



Gaelic Strategy 2024-2029

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Introduction

UHI North, West and Hebrides is Scotland's newest college, formed in August 2023 following the merger of UHI North Highland, UHI Outer Hebrides and UHI West Highland.

Proudly rooted in the culture and landscapes of the North and West Highlands, Skye and Outer Hebrides, UHI North, West and Hebrides provides relevant and distinctive learning, skills, research and innovation, shaped by the needs and ambitions of our communities, with a reach that extends locally, nationally and internationally.

As one of the largest partners within the University of the Highlands and Islands, we deliver flexible, supportive lifelong learning, from access level to PhD, to suit more people, at more levels, for more reasons.

We serve a diverse population, from school leavers to working adults, from career changers to those entering the workforce.

Through our range of senior phase, further education and higher education courses, world-class research, and flexible place-based, work-based and online study options, we're widening access to education in our rural and island communities, removing barriers to learning, providing relevant progression and career pathways for our students, and creating a personalised experience tailored to their needs.

We're delivering learning, skills, research and innovation to support a talent pipeline for the region's key growth sectors including energy, engineering and construction, net zero and sustainability, creative industries, food and drink, health and social care, land and sea-based industries, and Gaelic.



As an anchor institution in the region, our aim is to have a transformative impact on the people, communities and economies of our regions, by providing opportunities that enable people to live, work and study in the North and West Highlands, Skye and Outer Hebrides.

Gaelic is a central pillar of Scotland's rich heritage, national identity and cultural life and UHI North, West and Hebrides acknowledges that Gaelic is fundamental to its ethos and the region it serves.

Gaelic and English each have their own intrinsic value, and we endeavour to ensure that they both have their rightful place in the work that we do. This strategy makes provision for Gaelic to be represented within our curriculum offer and in our work with communities and stakeholders.

The largest concentration of Gaelic speakers in Scotland is found in the Outer Hebrides where 61 per cent of people aged three and over have some skills in the language. Highland region is home to the second highest concentration.

Strategic framework

A three-year strategic framework was set out in our business case for merger.

+ Our vision

To be an anchor institution for the region – a connected, flexible and sustainable learning organisation, opening doors to a world of opportunities.

+ Our mission

To connect rural and island Scotland, pioneering distinctive education and research opportunities to enable our students and communities to shape their future in a changing world.

+ Our values

- + **Trust:** We take pride in our work and trusted by our students, staff and partners. We are recognised for our leadership and dedication to deliver more for everyone we serve.
- + **Integrity:** We take responsibility for our actions, ensuring transparency and accountability. People are at the heart of everything we do, and we operate in a culture of collaboration, openness, dignity and respect.
- + **Excellence:** We are ambitious for our learners, our staff, our college, and our communities. We drive innovation, aspire to be sector leaders, and measure our success against national and international benchmarks.

+ Our strategic goals

- + To become a financially sustainable joined-up organisation
- + To grow curriculum, particularly into key areas that link with our research and commercial opportunities
- + To grow research and knowledge exchange through connecting our current specialisms and developing them alongside our region's potential
- + To have cohesive and responsive business development teams who can respond effectively and purposefully to opportunities of scale
- + To enhance the student experience through connecting our sites, resources, communities, and multi-location programmes
- + To have resilient team structures and depth of resource to address changing priorities, opportunities, and economic difficulties.

Gaelic strategy

Purpose

As Gaelic language, culture and heritage has been identified in as a key area of curriculum growth within our *Tertiary Curriculum Strategy 2025-2028*, this *Gaelic Strategy 2024-2029*, outlines the shape of our approach to the development and delivery of Gaelic language, heritage and culture over the next five years. It sets out strategic priority areas alongside their key objectives – the targets against which our progress will be reviewed. These strategic aims and objectives will be delivered through our *Gaelic Language Plan 2024-29*.

Scope

UHI North, West and Hebrides sets out a framework of priorities for developing and delivering the college's commitment to Gaelic language, culture and heritage. The *Gaelic language strategy 2024-2029* is informed by a range of external and internal strategies and plans, including *UHI Gaelic Language Plan 2023-26* and *UHI Islands' Strategy 2024-2029* and we remain clearly and firmly committed to the objectives outlined in the *National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028*, prepared by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and approved by Scottish Ministers.

Context

The *National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028* identifies key interlinking aspects of Gaelic language development and sets out areas of priority action for Gaelic language revitalisation and growth. Research, including current research led by UHI Language Sciences Institute, has shown that an increased emphasis on community-focused language policy is essential for the revitalisation and development of Gaelic.

As asserted in the *National Islands Plan 2019*, investment in Gaelic generates positivity. It creates a sense of self and of community and can make a substantial contribution to driving economic activity. It also offers significant opportunities for future economic growth. The Plan also highlights the symbiotic relationship between Gaelic and community. While Gaelic is important to the community, a thriving community is also important to the survival of Gaelic.

UHI North, West and Hebrides, as one of the largest tertiary education providers in the region and is uniquely situated to drive forward a revitalisation of Gaelic language and culture across our regions. We recognise the importance of bringing College and community together and recognise the value of our Gaelic heritage. Therefore, we will work with heritage and community groups to protect this heritage and to promote it as a community asset. UHI North, West and Hebrides is also strategically situated to contribute to the development of the Gaelic economy. We can play a key role in developing Gaelic language and culture as an economic driver and in strengthening links between Gaelic and employability.

This Strategy builds upon existing strengths and partnerships, including those with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland Council and community organisations such as community trusts, and Ceòlas through our joint venture Cnoc Soilleir. This emphasis on partnership working will develop strong interdisciplinary activity between Gaelic language, culture and heritage to develop short course community-based provision, learning and research.

UHI Gaelic Language Plan 2023-26

UHI Gaelic Language Plan 2023-26 provides strategic direction across the UHI partnership, and our activities are developed within the context of the UHI mission Where Learning Means More and the UHI strategic plan 2030.

Strategic aims, objectives and outcomes

Our Gaelic Language Strategy 2024-29 provides a framework to deliver our Gaelic Language Plan 2024-2029. Our strategy places focus on three strategic pillars.

Community and Heritage - delivered through our Gaelic Language Plan 2024-2029: Theme 1 – Community, and theme 4 – Media, Arts and Culture.

Curriculum and Research - delivered through our Gaelic language Plan 2024-2029: Theme 2 – Education.

The Gaelic Economy - delivered through our Gaelic Language Plan 2024-2029: Theme 3 – Business and the economy.

Strategic aim one : community and heritage

Strategic priority areas:

- To expand Gaelic language learning and usage across the region and digitally.
- To support the development of culture and heritage as a community asset.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing a suite of Gaelic language courses for parents of children in GME, from beginner to fluent speakers.
- Developing a Gaelic creative writing short course.
- Utilising the expertise of traditional Gaelic communities in our activities and programmes.
- Collaborating with community groups to deliver community language provision.
- Catering for the needs of the Gaelic diaspora, by expanding our online programmes of language, culture and heritage.
- Increasing community use of Gaelic in informal settings by further developing our Gaelic mentoring scheme and community delivered conversational sessions.

Success criteria:

- The number of Gaelic language enrolments increases annually until resource limits are reached.
- At least one community-based Seasonal School will be delivered within each academic year during the lifetime of the Strategy.
- The effectiveness of these courses is tested within appropriate annual review reports.
- At least one peer reviewer will contribute to the development of new Gaelic language provision.
- Community based provision is expanded annually and is reflected in the appropriate review document.

- The mentoring scheme should be reported on annually and reflect any increase in the use of Gaelic resulting from the work of the college.
- An annual programme of culture and heritage themed talks and lectures will be delivered in Gaelic online.

Strategic aim two : curriculum and research

Strategic priority areas:

- To develop and strengthen links between Gaelic and employability.
- To support and encourage latent speakers/adult returners to fluency.
- To expand Gaelic language learning and usage across the region and digitally.

We will achieve this by:

- Maintaining and developing clear tertiary progression pathways across our Gaelic curriculum.
- Increasing the number of Gaelic language and Gaelic culture courses delivered online to widen accessibility.
- Offering Gaelic language staff development programmes for beginner to fluent speakers.
- Offering Gaelic awareness training for new staff and board members.
- Developing micro-credentials and vocational provisions for key sectors, including business, tourism, health and social care, and early education and childcare.
- Increasing our involvement in Gaelic related research activity and projects.
- Building on our involvement in Gaelic activity and projects.
- Offering Gaelic capacity building courses for teaching practitioners.
- Developing micro-credentials for key sectors, including early years, health and social care, and allied health sectors.
- Supporting the development of flexible delivery models for PGDE (Gaelic medium) primary and secondary programmes within UHI, to widen access and address workforce shortages in our operating areas.

Success criteria:

- There are clear and marketed pathways to all Gaelic programmes.
- Staff development programmes have been developed and delivered within the lifespan of this strategy.
- The scope and effectiveness of progression pathways is reviewed within appropriate quality review documents.
- Our commitment to embed Gaelic options across programmes has been achieved within appropriate programme/departmental quality review documents.
- The number of Gaelic programmes delivered online increases annually until resource limits are reached.
- The effectiveness of Gaelic programmes is assessed within appropriate quality review documents.
- The number of Gaelic undergraduate enrolments increases annually during the period of this strategy.
- Support UHI to develop a flexible delivery model for PGDE (Gaelic medium) primary and secondary programmes and is offered for enrolment by the end of the strategy.

Strategic aim three : the Gaelic economy

Strategic priority areas:

- To support the development of Gaelic language and culture as an economic asset.
- To develop and strengthen links between Gaelic and employability.

We will achieve this by:

- Establishing a translation and cultural services agency.
- Providing cultural services/support key sectors.
- Exploring commercial opportunities for partnership working.

Success criteria:

- Translation of UHI North, West and Hebrides press releases, social media posts and website material delivered in-house.
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- Develop Gaelic micro-credentials for key sectors, including early education, health and social care, tourism, outdoor adventure and hospitality.
- Deliver at least two commercial events each year, such as language and cultural courses.

Enabling strategies

- [The National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028](#)
- [The National Islands Plan 2019](#)
- [UHI Gaelic Language Plan 2023-26](#)
- [UHI Islands Strategy 2024-29](#)
- UHI North, West and Hebrides Tertiary Curriculum Strategy 2024-2027
- UHI North, West and Hebrides Gaelic Language Plan 2024-29



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UHI North, West and Hebrides is a trading name of The Board of Management of UHI North, West and Hebrides which is a registered charity, number SC021215.

'S e UHI a Tuath, an Iar is Innse Gall an t-ainm malairt a th' air Bòrd Stiùiridh UHI a Tuath, an Iar is Innse Gall a tha na charthannas clàraichte, àireamh SC021215.