



SFC GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN 2022-27

PREPARED UNDER THE GAELIC LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005
APPROVED BY BÒRD NA Gàidhlig ON 8 FEBRUARY 2022



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba

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CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE
MORAY COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE OF SCOTLAND
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



FOREWORD

by **Karen Watt**, SFC Chief Executive

Languages are important. They encapsulate histories, cultures, landscapes and knowledge. In other words, they mean something important in terms of identity. Many nations, like Scotland, have more than one language and they are enriched by the opportunity which that creates for them, not least in education.

We recognise the importance of language. Gaelic, in common with Scots and British Sign Language, enhances our perspectives and contributes to Scotland's unique position in the world. Ensuring that Gaelic "commands equal respect to English as an official language of Scotland" (the words of the Gaelic Language Act) matters.

At SFC, we continue to recognise the value of Scotland's linguistic diversity in building connections and enhancing our quality of life. We also recognise the challenges that Gaelic faces. We will treat Gaelic with respect and due attention throughout our work. We will continue to contribute wherever we have responsibility and influence.

This is the third edition of our Gaelic language Plan, and it has been compiled during the Covid-19 pandemic. In common with our education and enterprise partners in Scotland, and indeed, with organisations across the world, SFC is actively considering its contribution to social and economic



recovery. This is in both our immediate areas of responsibility and, more broadly, as part of the wider national effort.

The new perspectives brought by the pandemic include opportunities as well as challenges. Our horizons have been constrained as we stayed local but are also expanding as online communication transcends the barriers of distance. We will work with our college and university sectors to identify how these opportunities can support the ideas emerging from recent Ministerial-led discussions on new ways of strengthening Gaelic in its communities.

Through publishing and delivering our Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027 SFC is committed to playing a strategic role in supporting Gaelic to thrive in all its communities.



INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF SFC

The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) is the national, strategic, body that is responsible for funding teaching and learning provision, research and other activities in Scotland's 26 colleges and 19 universities and higher education institutions (HEIs). We distribute around £1.9 billion each year in support of this work.

Our statutory duty is to secure coherent, high quality further and higher education provision by colleges and universities in Scotland (and the undertaking of research) through funding of the Scottish college and university sectors.



PHOTO: ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

The SFC Board consists of between 11 and 14 members, plus the Chair and Chief Executive. Members of the Council Board are appointed by the First Minister of Scotland and have a collective responsibility for the proper conduct of the Council's affairs. They are not appointed as representatives of individual organisations.

The Council Board is supported by around 115 staff (106 FTE) based in one location in Edinburgh. Work is arranged around four directorates: Research and Innovation; Access, Learning and Outcomes; Policy, Insights and Analytics; Finance and Corporate Services.

In June 2020 SFC was asked by Scottish Ministers to review how best it could fulfil its mission of securing coherent provision by post-16 education bodies, and the undertaking of research, in these changing times. The review considered the changes needed to existing funding, operations and accountability frameworks in order to respond effectively to the new challenges and opportunities brought by COVID-19. It advised Ministers on relevant changes to policy funding for tertiary education and research. The review was completed and published in summer 2021 and the Scottish Government published its response to it in October 2021.

As a result of this work, we are considering a revised approach to accountability and institutional engagement in future, which will include an Outcome and Impact Framework. We will revisit our Language Plan commitments once this is complete to ensure we continue to support Bòrd na Gàidhlig high level aims and the National Gaelic Language Plan ambitions and will look for opportunities to contribute to new directions identified in subsequent National Gaelic Language Plans.

GAELIC WITHIN SFC

SFC undertakes Gaelic activity in the following areas:

- Core funding for Scotland's colleges and universities: this is defined in negotiation of outcomes with individual institutions. This support includes funded student places for those studying Gaelic (including teacher education), funding that may be used to support staff undertaking Gaelic-relevant research and knowledge exchange, and support for other general functions of the institutions including their work with their staff, student and neighbouring communities.
- Specific funding for targeted activities in the further and higher education sectors: such as support for Faclair na Gàidhlig, Bliadhna Bhogaidh Oilthigh Glaschu and Scotland's Colleges' Gaelic Immersion Residential Course.
- Engagement and negotiation with partner bodies; for example, participation in the Scottish Government's Faster Rate of Progress work on National Gaelic Language Plan targets.
- Operational processes in support of the above policy work; such as translation, use of Gaelic in Communications activity and ensuring the inclusion of consideration of minority indigenous languages when conducting equality impact assessments.
- As an employer, supporting staff engagement with Gaelic; such as staff training, Gaelic awareness courses, and ensuring the visibility of Gaelic in the working environment.

OUR VISION FOR OUR WORK WITH GAELIC

Our vision continues to be that of a Funding Council whose work in all areas supports the aims of current and future National Gaelic Language Plans particularly the growth of opportunities within the Scottish college and university sectors to learn and to use Gaelic. Through this we hope to see our work also support the growth of opportunities to use and to learn Gaelic in Scottish communities, workplaces and learning environments which are beyond our immediate sphere of influence, the growth of Gaelic community engagement with the institutions we fund and a strengthened socioeconomic role for Gaelic in Scotland.

In our own workplace, we will show respect for and commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity, in our dealings with the public and in the opportunities provided for development for SFC staff. We will demonstrate by example our own commitment to the requirements for Gaelic that we place on the institutions we fund.

MAINSTREAMING GAELIC IN SFC'S POLICIES AND CORE FUNCTIONS

We recognise that opportunities will arise to promote and develop the Gaelic language through existing and future policy measures. We will examine current and emerging policy commitments to identify areas where Gaelic can be proactively incorporated and the priorities of the National Gaelic Language Plan addressed.

In the formation, renewal and monitoring of policies, we will work to ensure that the impacts on Gaelic will be in line with the National Gaelic Language Plan.

GAELIC IN SCOTLAND

The 2011 Census showed that 57,375 people in Scotland speak Gaelic (1.08% of the population). This was a slight decline from the 58,652 (1.16%) recorded in the 2001 Census. Previous recent censuses showed more significant declines in numbers of speakers:

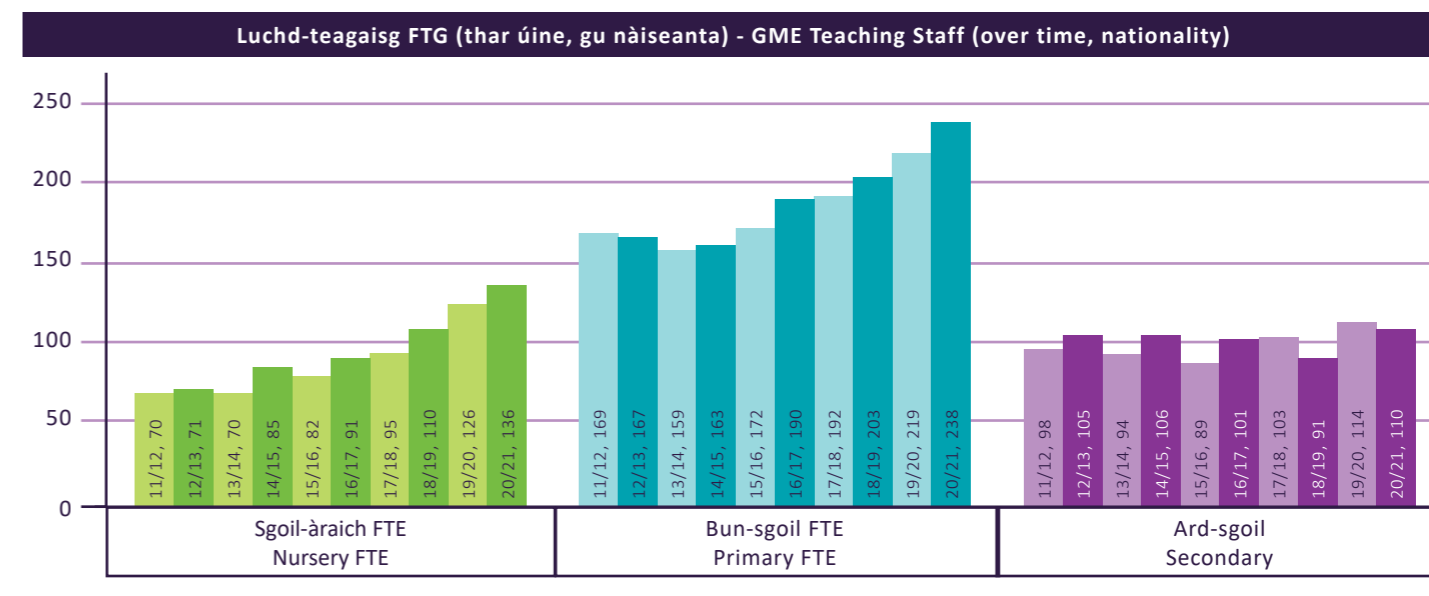
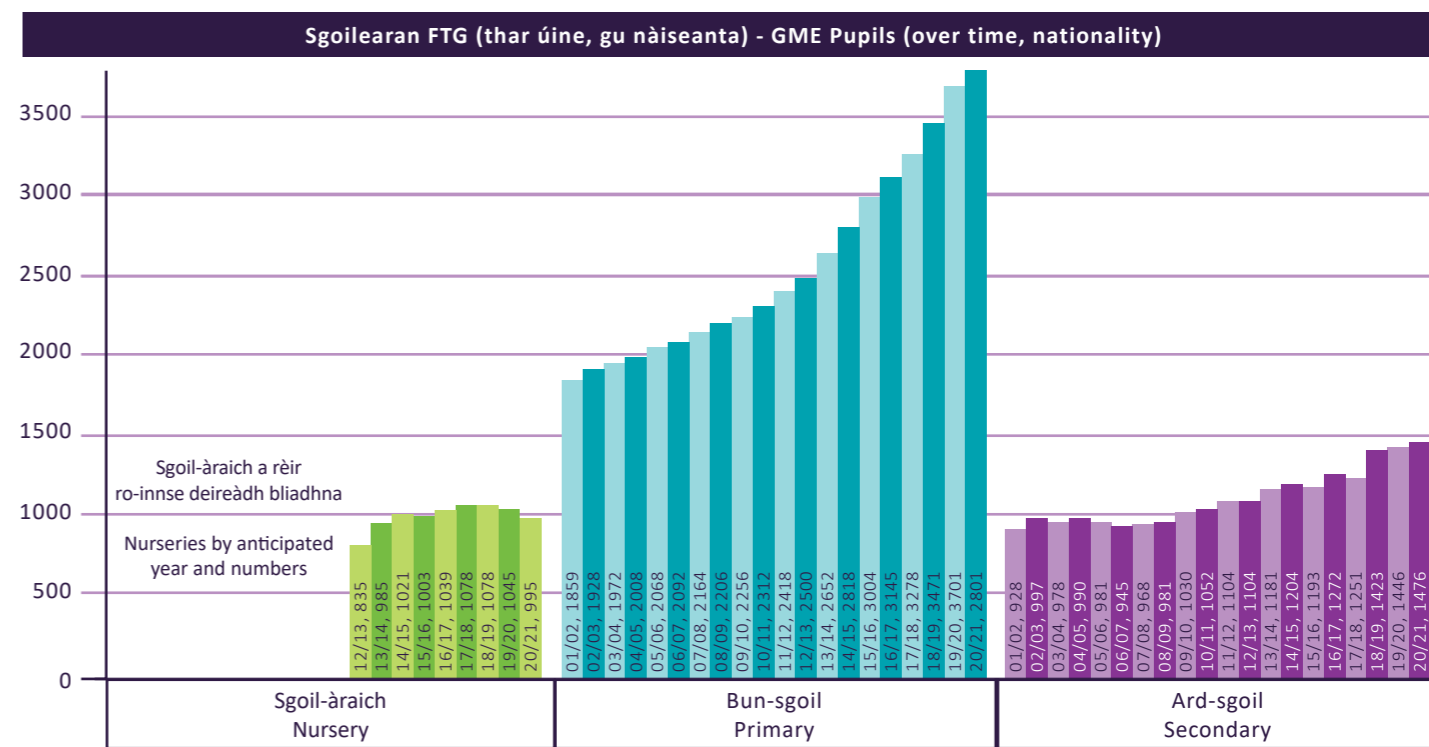
Gaelic in Scotland Census						
CENSUS	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Speakers	80,987	88,892	79,304	65,978	58,652	57,375
%	1.56%	1.70%	1.57%	1.32%	1.16%	1.08%
Change	-14,460	7,905	-9,588	-13,326	-7,326	-1,277

However, between 2001 and 2011 censuses, for every category for speakers under the age of 20 the numbers went up. And the numbers of children going through Gaelic medium education (GME) is increasing. Between census year 2011 and 2019 the numbers in GME increased by just over 1,700. Young people leaving school with Gaelic skills will come to look for a similar experience in further and higher education.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig tables showing changes over time in numbers of GME pupils and teachers are below.

The 2011 Census also recorded Gaelic speakers in every part of Scotland. The largest numbers were found in Eilean Siar (where over half the population are recorded as Gaelic speakers), Highland, Glasgow City, Argyll & Bute and Edinburgh City. GME is thriving in Edinburgh and Glasgow and there are strong communities of speakers in each.

As a national body, all of Scotland's Gaelic learners, Gaelic speakers, those with other Gaelic language skills, Gaelic communities and Gaelic organisations are within our geographic area of operation.



THE GAELIC LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

One of the key features of the 2005 Act is the provision enabling Bòrd na Gàidhlig to require a public authority to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan. This provision was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising the status and profile of the language and creating practical opportunities for its use.

This document is SFC's Gaelic Language Plan prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions, how we will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how we will promote and develop Gaelic.

SFC's Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2005 Act and having regard to the National Gaelic Language Plan and the Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans.

This is the third edition of SFC's Gaelic Language Plan. SFC's first Gaelic Language Plan was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 15 December 2009 and published by SFC on 26 February 2010. The second edition of our Gaelic Language Plan was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 17 September 2015 and published on 28 October 2015.



PHOTO: FIFE COLLEGE

THE NATIONAL GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

SFC supports the aim of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 that "Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations."

We are committed to achieving this aim by focussing our work on these three headings:

- Increasing the use of Gaelic within our organisation and encouraging more people to use Gaelic more often when they interact with us.
- Increasing the opportunity for people to learn Gaelic as part of our day-to-day operations.
- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic whenever we can as part of our day-to-day operations as an organisation.

In reviewing the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 priorities, we identified areas where SFC has potential to make a contribution. The following contains information on our spheres of influence. The commitments to deliver these are detailed in the commitments section of this plan.

Increasing the use of Gaelic	
NGLP PRIORITY	RELEVANT SFC INTERESTS
Initiatives which promote the use of Gaelic in homes and communities	college and university communities
Initiatives which promote the use of Gaelic by young people	students
Gaelic in traditional and new media	skills provision
Gaelic in the arts, publishing and creative industries	skills provision
Gaelic Language Plans	SFC, partners, colleges and universities
Gaelic in the workplace	SFC internally, colleges and universities
Gaelic use in heritage, tourism, food and drink, environment and leisure industries	skills provision
Initiatives which strengthen language richness, relevance and consistency	eg Faclair na Gàidhlig
Initiatives promoting links with Gaelic abroad and with minority languages	eg Soillse, Language Sciences Institute

Increasing the learning of Gaelic	
NGLP PRIORITY	RELEVANT SFC INTERESTS
Gaelic in the family	
Gaelic medium workforce recruitment, retention, training and supply	colleges and universities
Resources and support for learning	eg Faclair na Gàidhlig
Gaelic in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)	workforce training and places
Gaelic medium education (GME) in primary and secondary schools	workforce training
Gaelic learner education (GLE) in primary and secondary schools	workforce training
Gaelic in Higher and Further Education	colleges and universities
Adult Gaelic learning	SFC internally, colleges and universities

Increasing the learning of Gaelic	
NGLP PRIORITY	RELEVANT SFC INTERESTS
Support for Gaelic from the Scottish Government, Parliament and wider political support	
Gaelic Language Plans implemented by public authorities (local authorities and public bodies)	
Promoting a positive image of Gaelic and raising awareness through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaelic media and other media. • Gaelic education at all levels. • Gaelic arts. 	SFC, colleges and universities
Promoting the social, economic and cultural value of Gaelic	
Positive messages about Gaelic, bilingualism, and about diversity and inclusion	SFC, colleges and universities

There is also potential to work with institutions on responses to the National Gaelic Language Plan priorities for Gaelic in communities: island and rural; towns and cities; communities linked by technology.



PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

INTERNAL GAELIC CAPACITY AUDIT

SFC conducts surveys of Gaelic skills among staff annually. The latest audit took place in March 2020, achieving a response rate of 86.8%.

Using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a handful (fewer than 5%) of respondents claim A2¹ levels of Gaelic ability. The vast majority of respondents (over 95%), however, claim little or no ability in Gaelic (although this includes 10.1% who “recognise, understand and, if pushed, use a few everyday expressions and very basic phrases” and a further 22.2% who “can recognise and understand a few everyday expressions and very basic phrases”). We have no fluent speakers of Gaelic but we have a number of active learners.

¹ Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

We will maintain up to date data on Gaelic skills among our staff, through annual surveys and maintaining information on training provided.

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

Due to delays arising from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on public sector operations in 2020, consultation on this plan was delayed. A draft of this plan was presented to Bòrd na Gàidhlig in September 2020. A consultation was then opened for responses from the public, partners and colleagues between 3 November and 15 December 2020. As well as general publication, and notification to bodies and individuals with known interest in our areas of responsibility including Gaelic, specific efforts were made to reach those with interests in equalities and groups with protected characteristics. We received 17 responses, primarily from Scotland’s colleges and universities.



KEY PRINCIPLES

EQUAL RESPECT

Under the terms of the 2005 Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig works with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

SFC will ensure that where Gaelic is included as part of our operations and services, the offers made are of an equal standard and quality to those that we provide in English.



PHOTO: SCOTLAND'S RURAL COLLEGE

ACTIVE OFFER

SFC will continue to make an active offer of our Gaelic services to our employees and the public. This will ensure that where Gaelic services are made available by us, Gaelic users are made aware of their existence, and are actively encouraged to use them.

This will take the responsibility away from the individual to ask for the service and will give Gaelic users the confidence to know that their needs will be met if that is their choice.

We will ensure that our Gaelic language services are as accessible as our English language services.

MAINSTREAMING

SFC will ensure that opportunities for the public and our staff to use Gaelic are normalised, in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 aim that Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations.

PLAN COMMITMENTS

HIGH-LEVEL AIMS

The four high-level aims for the new edition of SFC's Gaelic Language Plan, identified by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in co-operation with SFC, and agreed with the Scottish Government, are:

- Carry forward and include all commitments from the previous iteration of Scottish Funding Council's Gaelic Language Plan which are within Scottish Funding Council's remit.
- Via membership of the Strategic Board for Enterprise and Skills, promote the benefits that Gaelic has on the Scottish economy. Details of which can be found in the June 2018 'The Gaelic Language Labour Market' report by Skills Development Scotland and the May 2014 research, 'Ar Stòras Gàidhlig' by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and partners.



PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

- Through Outcome Agreements, promote and encourage colleges and universities to introduce Gaelic language awareness and language learning opportunities for staff, and to report on progress made.
- Through Outcome Agreements, ensure that colleges and universities adhere to the principle of equal respect for Gaelic throughout property, students and culture of the institution.
- The following sections set out SFC's proposed actions in relation to these high-level aims. They also incorporate SFC policy aims for Gaelic in relation to its work with colleges and universities. Through this work SFC seeks to make a positive contribution to the National Gaelic Language Plan.



Carry forward and include all commitments from the previous iteration of Scottish Funding Council's Gaelic Language Plan which are within Scottish Funding Council's remit.

Outcome:

- Scottish Funding Council contributes to the achievement of the National Gaelic Language Plan.

Currently:

- SFC's Gaelic Language Plan 2014-19 and commitments are here (English/ Gaelic).
- All Gaelic services and resources demonstrate equal respect for Gaelic and English. There will be a continuous active offer for all Gaelic services and facilities.

SFC will:

- Carry forward and deliver all commitments from the previous edition of our Gaelic Language Plan which remain within our remit.
- We will continue to monitor and to work towards those commitments in our 2014-19 Gaelic Language Plan which have not yet been achieved and which remain within our remit.



Via membership of the Strategic Board for Enterprise and Skills, promote the benefits that Gaelic has on the Scottish economy.

Outcome:

- Provision responds to contemporary labour market intelligence including the June 2018 'The Gaelic Language Labour Market' report by Skills Development Scotland and the May 2014 research, 'Ar Stòras Gàidhlig' by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and partners.

Currently:

- SFC's Strategic Framework outlines our lead responsibility for a national policy perspective on coherent provision of subjects including Gaelic. Working with partners on the Strategic Board for Enterprise and Skills, liaises with specialists within the colleges and universities and with other bodies, such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which have related or overlapping responsibilities for these policy areas.
- SFC supports the Scottish universities in provision of teacher education courses, including ring-fenced places for Gaelic-medium education. SFC is working with partner organisations on Faster Rate of Progress projects. SFC also participates in the Scottish Government's Teacher Workforce Planning Group which assesses the need for student teacher places.
- SFC monitors use of targeted and ring-fenced places on Gaelic teacher education courses
- SFC's funding for teaching in Scotland's colleges and universities supports their provision of Gaelic study and the supply of confident Gaelic speakers to the workforce. In addition, we are providing support to the pilot Gaelic Immersion Year at the University of Glasgow and to a short Gaelic immersion course for colleges.
- SFC supports Scotland's Gaelic research and innovation capacity to contribute to the development of Gaelic.

- Our support of university research through Soillse (the national research network for the Maintenance and Revitalisation of Gaelic Language and Culture) contributes evidence to Gaelic policy debate.

SFC will:

- Ensure our funding for Gaelic provision – core, strategic and research – is aligned to ambitions with the National Gaelic Language Plan and the aims of the Strategic Board, including:
 - Work with Skills Development Scotland to explore and actively engage with demand for Gaelic skills (for example in priority sectors such as social and health care services) and responses to this.
 - Continue to support Scotland's Gaelic research and innovation capacity to contribute to the development of Gaelic.
 - Encourage colleges and universities to work together to create pathways for supporting development of Gaelic skills to meet national need, from 2023, informed by the new National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28.
- Use the Scottish Government led initiative, Gaelic – a Faster Rate of Progress, priorities as a framework to contribute to the delivery of the national strategy for Gaelic teacher education.
 - Work with the General Teaching Council for Scotland on a teacher-education recruitment strategy
 - Work with Faster Rate of Progress partners to ensure alignment of teacher education provision and employer needs.
 - Continue to monitor use of targeted and ring-fenced places on Gaelic teacher education courses.
- Ensure coherent provision of Gaelic and Gaelic Medium education pathways within the college and university sector.
- Challenge and support institutions in identifying gaps in provision, and in increasing the numbers of courses available and the number of learners in response to demand, from academic year 2022-23.
- Work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to identify priorities and targets for the college and university sectors, in the context of the National Gaelic Language Plan.
- Identify how expansion in Childcare provision is taking account of Gaelic Medium Education.
- Work with Local Authorities, the Convention of Highlands and Islands and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to ensure provision responds to demand, from 2023, informed by the new National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28.
- SFC acknowledges the success and impact of work being carried out on community engagement with, and participation in, the Gaelic language across Scotland. We will continue to work with colleges, universities and partner bodies active on the ground to ensure our investment in the sectors contributes positively to the position of living Gaelic in the three main types of Gaelic communities as described in the National Gaelic Language Plan – those in island and rural areas; those in towns and cities; and the online community.
- SFC will work with colleges and universities to develop a strategy to support community language transmission through their work. We will look for opportunities for greatest impact in each of the three types of community and seek to work with colleges and universities active within those spheres. We recognise that a strong Gaelic speaking environment has the potential to support a platform for inclusive economic growth.
- Work with Strategic Board partners to ensure a full contribution of Gaelic to inclusive socioeconomic growth. For example, opportunities to align international marketing strategies with Gaelic learning recruitment strategies, such as through Scotland is Now.



PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF ABERTAY



PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH



Through our accountability frameworks, promote and encourage colleges and universities to introduce Gaelic language awareness and language learning opportunities for staff, and to report on progress made.

Outcome:

- Increased awareness among college and university staff of the aims of the National Gaelic Language Plan.

Currently:

- Institutions' current Outcome Agreements should reference the National Gaelic Language Plan for 2018-23, and include actions in support of parity of esteem for Gaelic and to encourage its visibility and use by speakers among their staff, students and others with whom they engage, as well as maintenance and development of their provision, where relevant, for Gaelic learners SFC as a result of its Review is working to design a National Impact Framework and an outcomes and impact framework which will guide our institutional engagements and demonstrate how institutions support national objectives.

SFC will:

- Ensure the aims of the National Gaelic Language Plan are addressed by each institution on an annual basis through our National Impact Framework and its contributing elements.
- Work with Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland to encourage Gaelic awareness training for college and university Board members and senior management.
- Work to share good practice among institutions.
- Host a national tertiary education meeting to discuss Gaelic policy issues, to support delivery.
- Ensure data on local and national demand, and on Gaelic in the community, are explicitly examined and addressed with universities and colleges. This should include consideration of Local Authority language plans.



Using our mechanisms which support quality and impact, ensure that colleges and universities adhere to the principle of equal respect for Gaelic throughout property, students and culture of the institution

Outcome:

- The accountability process ensures that the aims of the National Gaelic Language Plan are actively considered and appropriately addressed by all colleges and universities.

Currently:

- Institutions' Outcome agreements should reference the National Gaelic Language Plan for 2018-23, and include actions in support of parity of esteem for Gaelic and to encourage its visibility and use by speakers among their staff, students and others with whom they engage, as well as maintenance and development of their provision, where relevant, for Gaelic learners.

SFC will:

- Brief institutions on the role the principle of "equal respect" plays within Gaelic language policy.
- As part of our work in association with the National Impact Framework:
 - Encourage all colleges and universities to commit to including Gaelic awareness in induction processes.
 - Encourage all colleges and universities to commit to a bilingual corporate identity with equal respect for Gaelic and English for use as standard when rebranding next occurs.
 - Encourage all colleges and universities to develop service delivery and resources which demonstrate equal respect for Gaelic and English and promote a continuous active offer for all Gaelic services and facilities.
 - Encourage all colleges and universities to make explicit on a prominent part of their website which services are available on request in Gaelic and make a statement that requests for communications in Gaelic are welcome.

We note here our ongoing policy commitment to Gaelic corpus development, in addition to Corporate Service Aims in the following section.



Support Gaelic Corpus Development

Outcome:

- Ensure a resource is available to record the Gaelic language corpus and support a high level speech community and a research capability.

Currently:

- SFC funds the multi-university Faclair na Gàidhlig/Dictionary of the Scottish Gaelic language project (indirectly through Faclair na Gàidhlig, the Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic /Corpas na Gàidhlig) over five years to academic year 2022-23.
- SFC funds a national Gaelic Research and Innovation Network – Soillse. Its work includes ongoing development of online grammatical guidance.

SFC will:

- Monitor and advise the Faclair na Gàidhlig project during the period of SFC support.
- Work with Soillse, during the period of SFC support, to develop a sustainable business model.
- Work with institutions and other public bodies to expand and to mainstream immersion opportunities for Gaelic language students.

CORPORATE SERVICE AIMS

As well as the High-level Aims, Bòrd na Gàidhlig issued standardised Corporate Service Aims as part of the formal notice.

The following section sets out SFC's proposed actions in relation to our internal workplace and customer-facing activities. In doing so it addresses each of the five core areas of service delivery that public authorities should address in preparing their Gaelic Language Plans identified by the Bòrd:

1. Status.
2. Communicating with the public.
3. Information.
4. Staff.
5. Corpus.



STATUS

The Scottish Funding Council recognises the importance of extending the visibility of Gaelic and enhancing its status.

Outcome:

- Our corporate identity supports the visibility of Gaelic.

Currently:

- SFC's bilingual logo is used on our publications, templates and stationery. Two versions of the logo are available, alternating the positions of Gaelic and of English.
- There is bilingual signage throughout SFC's office, and in our shared meeting space.
- Staff email signatures and including business cards are bilingual.

SFC will:

- Maintain current levels of Gaelic visibility.
- Review opportunities to increase Gaelic visibility as they arise and report on this in our annual returns to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.



COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

The Scottish Funding Council recognises the importance of creating opportunities for the practical use of Gaelic in a wide range of everyday situations and is committed to increasing its level of provision in this area.

Outcome:

- Use of Gaelic is encouraged and supported in SFC's day-to-day operations. Staff are confident and positive in responding to approaches in Gaelic.

Currently:

- All emails from SFC contain standard text in Gaelic, including a message welcoming correspondence in Gaelic. The SFC website also welcomes correspondence in Gaelic.
- Reception staff have been familiarised with Gaelic in their context and are encouraged to respond to and use Gaelic greetings as appropriate. We currently have no fluent Gaelic speakers.
- Briefings are provided to staff on use of Gaelic in our dealings with the public, periodically throughout the year including reminders prompted by preparations for public holidays.

SFC will:

- Refresh procedures to support translation of telephone conversations.
- Provide at least annual briefings to staff on use of Gaelic in our dealings with the public.



INFORMATION

The Scottish Funding Council is committed to increasing the use of Gaelic in these areas where the subject matter is of most interest to the general public or relates specifically to Gaelic issues.

Outcome:

- Our use of Gaelic through external communications, particularly when dealing with the public, is maintained or improved

Currently:

- Key corporate publications are made available in both Gaelic and English.
- Where content is of specific interest to Gaelic speaking communities or areas, media releases are prepared in both Gaelic and English, and BBC Alba is included on distribution lists.
- Information on and in Gaelic (including our Gaelic language plan) is available on our website in both Gaelic and English.
- SFC's Gaelic materials are provided by translators (see Corpus section below).

SFC will:

- Continue to review and identify opportunities to increase the use of Gaelic in media and public relations and in printed materials, seeking to broaden our Gaelic presence.
- On our website, refresh and increase our use of Gaelic and Gaelic-related material.
- Increase our successful use of Gaelic in social media.



STAFF

The Scottish Funding Council recognises the importance of seeing Gaelic as an important job skill and of identifying situations in which its use is essential or desirable. The Scottish Funding Council also recognises the importance of enabling staff to develop their Gaelic skills if they wish to do so.

Outcome:

- The level of Gaelic skills and knowledge among SFC's staff improves

Currently:

- SFC reviews Gaelic skills among staff annually to inform implementation of our Gaelic language plan, including training needs.
- Inductions for new staff cover SFC's Gaelic Language Plan.
- SFC offers support to staff for Lifelong Learning. Gaelic language skills are cited as a potential activity, and these resources are often used for this.
- SFC also supports work-related Gaelic language training where appropriate to the responsibilities of staff, such as reception staff and those dealing with UHI and its academic partner colleges.
- Gaelic awareness training is offered periodically, primarily for new staff cohorts, but also made available to Board and Committee members. Training was last offered in 2018 when 25 attended. Plans for further courses in 2020 and subsequently have been disrupted by the Covid pandemic.
- The essential and desirable skills for all vacant posts, new or replacement, are reviewed as they arise. We are committed to consider and identify posts where the ability to speak Gaelic will help us to achieve the objectives of this plan and recruit accordingly.
- All job applicants are asked to let us know about their language skills, with Gaelic being specifically cited as an example.
- SFC does not currently have any 'Gaelic essential' posts. We have existing commitments to appropriate advertising and testing of skills should 'Gaelic essential' or 'Gaelic desirable' vacancies arise.

SFC will:

- Maintain current commitments to recruitment, and staff training and development.
- **Designate Gaelic as a desirable skill for all posts**
- **During the lifetime of this plan, review our staff posts to assess whether a Gaelic essential post can be achieved.**
- Continue to identify and act on opportunities to promote familiarity with Gaelic among staff, including opportunities for use of Gaelic in the workplace.



DEALBH: FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE



GAELIC LANGUAGE CORPUS

Our ongoing policy commitment to Gaelic corpus development is set out earlier in this plan.

The Scottish Funding Council recognises the importance of developing the Gaelic language to ensure that it is fit for all appropriate purposes and for use in the growing range of contexts in which it features.

Outcome:

- There is consistent use of national standards in our use of Gaelic, including those of the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions (GOC) and Ainmean Àite na h-Alba (AAA).

Currently:

- SFC requires the use of GOC and AAA standards in services provided by translators.

SFC will:

- Continue to require use of the current Gaelic Orthographic Conventions and Ainmean Àite na h-Alba place-naming conventions.



PHOTO: PERTH COLLEGE UHI

LINKS TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The National Performance Framework outcomes are that Scotland's people:

- Grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.
- Live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.
- Are creative and their vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.
- Have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- Are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.
- Value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment.
- Have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.
- Are healthy and active.
- Respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.
- Are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally.
- Tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

We are a national body whose statutory duty is “to secure coherent, high quality further and higher learning provision by colleges and universities in Scotland, and the undertaking of research”. This includes ensuring Scotland can provide the skills and knowledge to develop our economy and society. Therefore the vision and objectives of the following NPF outcomes have particular resonance with SFC and are reflected in the approach to our Gaelic Language Plan.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Our schools are loving, respectful and encouraging places where everyone can learn, play and flourish. We provide children and young people with hope for the future and create opportunities for them to fulfil their dreams.



COMMUNITIES

... to be healthy and happy as a nation we must nurture and protect our local resources, environments and all who live in them.

We have high quality, affordable and accessible public services and facilities that positively enhance our lives. ... We live in friendly, vibrant and cohesive communities which value diversity and support those in need.



CULTURE

We cherish and protect our history, traditional and rural cultures, and embrace those from elsewhere.



ECONOMY

Our economy is inclusive and focused on improving the lives of all our people. We ensure the benefits of economic growth, wealth and opportunities are fairly shared.



EDUCATION

We have an education system we can all take part in and which inspires us to reach our potential whatever that may be. ... We value our teachers, educators and academics and do all we can to achieve the highest standards across our learning and research. We work with partners in business, industry, science and academia to ensure we lead the world in new thinking and have the talents and abilities to flourish in future.



FAIR WORK AND BUSINESS

We take seriously the wellbeing and skills of our workforce and provide good quality, fair work, training and employment support for all.



HUMAN RIGHTS

We recognise the fundamental equality of all humans and strive to reflect this in our day to day functioning as a nation.



INTERNATIONAL (INCLUDING POPULATION)

Our family, communities and people are important to us and we are committed to being fair and socially just.

NPF outcomes are aligned with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. The following SDG targets are particularly relevant:



BY 2030

ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including ... indigenous peoples...



BY 2030

ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for ... human rights, ... appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development



BY 2030

empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

PUBLICATION

PUBLISHING AND PUBLICISING THE PLAN

INTERNAL

Colleagues have been involved in the consultation on the draft plan. They will be notified of the publication of the final plan and its relevance to their areas of work through internal processes, including email, and links on relevant parts of our intranet.

EXTERNAL

SFC's Gaelic Language Plan will be published simultaneously in Gaelic and in English on our website. In addition, we will:

- Issue a bilingual press release announcing the plan.
- Publicise the plan through a variety of social media platforms.
- Draw the plan to the attention of:
 - Arms-length organisations and other third-party organisations, explaining their role in the delivery of the plan.
 - Key stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors.
 - Relevant Gaelic organisations and other interested bodies.
- Make hard copies available on request.

RESOURCING THE PLAN

We commit to maintaining appropriate resourcing within running costs for staff training, translation and other Gaelic-related activities.

Resource demands for Gaelic-related activity in our statutory functions will be considered as part of our normal procedures, taking into account Scottish Government and National Performance Framework objectives, National Gaelic Language Plan objectives and commitments within this plan.

MONITORING THE PLAN

SFC will compile an annual progress report that will be provided to Bòrd na Gàidhlig and made available to the public.

THE GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN IN SFC

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for preparation, delivery and monitoring of SFC's Gaelic Language Plan. The Chief Executive can be contacted as follows:

KAREN WATT

Chief Executive, SFC

0131 313 6646
kwatt@sfc.ac.uk

DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

The Assistant Director, Research and Innovation has day-to-day responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of SFC's Gaelic Language Plan. Queries regarding the day-to-day operation of the plan should be addressed to:

MORAG CAMPBELL

Assistant Director,
Research and Innovation, SFC

0131 313 6530
mcampbell@sfc.ac.uk



DEALBH: EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING GROUP

The Scottish Funding Council has an internal implementation and monitoring group. This group is made up from representation across our policy directorates and works with operational colleagues. In addition to focussing on activities to maintain Gaelic awareness among staff, this group has facilitated drafting of this third edition of our Gaelic language plan.

As we move into implementation of this plan, we will continue to ensure representation across the organisation and combine staff engagement and critical monitoring of the plan in its responsibilities.

ENGAGING WITH STAFF

See above.

ARM'S LENGTH ORGANISATIONS AND THIRD PARTIES

SFC's standard terms and conditions of contract require "reasonable endeavours to support the Gaelic language in accordance with SFC's obligations under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and SFC's Gaelic Language Plan. If requested ... the Contractor will provide materials in Gaelic to the standards operated by SFC."

APPENDIX A: Internal Gaelic Capacity Audit

SFC conducts surveys of Gaelic skills among staff annually. The latest audit took place in March 2020, achieving a response rate of 86.8%.

Using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a handful (fewer than 5%) of respondents claim A2 levels of Gaelic ability. The vast majority of respondents, however, claim little or no ability in Gaelic (although this includes 10.1% who admit to being able to “recognise, understand and, if pushed, use a few everyday expressions and very basic phrases” and a further 22.2% who “can recognise and understand a few everyday expressions and very basic phrases”). We have no fluent speakers of Gaelic.

Options offered:

- 1: No idea what Gaelic looks or sounds like.
- 2: Can recognise Gaelic.
- 3: Can recognise and understand a few everyday expressions and very basic phrases.
- 4: Can recognise, understand and, if pushed, use a few everyday expressions and very basic phrases. **(A1-)**
- 5: Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal information). Can communicate in simple and routine matters. **(A2)**
- 6: Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters. Can deal with most common situations likely to arise where the language is spoken. **(B1)**
- 7: Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously. Can interact in Gaelic with Gaelic speakers without strain for either party. **(B2/C1)**
- 8: Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can express ideas precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning. **(C2)**

At the point of the above survey, one staff member was undertaking An Cùrsa Inntigidh and two further staff were using their lifelong learning allowance for Gaelic evening classes. Other staff were known to be using Gaelic Duolingo.

Two posts are identified as ‘Gaelic desirable’. No posts are ‘Gaelic essential’.

APPENDIX B: Public Consultation: Detailed Report

A statutory requirement of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 is that public authorities must consult persons appearing to it to have an interest.

A consultation was opened for responses from the public, partners and colleagues between 3 November and 15 December 2020. As well as general publication, and notification to bodies and individuals with known interest in our areas of responsibility, including Gaelic, specific efforts were made to reach those with interests in equalities and groups with protected characteristics.

We received 17 responses, primarily from Scotland’s colleges and universities.

Respondents were notified of our intention to publish an anonymised selection of comments and asked to indicate whether their responses should be excluded from this.

EXTRACTS FROM CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Do you agree that the commitments proposed by SFC in our GLP (pages 12 – 14) support high level aim 2?

Via membership of the Strategic Board for Enterprise and Skills, promote the benefits that Gaelic has on the Scottish economy.

A whole systems approach is critical, as is support for institutions working together in a more cohesive manner. Ongoing support for Soillse is also very important to ensure that the development of Gaelic is underpinned by an appropriate research base. The focus on community language transmission is also very helpful and overall means that the strategy covers learning and teaching, research and community development.

... we would caution over the development of targets and reporting requirements, unless new resource is to be provided through SFC to support delivery of the same. Priorities must continue to be developed in partnership with universities and colleges and the circumstances of individual institutions must taken into account as per the current funding arrangements, lest the risk of detracting from other key Government priorities is increased (e.g. widening participation).

Suggest SFC Gaelic Plan recognises the regional area served by the University of the Highlands and Islands as a particular place for the maintenance and revitalisation of the vernacular Gaelic group ... we suggest SFC consider introducing a regional dimension to their support for Gaelic development within their strategic and operational remits, recognising in particular the role of the UHI network in actively engaging with Gaelic communities across the Highlands and Islands.

Do you agree that the commitments proposed by SFC in our GLP (pages 14 – 15) support high level aim 3? Through our accountability frameworks, promote and encourage colleges and universities to introduce Gaelic language awareness and language learning opportunities for staff, and to report on progress made.

... while we are keen to offer staff and students more opportunities to learn Gaelic, we have concerns about the cost implications to the university that some of these commitments may entail. We also note that the 2011 census data indicates that our council area has an above average proportion of Scots speakers and a below average proportion of Gaelic speakers. In this context, it would seem more appropriate to promote these two regional minority languages together, rather than only prioritising Gaelic.

We support this section, and especially the commitment to ensure that there is a good level of accountability for colleges and universities around their own commitment to Gaelic.

Introducing Gaelic language awareness and language learning opportunities for staff will require specialist knowledge and skills, which many will not have available in house and be required to be sourced externally. To save resources and adopt a more consistent approach, a central learning resource should be developed and funded by the SFC to be shared by all universities and colleges. Each institution's circumstances and requirements will be very different and SFC needs to recognise the need for flexibility in how institutions respond.

We welcome the return to a national meeting to discuss policy issues to support delivery in tertiary education in academic year 2021-22. We recommend the re-establishment of a sub-committee that advises on Gaelic funding.

Do you agree that the commitments proposed by SFC in our GLP (page 15) support the high level aim 4? Using our mechanisms which support quality and impact, ensure that colleges and universities adhere to the principle of equal respect for Gaelic throughout property, students and culture of the institution

... we would urge some minor modification to take account of areas of Scotland, notably Orkney and Shetland where Gaelic is not culturally aligned. The current wordage suggests that all colleges and universities' without exception should be encouraged to use Gaelic

Requests for services in Gaelic would present operational difficulties for institutions as this would require an external translation and access such services at short notice may be difficult to obtain. For all the outcomes under this objective, separate funding and access to translators and in production of material would be required.

Do you agree that SFC's proposed commitments in relation to our internal workplace and customer-facing activities (para 35, sections 1 – 5) appropriately address the five core areas of service delivery identified by the Bòrd for Corporate Service Aims?

We strongly agree with the commitments outlined to support and develop Gaelic in the workplace and in particular, support for staff to pursue lifelong learning opportunities. We believe these commitments demonstrate an example of best practice for Gaelic in the workplace and an example for institutions to replicate.

... the proposed action ... - "Where content is of specific interest to Gaelic speaking communities or areas, media releases are prepared in both Gaelic and English, and BBC Alba is included on distribution lists" - could be rephrased to be more inclusive. As ... it could be interpreted ... that people in Gaelic speaking communities have a much narrower field of interest than those in other communities, which we believe is not the intent of the phrasing.

Do you agree that SFC's proposed commitments in relation to key principles (paras 27 – 32, page 11) appropriately address the overarching principles identified by the Bòrd?

We would suggest that paragraph 32 ["SFC will ensure that opportunities for the public and our staff to use Gaelic are normalised, in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 aim that Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations"] is appropriately ambitious, but we feel that its implementation needs to be strengthened within the commitments to normalising the use of Gaelic - given the low level of usage of Gaelic which currently exists.

We ... welcome in particular, the active offer of Gaelic services and removing the responsibility on individuals to request this.

... need to find better ways of publicising SFC Gaelic services and encourage people to actively use these.

Do you agree that SFC's continuing vision for its work with Gaelic (paras 7 and 8, page 6) remains appropriate?

We particularly support the ambition to support opportunities within the Scottish college and university sectors to learn and to use Gaelic. ... Communication with local community members suggests an enthusiasm to study the language, but a reluctance to pay for Gaelic courses, particularly among more advanced learners ... At present, it is not financially viable for the University to run classes beyond beginner level because of this issue, but we believe that there would be interest in free provision, if offered.

We consider that the vision is too narrow, and should be more explicit about research and community engagement as well as learning and teaching.

We believe this vision to be highly appropriate to the work of the SFC and one which provides context for meaningful support and accountability for Gaelic across the HE sector more broadly.

We welcome the reference ... to the growth of opportunities within the Scottish college and university sectors to learn and to use Gaelic. ... certain areas ... should be highlighted in the SFC plan. One is the question of a summer school to support the development of language skills of students studying Gaelic at the tertiary level we would welcome increased SFC engagement with institutions across the sector.

The Vision set out in the draft Plan could be more purposeful and signal positivity and go beyond the requirements of the National Gaelic Plan.

It is also worth noting that the SFC 2020-25 Gaelic Plan will become operational before the next National Gaelic Plan has been developed or agreed with Scottish Government.

The commitment in the college and university sector should be to more than just growing opportunities to learn and use Gaelic. There should be active commitment to encouraging community-based research, particularly in vernacular communities.

Can you highlight any examples of good practice that SFC might consider in terms of models of mainstreaming consideration of Gaelic needs into policy development?

The key point here is to recognise the breadth of activity across provision for Gaelic for learners, teacher education, research and innovation and community engagement. Mainstreaming Gaelic needs into policy development needs to recognise the breadth of opportunity and relevance of Gaelic.

The ongoing commitment to reporting on Gaelic related activity at institutional and academic discipline level through the outcome agreement process and regular engagement meetings with Universities represents positive practice.

We commend the commitment here to identify emerging policy areas where Gaelic can be incorporated ... policies relating to HR, internationalisation, civic engagement and KE initiatives, provide unique opportunities for Gaelic. Both in terms of providing support for the language and the special contribution that Gaelic can make to the experience of international students and staff and the wider community

In light of the pandemic we are promoting and delivering ... online Gaelic beginners and intermediate classes ... To date take up has been very positive.

The Soillse Gaelic Crisis report has laid down a fundamental challenge to policy development for Gaelic at both national and regional levels... the Gaelic vernacular communities... and their speech patterns remain the authoritative mainstream touchstones for modelling Gaelic development going forward.

Will SFC's proposed GLP commitments contribute positively to or work against the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?

... the SFC's proposed commitments will, in general, contribute positively to the aims of the PSED. However, in [our] context ... we feel that more focus on providing opportunities for the public, including our student body, to learn Gaelic would help to "foster good relations between different groups" to a much greater extent than encouraging investment in bilingual signage over the period of the plan.

The proposed commitments would contribute positively to the aims of the PSED but would create considerable extra workload and resource requirement for universities. We would highlight that the EHRC and SFC signed a memorandum of understanding to embed regulatory reporting requirements for equality outcomes and equality mainstreaming in outcome agreement reporting from April 2021. Intentions are to streamline reporting in equality and diversity, with a focus on 'persistent inequalities'.

The commitments outlined in this draft policy demonstrate a positive and proactive approach to protecting the cultural rights of Gaelic speakers and will support universities in considering Gaelic within the context of their own equalities agendas, recognising Gaelic speakers as an important group within increasingly diverse HE communities. Specifically, we welcome the measures to: brief institutions on the role the principle of "equal respect" plays within Gaelic language policy; challenge and support institutions in identifying gaps in provision, and in increasing the numbers of courses available and the number of learners in response to demand.

Where Gaelic is not widely spoken or understood, the lack of recognition for the language can have a negative impact on those for whom it is their first language. The commitments in this GLP will help to raise awareness of Gaelic: but care needs to be taken not to alienate Scots speakers who feel their language is being ignored.

The Gaelic Language Plan addresses discrimination in relation to language use and its reach and promotion can be enhanced through inclusion in PSED reporting mechanisms.

Please include any other comments you would like to add

In support of raising awareness of Gaelic Language with staff we will [arrange] sessions on Gaelic Language as part of College staff Development events.

The aims of the commitments set out in the SFC's draft Gaelic Plan are commendable. However, we would caution that some of the proposed actions for universities would present considerable workload at a time when parallel work streams are aiming to reduce burden on institutions. The SFC could support the proposals in universities and colleges by commissioning shared resources and making funding available.

The University ... warmly welcomes this draft Gaelic Plan. It demonstrates good practice for Gaelic in the workplace and we welcome the commitment to awareness training for Board members and senior management. Awareness training in colleges and universities - we would welcome stronger direction here perhaps requiring institutions to implement this as part of outcome agreements? Gaelic information on college and university websites - a stronger direction from the SFC would be useful and would reinforce this requirement which also forms part of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's corporate service commitments for public bodies.

We believe the following high-level aim will bring strength and support to the implementation of our own Gaelic Language Plan. "Using our mechanisms which support quality and impact, ensure that colleges and universities adhere to the principle of equal respect for Gaelic throughout property, students and culture of the institution."

We strongly endorse the development of a strategy to support community language transmission ...

We fully support the proposal for a tertiary education meeting in 2021 – 22 to discuss Gaelic policy issues and will ensure the University ... is represented at these discussions.

Identifying priorities and targets for universities and colleges could be useful in helping institutions to focus on accelerating progress with their own GLPs. Although not mandated by the Scottish Government, the SFC could consider leading the way in similar recognition for Scots

It is an ambitious plan which will contribute to the collective efforts of all the organisations that are focused on improving outcomes, particularly through the work of the Faster Rate of Progress workstreams.

The Draft Plan currently acknowledges findings made by the SFC part-funded publication *The Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community*. The Draft Plan does not, however, acknowledge any other academic publication in the field of Gaelic studies even in the area of second language acquisition among adults, an area of direct relevance to many of the high level aims of the SFC's plan.

Gaelic-speaking communities are encountering a number of serious challenges such as lack of affordable housing, lack of well-paid permanent employment, depopulation etc, all of which contribute to the decline of Gaelic being spoken in traditional heartland communities.

Further development is needed of the full Gaelic immersion learner journey in discrete Gaelic institutions, from primary, through Gaelic secondary to Gaelic university level, providing a complete Gaelic immersion learner journey and thus strengthening the sustainability of the language and culture.

Section 11: ... the data table, as currently presented, does not provide clarity on the decline in speaker numbers: it would be more useful to state the 29% decline in speaker numbers since 1961 to indicate the level of challenge, and/or show the differential between the Highlands and Islands and the Rest of Scotland. The challenges ... are being "disguised" in a high-level portrayal of data.

Section 13: It could be helpful ... if some points ... could be specified in relation to how Gaelic communities could be supported in the sphere of SFC operations (whilst not directly related to SFC operations, such a linkage, where appropriate could be possibly agreed through the Outcome Agreements of relevant institutions).

A linkage could also be usefully made to the Islands Bill/Plan.



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba

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