

Equality Impact Assessment

Title	The Ardnamurchan Transitions Project 2025
Author	Hannah Cobb
Date of Assessment	16 July 2025
Faculty	Humanities
School	SALC
What are you completing this EIA for?	Academic Programme
Describe the Project	<p>The Ardnamurchan Transitions Project (henceforth ATP) is a multiperiod landscape archaeology project and archaeological field school which takes place on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula, Highland region, on the West Coast of Scotland. The project is directed by Hannah Cobb (University of Manchester), Oliver Harris (University of Leicester) and Phil Richardson (Archaeology Scotland). The project is staffed by around 12 volunteers each year who work throughout the archaeological sector and it trains around 20 undergraduate students each year from the Universities of Manchester and Leicester. It also works with community volunteers from the local community through Archaeology Scotland's work.</p> <p>The project aims to provide comprehensive archaeological field skills training to all attendees whilst also investigating the past occupation of the Ardnamurchan peninsula.</p> <p>ATP is a residential project. Students and staff camp around and occupy a house within Swordle Bay, where they cook, eat, and socialise together outside of digging hours.</p>

Have you engaged or consulted with anyone on this project?	Other (please state below)
Please tell us who you engaged with and any information that was obtained that relates to how inclusive your project is.	We have engaged with a variety of EDI bodies in archaeology to ensure that our project reaches the highest standards in inclusion and equity. These include the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists EDI group, the European Society for Black and Allied Archaeologists, the Enabled Archaeology Foundation, Queer Archaeology, the Black Trowel Collective and archaeology outreach charities such as the Council for British Archaeology and Archaeology Scotland. Insights and training from these various bodies have enabled us to adapt and develop our practice over time.
Is there a negative impact on any characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability including non-visible disabilities • Gender Reassignment • Neurodivergence • Pregnancy & Maternity • Race • Sexuality • Socio-Economic Impact • Religion & Belief incl no belief • Care-Experienced Students • Sex
Impact Rating	2. Some negative impact

<p>What are the negative impacts</p>	<p>There are significant and well documented issues with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in archaeology. At their most simplistic, studies of disciplinary demographics, such as Profiling the Profession (Aitchison et al 2021 but also see all prior versions of this) and studies that look at student diversity demographics specifically (Cobb 2015 and see summary in Cobb and Croucher 2020) demonstrate that archaeology falls significantly short of the national picture in terms of numbers of people identifying with protected characteristics, and is dominated by white, cis-gendered, non disabled people, with higher numbers of men in senior leadership roles. For each protected characteristic, and their intersections, there are extensive publications outlining this, starting with Conkey and Spector’s ground breaking paper on gender and archaeology in 1984, and Joan Gero’s 1985 and 1989 papers about archaeology and the “Women at Home ideology” and extending to the present day with papers such as Voss 2021a and 2021b which provide detailed analyses of sexual harassment in archaeology. Over the last forty years Black feminist archaeologists, enabled archaeologists, queer archaeologists, indigenous archaeologists and many more have highlighted how inequality, harassment and discrimination deeply impact their archaeological careers, and most emphasise the intersectional nature of this. Therefore the following list is a brief summary but readers should note the intersecting nature of negative impacts and the fact that these may be highly individualised.</p> <p>Age: Age-related impairments may make the physicality of some fieldwork activities challenging. Camping and living/socialising communally in a single space may also be challenging.</p>
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Disability (including non-visible disabilities, including neurodiversity): For people with physical disabilities the physicality of some fieldwork activities may be challenging in different ways depending on disability. Camping, living/socialising communally in a single space, geographical isolation and exacerbating factors such as the weather may also be challenging, especially for those with mental health issues or who are neurodivergent.

Gender Reassignment: Camping and working in sweaty or rainy conditions may be challenging for anyone applying hormone gels. Anyone binding parts of their bodies may find this makes physical activities harder. Anyone recovering from operations may struggle with the physicality of some manual fieldwork processes and camping.

Religion and belief: The rhythms of the working day and working week, communal living and dining, socialising with alcohol, and the presence of different animals may all impact different faiths in different negative ways, from interrupting routines of worship and cleanliness difficult to causing a sense of exclusion.

Race: Archaeology is a predominantly white profession (in 2021 97% of professional archaeologists were white) and archaeologists of colour have noted that everything from the lack of positive role models through to racial microaggressions and overt racism can be regular experiences.

Socio-economic impact: Fieldwork requires having certain kit (trowel, waterproofs, appropriate footwear) which can be expensive. Some personal expenses may be required for socialising, travel and days off also incurring further costs.

Care experienced students: Care experienced students who have struggled with routine may find learning new routines difficult. They may struggle when asked to give next of kin for medical forms. If estranged they may worry about their location being made available on social media.

Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnant and nursing mothers may find the physicality of some fieldwork activities challenging in different ways depending on stage of pregnancy or post-partum. Camping, living/socialising communally in a single space, and factors such as the weather may also be challenging, especially for those with infants who are breast feeding or needing to express milk.

Sexuality: Predominance of heteronormativity in interpretations of the past and homophobic behaviour in the present can all be extremely exclusionary.

Sex: Menstruating bodies need access to appropriate lavatory and hygienic facilities throughout the working day, which can be challenging if the project is working across the landscape e.g. on field survey or geophysics.

	<p>This is a brief summary but readers are directed to Cobb and Croucher 2020 for a summary of the literature, and Cobb and Crellin 2022 for additional summary of activism to address EDI issues.</p> <p>Cobb, H. and Crellin, R. J. 2022. "Affirmation and Action: A Posthumanist Feminist Agenda for Archaeology," Cambridge Archaeological Journal. pp. 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774321000573</p> <p>Cobb, H., and Croucher, K. 2020. Assembling Archaeology: Teaching, Practice and Research. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/assembling-archaeology-9780198784258?cc=gb&lang=en&</p>
<p>Is there a positive impact on any characteristic?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Carers of both children and/or adults • Care-Experienced Students • Disability including non-visible disabilities • Gender Reassignment • Neurodivergence • Pregnancy & Maternity • Race • Religion & Belief incl no belief

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexuality • Socio-Economic Impact
<p>What are the positive impacts</p>	<p>Despite the negative impacts noted under point 15, archaeological fieldwork can be incredibly empowering for all who undertake it in a range of different ways. Archaeological projects that attend to the needs of those with different protected characteristics to ensure that they are supported in all ways and protected against discrimination can ensure participants feel a great sense of inclusion, belonging and wellbeing. This is documented in a range of places. A recent edited volume which provides excellent examples is:</p> <p>Everill, P. and Burnell, K. eds. (2022). <i>Archaeology, heritage, and wellbeing : authentic, powerful, and therapeutic engagement with the past</i> / edited by Paul Everill and Karen Burnell. Abingdon, Oxon Routledge.</p> <p>This volume includes a paper by the author of this EIA and one of the co-directors of ATP (Cobb) about the ways in which inclusive teaching practices can support student wellbeing. I have also written about this here:</p> <p>Cobb, H., and Croucher, K. 2020. <i>Assembling Archaeology: Teaching, Practice and Research</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/assembling-archaeology-9780198784258?cc=gb&lang=en&</p>

	<p>This volume details an inclusive pedagogic approach which I have developed primarily at ATP and, as this is the 19th season of the project, it evidences some of the positive impacts of this project for not only teaching and learning archaeology but also for empowering and creating a sense of belonging for all students.</p>
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<p>What mitigations have you identified to address these impacts?</p>	<p>As noted above under point 15, we recognise the complex and intersecting nature of the negative impacts we note and the fact that these may be highly individualised. Therefore we try to ensure we address them with appropriate mitigations and actions on a case by case basis. This begins by asking all project attendees to complete an initial survey to establish any needs they have and would like help with, and providing ample information briefings and space to talk about needs before the dig begins. Alongside accommodating any specific needs in this way a series of generic mitigations are employed such as</p> <p>Working to the strengths of each individual: the project usually includes a wide range of work, from excavation and physical work, to geophysics, landscape survey, wet sieving and finds and ecofact analysis and sorting. We try to circulate students throughout the project so everyone gets a chance to undertake this range of activities, but we are also sensitive to any needs shaped by protected characteristics such as age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief and gender reassignment, and we work with students to identify their strengths and ensure that they are able to work to these as they need. We recognise that some protected characteristics might mean people need some time off site, or time to themselves, and we make</p>
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it clear to all participants that this is available where needed. This also includes time to ensure participants can meet any needs for religion or belief.

Understanding (and actively working to mitigate against) triggers for mental health problems: In some cases participants may have specific triggers e.g. around food or cleanliness. This is very personal and we work to support each student or staff member as needed. Another example is that several times we have had students with schizophrenia on the project who found the wind exacerbated the voices they heard. We were mindful of weather conditions and gave the students who experienced this the opportunity to work off site or in more sheltered locations whenever they needed.

Creating an atmosphere of care and respect: We have a multifaceted approach to ensure this as follows:

Practical steps, such as having as many staff with mental health first aid training as we do with physical first aid training is essential, but we also are very open from the start about the need to verbalise feelings in what is a geographically isolated place. We normalise talking about emotions, and we normalise the core notion that everyone experiences the dig differently and that's ok, and that if people aren't happy we will do all we can to address that. We clearly identify all the first aiders of all kinds from the start (see health and safety document attached to this form), and foreground our open and care laden approach, making space for students to come and chat with the appropriate staff members (and if needed medical professionals) whenever

this arises. We also have clear project protocols which we introduce at the start and regularly refer to - these are our code of conduct, which emphasises a zero-tolerance approach to all discrimination, and our project ethos document (both attached to this form). The latter outlines the centrality of care and respect not only to one another and the local population (also key points in the code of conduct), but as a way of practicing as archaeologists, and as a dig community. We ask all students to read these documents as the first thing we do on the first day, and we ask them to sign to demonstrate their agreement. We use these documents not only to clearly set out our expectations from the start but to directly address any issues and to take action if they arise. At the heart of our project's approach is to ensure all participants have the freedom to be their authentic selves. We normalise the use of pronouns (where participants wish) in introductions and ask these in advance too to ensure that all on the project are referred to by the names and pronouns that they wish.

Mitigations for socio-economic impact: All undergraduate students attending the project as their compulsory fieldwork placement attend for free. Both the Universities of Manchester and Leicester have mechanisms in place to support students with kit and equipment needed, but we also help with this as a project if needed, bringing equipment such as spare trowels, waterproofs and tents. We place free period and hygiene products in all of our communal toilets and Portaloo's on site.

Other practical mitigations not covered by the above: On the journey from Manchester to Ardnamurchan (and vice versa at the end) we have a really clear routine and set of stops usually

	<p>about 1.5 hrs apart which we inform all participants of from the start of the journey so that all know when toilet breaks will be. We can also stop on request in between those. We have a really clear schedule for the working day and working week which we let students know from the start (and which is documented through a table that we stick up) which helps anyone who needs the clarity and structure of rhythm and routine. It also helps us ensure that we can agree any individual adaptations to the working day to meet all needs. All toilets and showers are individual locked rooms and so can be used by all genders. At times when we are working on a fixed site there will always be a Portaloo or house toilet within a few minutes' walk of the site. When we are working away from individual sites (e.g. during landscape survey) we make trips back to the house or Portaloo's during break times, or at any time that is needed beyond this, for anyone who needs this. All dietary requirements are met as far as is feasible (there is only one very small and understocked shop on the peninsula so we try to buy everything in advance, but some circumstances may arise where this is not possible) and where this is not possible we discuss alternatives with students. We are able to make private spaces available for expressing milk and provide refrigeration for storing expressed breast milk. We ask all students permission before posting any images to social media.</p>
<p>How will you monitor the effectiveness of your mitigations</p>	<p>This is ATP's 19th season. Over the 19 years of digging, we have found a range of effective ways of monitoring, from continuous informal monitoring and adaptation where needed throughout the excavation (which particularly means keeping lines of communication open with all to make sure mitigations are working and adapt if not), to asking students to complete feedback forms at the end of the project. Many of our students return as volunteers and later</p>

	become staff members so we continuously adapt and develop our project ethos and inclusive processes to reflect their honest reflections and feedback.
Who is your EDI Partner	Kathy Bradley
Who is your Senior Sponsor	Hannah Cobb
Submission status	Approved by Senior Sponsor
Tell us the Date you will review this EIA	1 July 2026