 2019, will attract males onto College programmes. The College will publish a review of progress on its GAP objectives in July 2021.

The College will take every opportunity to celebrate this commitment to Equalities and to build on its achievements in this area.

The College is aware of the positive nature of Equality duties and is committed to being proactive in producing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) which thoroughly analyse its practices and establishes whether practices affect different groups in different ways.

This is demonstrated, for example, by its Equality Outcomes 2 and 3, namely:

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; and
3. All students with relevant protected characteristics have equality of opportunity to participate in college life and achieve positive outcomes.

The College will continue to explore ways to meet the needs of vulnerable learners and is aware of its responsibilities with regard to supporting care experienced learners.

The College's commitment to achieving these Equality Outcomes is also evidenced within its Strategic Plan and will inform its strategic thinking during the span of this OA. The College has also carried out an EIA of this Outcome Agreement.

### **Mainstreaming Report**

The College has updated and published its Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes, available [http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/files/PDFs/Equalities\\_Mainstreaming\\_Report\\_2019\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/files/PDFs/Equalities_Mainstreaming_Report_2019_FINAL.pdf) here:

### **Care-experienced students**

The College is a Corporate Parent and its Corporate Parenting Action Plan is available here: [http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/files/PDFs/P%C3%A0rantachadh\\_Corporra\\_Plana\\_\(b\).pdf](http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/files/PDFs/P%C3%A0rantachadh_Corporra_Plana_(b).pdf)

### **Veterans**

The College will sign the Armed Forces Covenant and will seek to identify opportunities for those veterans who wish to engage with Gaelic educational opportunities.

### **Carers and Estranged Students**

The College is committed to supporting estranged students and will sign the Stand Alone pledge

to demonstrate this commitment.

## 5. THE SYSTEM

**Scottish Government Strategic Priority:** *To provide high quality learning in a system where institutions work in partnership and demonstrate the highest standards of governance and financial accountability.*

**SFC Core objective:** *To ensure colleges, universities and specialist institutions form part of a successful, world-leading, coherent and sustainable system of education that responds effectively to the future needs of learners and the skills needs of the economy and society, enhances our rich cultural life, and strengthens Scotland's international connections.*

### Skills alignment

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's objective is to increase the range of programmes at FE level in line with local and regional priorities and to continue to widen access to our learning opportunities as described in the Scottish Government's Post-16 priorities to *"improve life chances for young people, support economic growth and increase the number of jobs...so that more people are able to access the right learning for them, increasing their qualifications and leading them into work"*.

### Current provision

The College's Further Education provision currently consists of the supported distance learning programme An Cùrsa Inntrigidh, the FA in Social Services – Children and Young People, the FA in Creative and Digital Media, and a programme of short courses delivered mainly during the Easter and Summer breaks.

### Re-alignment of provision

The College will further build on An Cùrsa Inntrigidh as a learning model for communities and schools, exploring opportunities being created by emerging technologies and sharing best practice. The need has been recognised for a structured course for face-to-face delivery, taken forward in the current session in partnership with LearnGaelic, <https://www.learnghaelic.scot/> through the initiative Speak Gaelic, which will establish a national curriculum for Gaelic Learners.. SMO is the lead academic partner in this initiative, and is authoring the curriculum which underpins the media-rich content of the programme.

Building on recommendations made in the College's Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP), SMO has been working in partnership with Education Scotland to further develop CPD opportunities for teachers working in Gaelic Medium Education (GME). This articulates with and complements existing development pathways for teachers such as STREAP and GiFT. The College has also, in collaboration with partners, explored opportunities to meet the national demand for teacher education across the UHI network and beyond, with the BA(Hons) Gaelic and Education which was delivered for the first time in 2017/18. The College is also the responsible partner for the PGDE (Gaelic Medium) within UHI.

### Current provision

There are ten levels of language courses available through the College's Short Courses

Programme, increasing choice for learners. A significant development has been the provision of tailor-made courses and other short courses in communities such as Flodigarry in North West Skye. The learner support provided for our distance learning programmes has been recognised as an example of best practice and continues to be a major strength and is highly valued by learners.

The College is exploring ways to increase vocational provision for schools, recognising the increased need for suitably qualified young people across a range of professions such as early learning and childcare, GME, Gaelic development and Gaelic media. This provision has been further extended with the delivery of the FA in Social Services: Children and Young People from AY 2018/19, and the FA in Creative and Digital Media from AY 2019/20. It is also planned to take forward the development of the SVQ3 in Childcare through the medium of Gaelic.

The College will seek to further re-align provision by:

- taking forward the development and delivery of ELC programmes as described above, in collaboration with UHI partner Colleges, SQA, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Scottish Government
- exploring potential demand for a Business Administration programme delivered through the medium of Gaelic in line with the perceived changing needs of employers and building on labour market intelligence
- developing and delivering bridging provision in Gaelic language for learners progressing from SCQF level 6 to 7, in order to develop language competences and improve progression opportunities

### **How the College delivers Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)**

The College is a member of DYW West Highland and sees this as an invaluable forum in further developing vocational provision, building on programmes already being delivered in media, teaching, Gaelic development, language and community planning. It is actively exploring opportunities to work more closely with young people to prepare them for the world of work. This activity is also being taken forward in partnership with SDS, with which the College has formed a close working relationship, to develop relevant qualifications, such as the Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services: Children and Young People and the FA in Creative and Digital Media.

The College is committed to working in partnership with schools, with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, with SDS and with local authorities to provide increased access to a range of Gaelic medium learning opportunities. This will be carried out utilising data collated from a wide range of sources to make informed judgements as to the way ahead. It will also be carried out in line with the objectives of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), such as those outlined in *Preparing Young People For the World of Work*, and *Schools and Colleges Working in Partnership - Recommendation 6* - "... supporting the development of Scotland's young workforce through the enhancement of vocational education pathways."

This will allow a more focussed targeted approach to this activity which will have maximum impact across the sector. It will also build upon work being taken forward at Subject Network and Faculty level within UHI to more closely liaise with schools across the region.

The College will continue to work with the Scottish Government and other partners to support the development of E-schools, initial discussions have taken place with e-Sgoil, <http://www.e-sgoil.com> recognising the potential for the College to provide CPD and other training and learning opportunities. This will include support for teachers and classroom assistants and utilise College expertise in distance learning and the development of digital skills within the College workforce.

#### **Public Health - Alignment to local authority Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning Partnerships**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig works closely with local community planning partnerships to identify and implement local public health priorities as expressed in Single Outcome Agreements. The College will continue to take this work forward during the term of this Outcome Agreement – particularly in relation to working with Skye, Ross and Cromarty Community Planning Partnership. It will also further develop links with other CPPs as it extends provision to other communities across Scotland. As outlined above, the College recognises the opportunities arising from the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and will work closely with Local Authorities and other community planning partners to take forward locality plans, providing advice and support in the delivery of relevant outcomes as well as supporting local authorities in the delivery of their Gaelic Language Plans.

#### **Climate change emergency**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has recognised the Climate change emergency and has been involved in a range of awareness-raising events involving staff and students over the past session. An environmental day, conceived through Freshers' week, was held in the current session and resulted in an engaging event which brought staff and students (from different countries) together to consider environmental issues. This was seen as being highly effective practice by Education Scotland during its recent Progress Visit at SMO.

The work to reduce the College's carbon footprint continues. In line with other public bodies, the College has published a Carbon Management Plan which identifies a range of measures to reduce its Gross Carbon Footprint. (Target for 19/20 - 355tns) The College's carbon emissions for the year 2018-19 were compiled as part of its annual Climate Change reporting to the Scottish Government and submitted in November 2019. The target emissions of 355tns is expected to have been met.

#### **Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland**

*"The Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland looks to upskill and reskill the rural workforce through the identification and provision of accessible education and skills provision to secure, sustain and progress individuals in their careers while contributing to the skills needs of rural businesses."*

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's provision is very much aligned with the principles and priorities of the Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland. A significant number of learners studying at FE level are enrolled on An Cùrsa Inntigidh, our supported distance learning programme and are, therefore, able to study from home. The College has seen an increase in the numbers of learners studying at a distance both at FE and HE levels and it is envisaged that this market will continue to grow over

the duration of the OA.

Learners have the opportunity to attend weekend schools at the College to reinforce their learning but the College's location within a rural area can, at times, be a barrier to attendance at these, particularly during the winter months when travel by public transport can be problematic. The College is actively involved in a range of initiatives to improve transport facilities within the area, including an air service to the Isle of Skye, an improved Winter ferry service between Mallaig and Armadale and a more consistent and fit for purpose Summer ferry service.

### Quality Reporting

In 2017, the College published its first Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP), for 2016/17, which was endorsed by Education Scotland. The report for 2017/18 available at <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=5519> summarised progress against targets identified in that report and identified further targets for AY 2018/19 and beyond. It also summarised progress against activities identified for AY 2017/18 in the College's Outcome Agreement with SFC. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's Progress Visit by Education Scotland in March 2020 confirmed that the College has made satisfactory progress towards the achievement of targets identified in its EREP.

SMO continues to provide a high-quality learning experience, supported by well-established quality assurance systems and procedures. Active engagement by staff in quality processes continues to contribute to the development of a quality culture, with action points being fed into internal College committees and to external bodies as appropriate. The College will continue to build on this track record through continuous enhancement and improvement, particularly in the systematic review of student support services, engagement with the learner and representation of the learner in quality enhancement processes. The College is aware of the Scottish Government's drive towards professional registration of lecturers and will work closely with the GTCS to take this forward.

Existing learning facilities for students are of a high standard and are further enhanced by the new College campus development. The College has a high level of ICT resource and access to ICT facilities. It also has a team of highly qualified and committed staff which are key to its success, and the College believes in supporting its staff through its CPD programme and in sharing best practice, particularly in the development of skills in immersion teaching methodologies, language intensive pedagogies and the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

The college will explore the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Professional Standards for lecturers, to support staff reflection on learning and teaching and to inform future planning of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities.

### Research and Innovation

**Scottish Government strategic priority:** *To support Scotland's global reputation as a Science and Research Nation synonymous with high quality teaching, research, knowledge exchange and innovation.*

**SFC Core Objective:** *To invest in excellent research and innovation that adds to current knowledge, delivers economic and societal value, enhances Scotland's international reputation and attractiveness, and make the world around us prosper, healthier and more sustainable.*

**Effective knowledge exchange and innovation (Heritage Act Outcome 4: Deliver excellent research and knowledge transfer to support Gaelic language and culture)**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is committed to building on the positive attitude to the language across Scotland to providing more opportunities to engage with, learn and use the language, in partnership with UHI colleges and others, such as Newbattle Abbey College, across Scotland. These opportunities will be provided through delivery of learning, increasing research and creating and sustaining employment opportunities where Gaelic is desirable or essential. This work will be informed by the Ekosgen Report, as referred to above. We will increase our understanding of the different Gaelic communities' aspirations, from learners of the language to those seeking CPD opportunities to increase skills and employability by working closely with SDS, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and other relevant agencies.

The College has also been successful in gaining support under SFCs College Innovation Accelerator Fund (CIAF) and will identify relevant activities to more closely align its provision with the needs of employers and SMEs in particular. This work will be carried out in line with the College's EHRIA commitments and in compliance with all legislative requirements. The engagement is based on a partnership approach, ensuring that regional partners, such as Lews Castle College, and others, such as the universities with which SMO has Memoranda of Understanding, are appropriately engaged with developments in vocational and professional provision.

The College will continue to work with local authorities, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Education Scotland, SDS, SQA, and other partners, to further develop its provision to more closely match the fast changing needs of employers and the wider Gaelic community on a national basis. The College recognises that employer needs in relation to Gaelic are diverse, ranging from Childcare to Media, and that we need to work closely in partnership with employer groups when developing and designing new provision. This work has been evidenced in the past, for example, with the development of the PDA Diploma in Gaelic Media, and this model will be further developed for new course provision.

This work will be taken forward based on Labour Market Intelligence and Census Data referred to above. It will also be developed with reference to the principles and objectives of DYW as outlined above in partnership with the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and SDS.

The College also intends to create and operate a new Cultural Heritage Resource and Knowledge Exchange Centre at Arainn Ostaig, utilising advance digital technologies e.g. Augmented Virtual Reality (AVR) for the benefit of educational research and scholarship and as a national and international cultural heritage resource.

### **The Gaelic Community**

The 2011 Census showed that there had been a slower decline in the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland since the previous Census conducted in 2001. Just over one per cent (1.1 per cent or 58,000 people) of the population aged 3 and over in Scotland was able to speak Gaelic, a slight fall from 1.2 per cent (59,000) in 2001. *(See Annex 1 for a linguistic map of the UK which includes data on Gaelic from the 2011 census).* There were decreases in the proportion of people able to speak Gaelic in all age groups apart from those aged under 20 years which showed a 0.1 percentage point increase<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Census 2011: Release 2A

The Census results also showed that a higher proportion of Gaelic speakers than previously was now based outwith the traditional Gaelic speaking communities within the Highlands and Islands – some 47% of Gaelic speakers are now based in the “rest of Scotland” as defined by Census statistics.

### **Population Density**

As indicated above, the Gaelic community is dispersed across Scotland, with almost half of all Gaelic speakers now based outwith the traditional Gaelic communities. The College is committed to working with all Gaelic speakers, and to those wishing to learn and be involved in the development of the language, with the aim of reversing the decline in the number of speakers. The College is particularly aware of the growing numbers of Gaelic learners and the need to increase those numbers further in line with the aims of the NGLP.

### **Economic/employer profile**

In the course of recruitment activities and visits to schools, it is clear that there is significant interest/demand for Gaelic language learning programmes in general, with a growing interest in vocational programmes. Taking cognisance of the HIE employer engagement strategy and in consultation with employers and stakeholders, particularly those involved with Gaelic development, such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comunn na Gàidhlig and HIE, it is clear that there is demand for bespoke Gaelic language programmes, for Gaelic Medium teachers for example, as well as subject areas related to Gaelic planning and policy and community development. Employers are closely involved in the development of programmes – this has been particularly evident in relation to the development of media-related provision, where the programme development team has included representatives from the BBC and MG ALBA, as well as independent production companies.

### **Economic Impact**

As a National Centre, SMO acts as a significant economic driver across a wide range of national activity particularly in the areas of education, training and skills and in the creative and cultural industries. The Centre currently accounts for approximately £4 million of annual investment into the Scottish economy. SMO’s work is very much aligned to the Scottish Government’s strategy for the development of the language and culture and to ensuring that the supporting network of business enterprise and innovation and economic and cultural activity is in place to meet the growing demands of the national Scottish language community. The College’s work contributes to HIE’s priorities in terms of creating regionally distinctive opportunities and strengthening communities.

Sabhal Mor Ostaig continues to act a major ‘stimulus’ for inward investment in the area through the continuing development of Kilbeg Village, of which Phase 2 with all the associated services and infrastructure, is about to commence. This will bring further inward investment to the area of more than £5million and will provide an initial 18 new units of ‘affordable housing’, with more to follow shortly and all achieved through an innovative and creative investment partnership featuring both public and private investors, all initiated, brokered and facilitated, by SMO.

The new Kilbeg Village is an exemplar of sustainable rural development, creating an economically active community with Gaelic language ‘at its heart’. Additionally, SMO is also working in partnership with Sleat Community Trust, Sports Scotland, Highland Council, Highlife Highland and Highland Health Board, to deliver badly needed Sports, Health, Fitness, Recreation and Well-being facilities for our students and staff and for the local and visitor community alike. This exemplifies the extent to which Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has a critical socio-economic impact in the area and of an educational



institution truly 'embedded' in the life and well-being of the community.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is the only institution in Scotland which delivers this wide and holistic range of educational and supporting economic and cultural activity through the medium of Gaelic.

College provision is informed by Regional Skills Assessments, particularly in relation to Gaelic language and the development of vocational skills in Gaelic. College provision also contributes to implementing aspects of Skills Development Scotland's Skills Investment Plan for Tourism2, particularly in relation to developing assets such as Gaelic heritage, culture and the Arts, and raising the skills levels of those involved in the industry.

### **Employer Engagement**

The College works closely with employers across a range of sectors within the Scottish economy. SMO is also aware that more specific data on first destinations is required to inform programme development and more closely align College provision with the needs of employers. The College has identified this as an action within this OA. The College has also been successful in gaining support under SFCs College Innovation Accelerator Fund (CIAF) and will identify relevant activities to more closely align its provision with the needs of employers and SMEs in particular. This work will be carried out in line with the College's EHRIA commitments and in compliance with all legislative requirements. The engagement is based on a partnership approach, ensuring that regional partners, such as Lews Castle College, and others, such as the universities with which SMO has Memoranda of Understanding, are appropriately engaged with developments in vocational and professional provision.

The College will continue to work with local authorities, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Education Scotland, SDS, SQA, and other partners, to further develop its provision to more closely match the fast changing needs of employers and the wider Gaelic community on a national basis. The College recognises that employer needs in relation to Gaelic are diverse, ranging from Childcare to Media, and that we need to work closely in partnership with employer groups when developing and designing new provision. This work has been evidenced in the past, for example, with the development of the PDA Diploma in Gaelic Media, and this model will be further developed for new course provision.

This work will be taken forward based on Labour Market Intelligence and Census Data referred to above. It will also be developed with reference to the principles and objectives of DYW as outlined above in partnership with the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and SDS.

### **Partnerships**

As the national and international Centre of Excellence for Gaelic language and culture, the College has a strong track record in delivering regional and national priorities and is a key partner in delivering a wide range of activities contributing to the NGLP.

The College works with a wide range of partner institutions – including Newbattle Abbey College and other HEIs in developing learner pathways and Gaelic Immersion experiences. The College has an MOU with the University of Edinburgh for the delivery of an immersion year for Year 3 students on the 5 year MA Gaelic and Primary Education (Learners). SMO offers a bespoke short course for Newbattle Abbey College students and will continue to explore possible partnerships with other HEIs to develop Gaelic learner pathways.

SMO works in partnership with Argyll College, Lews Castle College and other UHI partners in the

delivery of the Gaelic pathway of the PGDE. This partnership includes Inverness College, Perth College and Moray College. Both West Highland College and SMO have recently been approved as Hosting Academic Partners (HAPs) for the PGDE Gaelic pathway. The College has also worked closely with colleagues at Inverness College and other UHI partners to develop a Gaelic pathway for ELC which will commence delivery in September 2020.

### **Economic Recovery**

SMO's commercial activity, which is dependent on being able to utilise the campus for conferencing, concerts and other events, accommodation for Short Course users and other accommodation, provision has been badly hit by Covid. 2019/20 saw losses from cancellations from Easter and all through the Summer, and it is expected that there will still be considerable impact through 2021. Short Courses were delivered online through the summer of 2019, and will also be online for Easter 2020. We are planning to develop year-round Short Courses, alongside the campus-based courses post-Covid. SMO has plans in place if it is possible to be open to deliver courses and events in socially distanced and Covid-safe manner this summer. Also a new Hospitality strategy will be developed in 2021 to look at how to best capitalise on campus usage post-Covid, whilst still providing an immersive language environment for our campus-based and visiting students.